



CIWA Gender Equality & Social Inclusion Framework

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The Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA) was established in 2011 and represents a partnership between the World Bank, its African partners, the European Commission, and the governments of Austria, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. CIWA supports riparian governments in Sub-Saharan Africa to unlock the potential for sustainable and inclusive growth, climate resilience, and poverty reduction by addressing constraints to cooperative management and development of international waters.

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Abbreviations

ARCAN	Africa Regional Climate and Nature Programme	NCCR	Nile Cooperation for Climate Resilience
CIWA	Cooperation in International Waters in Africa	NELSAP-CU	Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program Coordination Unit
CSO	Civil Society Organization	REC	Regional Economic Community
ENTRO	Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office	RBO	River Basin Organization
GAP	Gender Action Plan	SADC-GMI	Community-Groundwater Management Program Coordination Unit
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion	SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
LVBC	Lake Victoria Basin Commission	ToC	Theory of Change
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	TTL	Task Team Lead

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CIWA's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Framework

1. Introduction: CIWA and Gender

Established in 2010, the Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA) supports riparian governments to strengthen cooperative management and development of water resources in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve sustainable climate-resilient growth and poverty reduction. As a Multi-Donor Partnership of the World Bank, CIWA has made Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) a priority.

At the programmatic or institutional level, efforts are focused on gender and governance to create an enabling environment for female decision makers to thrive, identifying opportunities for women to participate in leadership positions at the institutional level and providing direct support to CIWA's partners to enable them to mainstream gender and social inclusion into their work. At the project level, CIWA follows the project preparation procedures and guidelines set out by the World Bank to consider gender equality and social inclusion throughout the project cycle.

This Gender and Social Inclusion Framework has been prepared as a living document to guide CIWA's operations into the future to be adapted as new approaches and lessons learned related to gender and social inclusion emerge within the transboundary landscape.

As part of CIWA's commitment to ensure that gender and social inclusion are represented in all of its work, the GESI Framework puts forward an overarching strategic approach aligned to the concept of transformation that facilitates harmonized and integrated approaches to gender and social inclusion in all of CIWA's work.

By promoting a holistic and integrated focus on women, men, and other vulnerable populations, the Framework also seeks to ensure that CIWA's investments in transboundary water management result in project outcomes that benefit all women and men as well as girls and boys associated with the project. Targeted to CIWA staff, country partners, and development partners, the strategic Framework highlights key action points related to gender and social inclusion and transboundary water management that build upon analysis of lessons learned.

The GESI Framework is aligned to the World Bank Group's commitment to addressing GESI as part of its overall efforts to achieve the World Bank's goal to create a world free of poverty on a livable planet. It also takes into account other efforts within the Bank and through other organizations to promote gender and social inclusion.

2. Objective of the Framework

The objective of the CIWA GESI Framework is to mainstream gender and social inclusion considerations into CIWA's work with the aim of catalyzing transformative change to achieve sustainable gender equality and inclusion in water resource management and development.

The strategy seeks to:

- Build upon the lessons learned to enhance recognition of gender and social inclusion issues within the context of transboundary water management;
- Provide the strategic focus required to scale up gender equality and social inclusion across the different levels of CIWA's work;
- Articulate key action points for the CIWA program to advance gender equality and social inclusion within the transboundary water context; and
- Reinforce the World Bank Group's own commitment to gender and social inclusion as articulated in its Gender Strategy (FY2016-2023).

3. Concepts of Gender and Social Inclusion

Gender is:

- About women, girls, men and boys including the different things that women and men think and do, and the relationships between them.
- **Social Inclusion** assumes that men and women are not homogeneous. Instead, they are stratified by age, ethnic origin, beliefs and practices, socio-cultural situations, and other vulnerabilities. Social inclusion, therefore, involves the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people who are disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to take part in society.
- By making this distinction, it is necessary to target the specific disadvantage of either women or men and to establish separate spaces for men and women while ensuring that strategies for gender equality engage all key stakeholders so that the broader dimensions of social inclusion and vulnerability are adequately captured.
- **Gender equality** is about changing the norms and expectations about female and male roles and ultimately changing power relations by fostering a more balanced distribution of power within governments, companies, formal and informal institutions and households.¹

¹ World Bank Group Gender Strategy (2016-2023).

Gender is not:

- **Only about women and girls:** Men and boys should also be part of the GESI equation.
- **Only women's responsibility:** For real change to happen, everyone needs to be involved.
- **A western or foreign concept:** Gender equality is a global commitment articulated in international regional and national commitments to which countries worldwide are signatories.
- **An attempt to take away the rights of men and boys:** Human rights are universal, which means that they apply to all human beings.
- **Only an issue for gender specialists:** Relying solely on gender specialists cannot tackle the main drivers of gender inequality and social exclusion. Everyone needs to be involved.

4. Lessons Learned

The GESI Framework draws on the findings and lessons learned from a baseline study on CIWA's performance on gender and social inclusion in May 2020. It included a desk-based literature review, online survey and consultations with CIWA staff, development partners and country partners including River Basin Organizations (RBOs), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and national governments. It also builds upon lessons learned from CIWA's existing efforts to promote and support the integration of GESI considerations into its work. Key findings that account for the low participation of women in transboundary water management at either the institutional or project level and limited progress in addressing gender inequalities and social exclusion within the transboundary water management context include:

- i) **Water is a male-dominated sector:** This makes it difficult for women to find a safe and friendly setting to express their views, participate in meetings and play a leadership role.
 - ii) **Governance structures fail to accommodate women.** Laws, policies and strategies at the transboundary level are mostly silent on the promotion of gender issues. This limits the level of accountability and capacity to ensure that GESI issues are adequately addressed.
 - iii) **Women face socio-cultural barriers to working on water resource management.** Barriers are driven by strong patriarchal values in most African societies that position men as the key decision makers and holders of power and limit women's access and control over resources.
 - iv) **Women tend to be stereotyped as resource users.** Despite the key role they play as custodians of water and the heavy burden they bear when water is in short supply, women's role tends to be pigeonholed into the reproductive sphere. This limits how they are included and what role they play at the project and institutional level.
- v) **Water ministries and government departments tend to be led by men.** This is linked to obstacles women face in entering or operating in the water sector including a lack of access to education, sexual harassment, job insecurity and comparatively lower pay levels.²
 - vi) **Failure to move from commitment to implementation.** Even when countries sign on to international, regional or national agreements on gender and social inclusion, there is often a lack of capacity and willingness to apply the necessary financial and technical resources.
 - vii) **Regional institutions have achieved less progress.** Regional institutions addressing transboundary water management involve negotiations at the political level requiring the cooperation and agreement of multiple and often competing countries.³ This makes it difficult to ensure a consistent and harmonized approach to tackling GESI issues.
 - viii) **Women are denied access to water governance processes:** Although water governance is anticipated to become a cornerstone of global water security, space for women to participate in political decision making is limited.
 - ix) **A lack of capacity and awareness.** Stakeholders at all levels and across all sectors tend to lack the capacity and understanding of why and how to apply GESI considerations. This means that local-level projects and institutional programming are frequently gender blind.
 - x) **Lack of a systematic approach:** Gender and social inclusion tends to be assigned to one individual or ministry thereby limiting the ability to promote a systematic approach. Projects tend to include stand-alone interventions rather than integrating GESI considerations at all levels and across all sectors where the project is being implemented.
 - xi) **Failure to allocate adequate resources.** Allocating sufficient funding to apply a GESI lens at the project and program level throughout