

## DRAFT FINAL - FOR COMMENT

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## Discussion Paper

# Integration of Gender Perspectives in WaterAid's Bangladesh Programme: for improved Safe Water Supply, Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion

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## WaterAid

WaterAid is an independent British charity (INGO) working with people in developing countries to improve their quality of life through lasting improvements to water, sanitation and hygiene using local skills and practical technologies. WaterAid was created in 1981 by the people and organizations of the British water industry as a response to the United Nations Water Decade (1981-1990).

## Vision

WaterAid's vision is a world where every one has access to safe water and effective sanitation. Currently, over 1.2 billion people lack access to a safe water supply and more than 2.4 billion people do not have access to effective sanitation.

## Objectives

WaterAid works through partner organizations to support integrated water, sanitation and hygiene education projects that focus on the poor and vulnerable, contributing to global initiatives for poverty reduction.

WaterAid supports partner organizations to develop their capacity to undertake effective, integrated water, sanitation and hygiene promotion projects. WaterAid works to influence other organizations to adopt programme approaches that emphasise: low cost, appropriate technology; community empowerment and ownership; long-term sustainability, and; capacity building within local organisations and institutions.

WaterAid currently has programmes in 12 countries: three in South Asia (India, Nepal and Bangladesh); three in East Africa (Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania); four in Southern Africa (Zambia, Malawi, Moçambique and Madagascar), two in West Africa (Ghana and Nigeria). In addition, WaterAid supports partners' projects in 3 further countries: Pakistan, Burkina Faso and Mali.

## WaterAid and Gender

Underpinning WaterAid's goal of universal access to safe water and sustainable sanitation, is to support the poor and vulnerable in developing countries, especially women and children, addressing issues of poverty and inequity. WaterAid is committed to maximizing the benefits for women and children from its work. To this end the WaterAid's strategy document<sup>1</sup> of 2000 stressed that the results of gender analysis will permeate all aspects of the design projects and programmes, and will be reflected in relationships with partners.

WaterAid has been actively deliberating the importance of gender and social relations issues in its work since 1994. During this period WaterAid has increased its support to the 'software' aspects of safe water and sanitation projects, particularly to community based management and hygiene promotion activities. The emphasis on these activities has served to bring social and gender issues more to the fore in programme and project design. The importance of the social aspects of the WaterAid's work is reflected in project reviews and evaluation reports commissioned from London.

The international Department of WaterAid U.K made gender a "Big Issue" for debate within the department in 1999. As a output of the debate the international department of WaterAid decided to commission a review of gender in relation to institutional thinking and practice. The review was carried out from December 1999 through May 2000. The report has been shared with country programme offices and partner organisations.

However a dilemma remains unresolved: whether WaterAid will support pro-active social justice and equity initiatives that arise from its work, or present challenges to its core objectives, or; whether WaterAid will limit its involvement to the scope of its resources and core objectives, contenting itself that its work provides positive contributions towards social justice and equity that other actors may build upon.

In line with WaterAid's philosophy of delegating decision making to the most effective level, country programmes have been charged with developing context sensitive gender policies with their specific country programme partners, for the country programme, projects and partner organisations.

**This discussion paper is a part of the ongoing process of developing gender sensitive approaches and analysis within WaterAid's Bangladesh programme.**

<sup>1</sup> WaterAid's next five years to 2005

### **WaterAid Bangladesh (WAB)**

WAB has been supporting work in rural Bangladesh since 1986, but until 1995 was confined to working with a single rural partner NGO, VERC. In 1996 WaterAid was registered officially in Bangladesh as an INGO and a Country Office was established to oversee both the existing rural programme and a new urban programme.

WAB's overall Programme Approach is called the

### **Integrated, Participatory , Empowering Approach to Safe Water Supply, Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion (IPEA – SWESHP)**

#### **Rural Programme**

Present partner organizations in the rural program are VERC, Green Hill and UST.

The rural programme currently serves over 500 communities across 11 districts.

#### **Key Elements of Rural Programme**

- Participatory Hygiene promotion
- Water Supply – TWs/GFS/HDW/RSW/RWH
- 100% Sanitized Village Approach (100% SVA)
- Arsenic Screening and Mitigation
- Capital Cost Recovery & No-Subsidy Sanitation
- Research and Development
- Rural Partners Coordination and Support Network

#### **Urban Programme**

The current urban programme is being implemented by six partner NGOs:

DSK, PSTC, PRODIPAN, Phulki, ARBAN and ASD.

The urban programme projects serve over 150 different slum communities in the cities of Dhaka and Chittagong.

#### **Key Elements of Urban Programme**

- Participatory Hygiene Promotion
- Water Supply – CWP/TWs
- Communal and household Sanitation
- Environmental Sanitation
- Solid Waste Management
- Capital Cost Recovery
- Research and Development
- Urban Partners Coordination and Support Network

### **"Little Princes" - The Social Position of Men in Bangladesh**

*Men are 'spoilt' from childhood, with special attention given from their families to their nutrition, education etc. Strangely this is actively facilitated by almost all mothers. The common belief is that families will rely on their sons income and support in the future and thus their well being is paramount to their female siblings.*

*Men enter adulthood convinced of their special place and superiority in their family and social roles, thus the related 'responsibilities' they bear towards women.*

### ***The Social Position of Women in Bangladesh***

*Times are changing. Women in Bangladesh are raising their voice and asserting their rights. Despite resistances and pressures, they are trying to demonstrate that they will not remain as second or third class citizens.*

*But still discrimination against women permeates Bangladesh society. Repressive age-old traditions, unquestioned social norms, unchallenged economic dependence and financial insecurity, illiteracy and ignorance, the invisibility and silence of women in public life - all these combine to keep women in a lowly state within their families, their communities, and their country.*

*Across the classes, women are undervalued, their work being unseen and unpaid if done within the home, unrecognised and underpaid in the informal and formal employment sectors. Most of the women, regardless of their husbands' or fathers' social standing, can be victims of forms of oppression that include dowry demands, polygamy and violence within and outside of the home; arbitrary divorce, little or no education; and less food, health care, and material possessions than their men folk. Individually and within their families women have little power; as a group they have even less in civil society and their rights are often trampled upon. The poorer the woman, the greater the burden she has to carry as she struggles to feed her family on inadequate resources of money, education and support systems.*

## **Gender integration within Projects and Programmes of WAB partner organisations**

WaterAid Bangladesh does not prescribe to its partner organisations a gender policy or any particular guideline on gender, though the organization has been trying for gender balance regarding staff recruitment both at WAB and partner organizations. WAB encourages partners' initiatives on gender: within their organisations and project teams; in project planning and impact analysis.

All WAB's partners work according to their own vision and mission and they have different projects with different donor agencies across diverse areas of the country. Some of the partner organisations have specific agenda or projects regarding women in development or gender and development, a few of them also have a gender policy.

Most of WAB's partner organisations have designed Water and Sanitation projects which recognise the overall subordinate position of women both at household and community level. In Bangladesh, women face a rigid gender division of labour where traditionally, they remain responsible for reproductive activities. The reproductive role comprises the childbearing and rearing responsibilities and domestic task. Recognizing that women are most active in activities related to: home and family care; collection of water, fuel, food and fodder; livestock and poultry care. The WAB partners' projects are planned with a noble intention for maximum benefit of poor women but the approaches utilised are not aligned and all can probably be improved in terms of impact.

### **The Programme/Project Level**

#### **- men, women and children are integrated in the following ways:**

WaterAid Bangladesh and partner organizations follow an integrated, participatory and empowering hygiene promotion approach to enable people to understand the present hygiene situation, towards realising a common vision and commitment to change and action, which is very important for men, women and children. The first activity of the approach is to conduct a baseline survey using a 'basket' of PRA methodologies and tools. At the time of baseline survey the whole community (men, women, children, poor and rich) are involved in joint analysis. After the baseline survey the community formulate an action plan together. During the initial two or three months the whole community involvement is remarkable.

But in most cases the long-term day-to-day project activities, e.g. regular hygiene education sessions, are mainly targeted to women and children; due to nature and division of work between men and women (men mainly work outside of home and they are not responsible the work related with cleanliness at house hold level). Some organizations work mainly with women's groups, which they have formed for other activities e.g. women development program, or savings and credit, they facilitate hygiene promotion sessions with the same group.

One of the major components of any project is, the installation of hardware components (water points, individual latrines, cluster latrines or sanitation blocks) for fulfilling the practical needs of the people (men, women and children). During planning and installation of these hardware components, in many cases, men play the lead role rather than the women because of their socio economic position.

The hardware components are maintained and managed by community management committees. The committee is comprised in some cases of 100% women members of the community, with men as 'advisors', in other cases it's a mixed group where both men and women share the responsibilities.

In most of the cases a female caretaker from the community (especially in urban projects) is selected to undertake the regular maintenance of hardware and daily collection of community subscriptions for repayment of the instalment cost. A small amount of money is paid to caretakers as an honorarium, salaried caretakers are not yet 'normal' though some communities have recognised the pivotal role of these individuals.

## The Organization Level

Both WAB and its partner organisations give special emphasis to gender balance when considering staff recruitment. For the partners' project staff provisions have been made to recruit at least 50% women to 50% men staff at the field level. There is also evidence of pro-active effort to recruit women staff at management level, though the number of female staff at senior management level is still low both within WAB and partner organisations. The global "catch 22" applies in Bangladesh, if we do not employ and develop women for roles throughout our organisations, then it will always be hard to find a 'qualified' female candidate for a senior role in the market.

In programme project teams there is no systematic and regular process for awareness building on issues related to gender and development among the staff. Some partner organisations provide training on gender and development to the staff, as an overall organization activity, to sensitise the staff for affirmative action at the community level.

## Achievements At The Project Level

Water supply and sanitation support from WAB partners' projects in the community has fulfilled the practical needs of men, women and children in project areas; it has made women and children's lives easier by reducing the burden of collecting water from long distances (in some cases over 2 hours workload per day has been saved), it has given women mental peace (privacy) from having improved access to sanitary latrines and bathing space.

Formation of community management committees with female members has been a positive encouragement for women towards the performance of community management roles. Through the process the women get the opportunity to interact with others, often outside the home, which assists in confidence building, experience of dialogue and negotiation on wider issues outside the home and creates opportunities for public mobility, which makes them visible, literally, in the community. In the mixed gender project planning and management committee groups, both men and women get opportunities to interact with each other as peers. Though in the mixed groups special effort is needed to ensure women's equal participation in the decision making process.

For the installation of hardware components in most cases women play a vital role in site selection, which involves them in decision-making processes with men. In urban project areas the sanitation blocks have separate latrines and washing facilities for women, which is very important for the privacy of women. In the rural context installation of individual latrines is equally important for privacy of women.

The selection of female caretakers for infrastructure facilities creates job opportunities for women at the community level and increases their visibility and voice as community development actors, and provides positive role models for children, men and other women.

## Achievements At The Organization Level

Recruitment of female staff at the local and community levels has created job opportunities for 'middle class' women and helped them in terms of economic empowerment. Their mobility at local level made them visible in the society, which encouraged other women to come out from the all too prevalent "inside world" prescribed by social norms within the pre-dominantly Muslim society.

Professional interaction between male and female colleagues in programme support and project teams enables them to consciously consider and understand the importance of gender related issues.

## Limitations and Objectives

Despite some gender positive aspects to the WAB programme work and partners organisations, WAB recognises that further development and integration of gender perspectives is vital for the programme to achieve its purpose and goal within the country strategy. WAB recognises that WaterAid's 'corporate' dilemma, re embarking on or entering into social justice initiatives versus limiting resource allocation to improved programme impact, is relevant to the WAB programme also.

WAB's short to medium term objective is to integrate a Gender and Poverty (GAP) approach to its programme work. The section that follows is intended as points for dialogue in order to pursue this objective.

## For Discussion and Deliberation: Should We Re-Think The Following Issues In Seeking Improved Integration Of Gender Perspectives in the WAB Programme and within Partner Organisations?

### Issues at the Programme/Project Level

1. All WAB partner organisations try to involve men, women and children in their project's hygiene promotion activities, but in most cases women are the main target group for regular hygiene education sessions. Formal and informal discussion sessions on hygiene education are organized with women and children with an expectation that they will convey the message to the other members of the family and play an active role for positive change of the family members towards hygiene behaviour.

In Bangladesh most people believe that men are the guardian of women, thus all the important family decisions will be made by men and women will act accordingly. No more than eight percent of the poor urban women have any definite role in major family decisions.<sup>2</sup> In rural areas the situation is worse.

For deviation from male decisions by women, men quite often blame the women and even sometimes beat women to maintain discipline at household level, which is accepted by the society. For an example, in 1998 a survey carried out by the Ain-O-Salish Kendra revealed that 1,691 women were subjected to violence in three months across 75 unions of six thanas, 72 percent of these women were severely beaten by their husbands.<sup>3</sup> In this socio cultural context, where domestic violence is a common phenomenon, how powerful are women to change the behaviour of male family members? and also how much respect do the men have for 'their' womens' opinions?

2. Because of the rigid division of labour most of the time we think that the women are available at home and they have the time for regular group meetings and other voluntary activities. But it is important for us to remember that most women from low-income families have an important productive role within their reproductive role, often as secondary income earners. In Bangladesh, among the urban poor, 64% women are working women.<sup>4</sup>
3. The difficulties to involve men in regular hygiene activities comes not only from the unavailability of men at home but also the mind set of men and women (both community level and organization level) from thousands of years of tradition and culture about the male productive role and female reproductive role. Most men and women in Bangladesh think that men will engage themselves with income earning activities, which will help them to support their immediate and extended family and perhaps increase their prestige to be a community leader.
4. All the WAB partner organizations are keenly aware about the subordinate position of women in society and importance of safe hygiene behaviour for all the people in the community (men, women and children). But because of the availability of women at home and the formation of women's groups by multiple actors, for their empowerment, sometimes men become isolated from the major day-to-day activities. No doubt, special effort with women and regular work with women's groups increases women's mobility, helps them to be more vocal and confidant.
5. At the same time it is very important to work with men, to improve their awareness and their value of women's work, to promote men's sharing of household work and to respect women's opinions for joint decision making. Women's ideas and opinions are very important re issues like the installation of WatSan project hardware components, but often are ignored even in simple daily issues like the purchase of soap.

<sup>2</sup> Addressing the Urban Poverty Agenda in Bangladesh; Critical issues and the 1995 Survey Findings, Edited by: Nazrul Islam,Nurul huda, Francis B. Narayan and Pradumna B.Rana

<sup>3</sup> The Socio-Legal Status of Bangali Women in Bangladesh; Implications for development, Saira Rahman Khan p.163

<sup>4</sup> Addressing the Urban Poverty Agenda in Bangladesh; Critical issues and the 1995 Survey Findings, Edited by: Nazrul Islam,Nurul huda, Francis B. Narayan and Pradumna B.Rana

6. With out direct interaction with men and children on a regular basis on hygiene education, it is very difficult to involve everybody in a community for regular practice of safe hygienic behaviour. If the men, women and children don't change their regular hygiene behaviour practice, towards positive change of the family and community hygiene situation, it will be really difficult to get the intended results from our interventions, i.e. a positive, sustained impact on health and poverty.
7. Undertaking hygiene education mainly with women, reinforces women's reproductive role. Sometimes this may make their life more difficult with extra work and the mental depression/frustration ensuing when consciousness of the importance of safer water supplies and sanitation is realised, but the main economic role and decision making responsibility lies with male members of their families, preventing ready access or shared understanding. For example if the women cannot install a water point near by their house they have to look for a safe water supply, which may involve walking further distances. Otherwise they have to purify the water through boiling to make it germ free, which involves collection of more fuel. In an FAO report it has been pointed out that in Bangladesh the firewood shortage is so severe that the rural women and children spend 3-5 hours a day gathering and transporting fuel.<sup>5</sup> Motivation work is carried out among the women to perform their duty more efficiently, reinforcing the requirement to do the labour intensive, dirty domestic work more frequently (cleaning of drains, latrines and children after defecation). A GAD approach would shift the emphasis of the WAB programme to advocate for changing the division of labour between men and women.
8. No doubt, working towards changing the division of labour is not an easy activity, because men believe that they are doing the hardest work, which feeds all the family members. Though, in Bangladesh, the rural population works 6.71 hours per capita per day on average, according to a recent study<sup>6</sup>. Rural men spend 5.97 hours daily on work and rural women, on other hand, spend 7.57 hours. The study further noted that of the total time spent by an average unit family on work, women contribute 53% whilst 47% is contributed by men.

Under the norms, values and culture of Bangladesh's patriarchal society, both men and women are brought up not to consider the importance and value of reproductive work. For gender awareness building of men and women it is important to initiate and facilitate discussion sessions by creating a positive environment, where they will be able to re-think the over all situation from a gender perspective: e.g. point out the value of reproductive work; potentials of partners projects to engage women in productive work (already quite a good number of women are involved), and; by sharing reproductive work, which will ultimately reduce the 'bread winner' role/burden of men and improve the overall economic condition of the family. At the same time with children's programme activities, if we promote and follow gender sensitive approaches, it will be a vital contribution for the next generation of adults.

9. Selection of women as caretakers has created employment opportunities for women. Increased income for families from female employment is definitely important: it helps women to increase their power to negotiate over household assets; decreases intra-household inequalities, and; can improve the overall economic condition of a family. But in the Bangladesh context it also a double burden for women, adding to their domestic responsibilities with a job responsibility. It is also important for us to rethink how much are we paying to WatSan caretakers? Is it possible to get a male caretaker with the same remuneration? In Bangladesh wage discrimination among men and women is a big issue and a priority of the women's movement. Among the urban poor the monthly average income of a working woman is only TK. 706 versus TK 1,787 for a man, for the same or even more hours of work.<sup>7</sup>

Most men are not interested to be a community WatSan caretaker because of the low wage of the job. If the community consider water and sanitation is important for whole families they should rethink the remuneration or voluntary time, from both the women's and men's perspective.

<sup>5</sup> *Environment and Development; A sub Regional Perspective;* p-32

<sup>6</sup> (*Why Women Count. Essays on Women In Development in Bangladesh*, Shamid Hamid).

<sup>7</sup> *Addressing the Urban Poverty Agenda in Bangladesh; Critical issues and the 1995 Survey Findings*, Edited by: Nazrul Islam, Nurul huda, Francis B. Narayan and Pradumna B.Rana

## Issues at the The Organisation Level

1. If we look at the management level staff within most of the WAB partner organisations, it seems that the organisations are male dominated. It is difficult in Bangladesh to recruit women at management level for different reasons: the number of well qualified women are less in number in the 'market' than men; due to the traditional reproductive and domestic responsibilities of women, some women can not cope with a professional job; still in Bangladesh women feel insecure to commute or travel alone; sometimes family members discourage women to work outside of the home.
2. Due to the reasons above, senior executives often adopt a gender-neutral policy at the time of recruitment for the maximum benefit of the organization. They select the person for the job who: has only one major family role, that is a productive role, which means the person will concentrate the majority of their energy for the organisation, and; who will have the socio-culturally accepted freedom to travel alone, even internationally, which is often required of senior staff by development organisations, i.e. a man.
3. If we analyse the current reasons for women's 'backwardness in coming forward', we can take affirmative action to fulfil women's practical and strategic needs; e.g. childcare facilities, flexi-time systems considering women's household responsibilities, organise special training for women's management and leadership skill development etc. At the same time it is important to openly publicise within an organisation, to both the male and female staff, the reason and necessity of special arrangements for the women, which will help to avoid conflict between male and female staff and establish a gender friendly environment in the organization.
4. It is very important for all of us to understand that social and economic differences between men and women are created by society, in which all of us are members and stakeholders. Thus, we are all responsible for the continuation of the status quo or change for the better. To bring more balance in the society, to minimize the gap between men and women, to further equitable social and economic development, we all have to give special attention to the persons who still remain 'at the back of the queue', men or women.
5. An organisation should be rigorous in analysing its vision, mission and goals re social justice and equity initiatives. It is not negative to limit an organisations initiatives and resource allocation to achieving positive gender perspective impact from programmes or projects. However, this limitation should be clearly recognised and a conscious decision taken to reflect the organisations position through all guidelines, staff orientation and training and programme designs etc. Other development actors may well have better resources for addressing social justice issues in a holistic manner, perhaps the WAB network should be seeking strategic alliances with such organisations or programmes.

## Conclusion

Certainly improved access to safe water and sanitation makes women's lives easier, but these are also beneficial for all the members of the household and community. The way WAB's partners are working with women at the community level, addressing practical needs of women, it seems to be that they are following mainly a Women in Development (WID) approach, rather than a Gender and Development (GAD) approach.

The reasons WAB partners' projects can be described as following a WID approach is that most development projects/ programmes are designed from our inherited domestic ideology, where women's role is being a good mother or wife, working to improve living condition to the families as well as communities. As an example, in the design period of a WatSan project we have often considered that women are the main users of the water and responsible persons to promote hygiene practice at household level from a gender-neutral point of view. If we analyse the facts from a gender sensitive perspective we can discover that all men, women and children are the users of the water and sanitation improvements and that their overall health depends on improvements in everyone's hygiene behaviour. For all community members comfort, women take the burden to collect water, clean latrines and maintain infrastructure.

Whether we are using WID or GAD or other approaches for development work, we usually listen to the women's voices from our personal perspectives of their roles and position as mothers and wives, not as labourers, grassroots activists or equal human beings. This is due to thousands of years of culture, beliefs and resulting norms, which reinforce our way of thinking, planning and analysing.

Gender does not mean to work only with women or on issues challenging women. It rather refers to work for establishment of a more egalitarian society for both men and women, based on equal opportunity to maximize their potentialities. Which need to work both with practical and strategic gender needs/interests of men and women.

It is universally agreed that the central problem of addressing gender equity remains with the concept of power and its opposite, oppression, and finally the subordination of women to men. If it is opposite in any society then we have to give special attention to the men to change their subordinate position.

### **Women in Development (WID)**

*The 'Women in Development' (WID) school, asserting that development would be impossible unless women were integrated into the mainstream development process, evolved during the 1970s. It was a response not only to the inadequacies of existing development approaches, but also to ideas sweeping worldwide with feminism. Encouraged by the UN Decade of Women following the 1975 Mexico City and 1985 Nairobi UN Conferences, WID practitioners emphasised the need for women to achieve equality, particularly in the economic arena. Without financial security and economic independence, it was argued, women would be unable to benefit from development assistance.*

*During the 1980s, the momentum to set up women-focused projects grew rapidly. WID was directed at achieving equality for women - a noble but a huge task given the low status of women everywhere. It had as its goal more efficient and effective development with women as the focus of, and integrated into its activities. But, given the scale of the task and as its practitioners often lacked a perspective on the basic and critical issue of unequal power relations between the sexes, the WID approach floundered.*

### **Gender and Development (GAD)**

*Gender and Development (GAD) approach has emerged in 1990s. The approach has strongly linked to the growing demands for human rights.*

*GAD perceives the underlying concern for development in unequal power relations, between women and men, between rich and poor. When the patriarchal systems, which give power to men and subjugate women, are removed, only then the equitable and sustainable development will be achievable. GAD stresses the social benefits, rather than the economic solutions to development. It looks to work with both women and men, instead of focusing on women as the answer to the problems of development.*

*GAD theorists give emphasis on a more participatory approach; open, egalitarian development, working with the people to provide for the short-term practical needs of the poor, both women and men, whilst challenging the strategic issues of unequal gender relations that persist to keep the men in power and women subordinate. Until these are replaced, any attempt at development, to alleviate poverty, to empower women, to improve the quality of life for the millions of poor, will be unsuccessful.*

GAD theorists challenge the basic premises of the gender division of labour, the division between the male breadwinner and the female homemaker, roles for men and women, who are 'different but equal'. They argue that there is no reason why gender should be an organizing principle of the social division of labour, except for the physical process of childbearing.

Development projects attempt to identify and address the needs of targeted communities. A GAD approach distinguishes between women's practical needs and their strategic gender needs. They are closely related to condition and position. Practical needs are linked to women's condition. They can be readily identified and usually relate to unsatisfactory living conditions and lack of resources. Poor third world women may identify practical needs as those related to food, water and income. Meeting these needs is very important and development actors, often using a WID approach, can satisfy these needs over time.

However, only working to address practical needs often reinforces traditional relations and responsibilities between women and men. Whilst addressing practical gender needs it is vital to consciously address the issues arising from women's subordinate position in a society, i.e. their strategic gender needs, which will lead to improved social justice, if addressed.

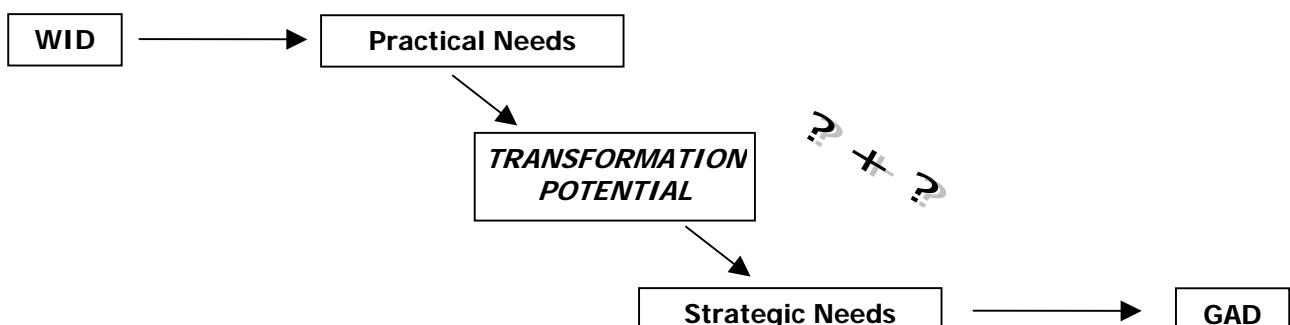
### **Strategic Gender Needs**

Strategic gender needs are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position to men in their society.

Strategic gender needs vary according to particular contexts.

They relate to gender divisions of labour, power and control and may include such issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over their bodies.

Meeting strategic gender needs helps women to achieve greater equality. It also changes existing roles and therefore challenges women's subordinate position in many societies.



To achieve progress on strategic gender needs processes must involve children, men and women, rich and poor, across the community. Special effort is needed for awareness building on issues related to gender amongst the whole community. (This is a gap in WAB's partners initiatives on integration of gender perspectives.) Considering strategic gender needs can lead to community analysis and action towards transformation of: gender division of labour, and ; the pervading subordinate relationship of women to men. A strategic gender needs analysis can positively influence community processes to move on from addressing practical gender needs within the status quo<sup>8</sup>, towards addressing issues of social justice.

It is high time to join hand to hand, to work with men, women and children in Bangladesh against discrimination and injustice on women and girls, to increase equity and justice in sharing burdens, resources, benefits and responsibilities, between women and men, which will lead to a more egalitarian society for the benefit of all Bangladesh's people, present and future. Mainstreaming gender issues is not a simple task; it requires us to tackle a deeply rooted system of different gender roles, variations in socio-economic power, cultural and religious aspects, class/caste, race etc. In dealing with gender issues there is always the risk that the issue will be treated as a "women's issue". However, given the subordinate position of women almost everywhere in the world the approach gives an emphasis and a framework for not only women's empowerment, but for establishing equal rights and responsibilities for both men and women as equal human beings.

<sup>8</sup> status quo: *the existing state of affairs*

## **Annex 1**

### **A Guideline to Mainstreaming Gender in WAB and NGO Partners' Programs**

It is very important for an organization to think through the pertinent issues for programme, project and organization levels for mainstreaming gender. The following steps and questions may be a guideline to start the analysis activities.

#### **Step one:**

Understand very clearly the chosen approach ( analysis toolkit ) to analyse the present status, within the organization, programme and project levels from a gender perspective on the basis of a gender and development/poverty approach.

#### **Step two:**

Identify the gaps from the analysis and make an action plan to address the gaps.

#### **Step three:**

Allocate time, persons and resources for acting on the action plan.

### **Basic questions to analyse the gender perspective**

#### **Program level:**

- I. What were the aims and objectives behind setting up the project? Were project planners taking in to account gender inequalities when they formulated the project?
- II. Whether the project's output facilities have addressed practical gender needs in the community.
- III. Do biases exist in the provision of services to the two sexes? If so, why?
- IV. Whether addressing gender needs was intended or just a lucky result of the programme/project.
- V. Did the project designers change their target group or adjust their strategies after the program had been in operation for some times? If so, why?
- VI. If gender issues are addressed deliberately, what was the basis for such considerations:- people's demand, organisational policy, or design etc?
- VII. Who or which groups in the community were consulted during the planning, design and implementation of project output facilities?
- VIII. Is there any special attempt being made to ensure that both the men and women's voices are being heard? Were woman consulted in such a way that they could freely discuss their own ideas, concerns and problems?
- IX. Did the consultation continue during the implementation phase of these facilities?
- X. What gender roles, reproductive vs productive etc., have been considered by dialogue at the project intervention level?
- XI. How did the project interventions involve male counterparts of women target groups or programme participants? Is there any initiative or activity with male members to promote their sharing the workload of women regarding water, sanitation and hygiene promotion?
- XII. How did the project address the financial opportunity costs and social costs while emphasizing gender? i.e. awareness raising on the economic and social benefits of action on practical and strategic gender needs, e.g. female productive work can economically benefit a family, male contributions to reproductive work can positively influence family harmony and free women to pursue productive initiatives.
- XIII. What are the approaches that are being followed by the project (welfare/WID/GAD)? Is there any initiative/activity to address strategic gender needs?

### **Key Questions for Impact Analysis:**

- I. Does the existence of project output facilities add any value to improve the women's situation in the community?
- II. Who are the caretakers of the facilities?
- III. Who controls these facilities?
- IV. Who decides what at community and family level? Has there been any change due to the project?

### **Organization level:**

- V. Are project planners taking in to account gender inequalities when they formulate staff policies?
- VI. Are the same qualifications required when recruiting male and female staff?
- VII. Is there an active attempt being made to recruit women?
- VIII. Are there any special service conditions provided for men and women staff, e.g. paternity / maternity leave or flexitime system?
- IX. Do work conditions in the organization seem likely to cause friction for women staff where their family life is concerned?
- X. What kind of benefits does the organization specifically provide for women workers?
- XI. What is the 'culture' of interaction between male and female workers within the organization?
- XII. Is management thought to be responsive to the socio-cultural needs of women workers, via flexitime or special transport privileges etc.?
- XIII. Is there any special attempt being made to ensure that women's voice are being heard, or to deal with sexual harassment and suchlike problems?
- XIV. What percentages of staff in the organization are women/men?
- XV. What percentage of senior management staffs is women/men? What percentage of junior and middle management staffs are women/men?
- XVI. To what extent are women and men represented on the board of directors or on management committee?
- XVII. To what extent and by what means do women and men have a say in decision making with in the organization? How does the organisation ensure that their differential perspectives are heard?

## **Annex 2 - An example of a WAB partner's thinking: How DSK have begun to integrate gender in their organisation & programme**

### **DSK: Initiatives to Integrate Gender Perspectives in an Urban Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion Programme.**

Water and sanitation are crucial issues in the slums of Dhaka City. Slum dwellers are the integral part of the society and economy of 'Mega City' life. National development is not possible unless we develop the situations of the slum dwellers by giving the recognition of their effort. Since 1989 Dushta Shasthya Kendra (DSK) has been engaged to bring the lasting improvements in the lives of the urban slum dwellers, to have the access of safe water, sanitation and hygiene promotion.

Women members of the slums are mainly engaged in planning and managing the water points (WP), sanitation facilities, solid waste systems and defecation options for children. With this given consideration, DSK has given emphasis to ensure the participation of women in need assessment, decision making, planning, implementing and as a whole in the total leadership of the services through the process of empowerment.

To date 96 women headed CBOs have been catalysed, trained and empowered to manage their community 'utilities'. Their performance on the management of the utilities are quite satisfactory. Meanwhile, they are also enhancing their families and communities' hygiene knowledge through training, education and household visits. We believe that, if we empower women and children through our work, it will impact on the other members of the families.

- A nine member female management committee and a five member male advisory committee are formed as the CBOs leadership to perform the management function of the programme infrastructure development and software activities. The community itself is assigned to manage the WP who bear the capital cost, maintenance bills, caretaker's salaries, and the DWASA bills. According to the model communities themselves form group and DSK facilitates training on management, maintenance of WP, health hygiene and behavioural practices. DSK encourages community involvement in designing, selecting location, and formulating the community's rules on water use and cost recovery for the WP.
- Hygiene education is facilitated for the female members in order to enhance the knowledge and practices of the participants as they are always looking after the household's affairs and the other members of the families including children.
- During the household visits hygiene promotion follow up activities are done with all available members of the households (may be male and female, adults or children).
- In the household registration form DSK consider the name of the women members as the head of the families.
- CBO management committee chiefs (women members) sign the agreement paper for the WATSAN infrastructure management purpose.
- In the child groups for hygiene promotion, both male and female children are actively involved via the child to child (CTC) approach.
- Active women's participation is encouraged for selecting sites, planning, designing, and construction works.
- DSK arranges Gender Awareness Training for all programme staff.
- As a part of its technical service provider (TSP) role for WAB's urban partners, DSK organized an "Orientation on Gender" during the second year (2001) of its phase three program.
- DSK has developed a Gender Training Guideline.
- Recently DSK developed a draft Gender Policy.

**Where are the gaps ?!**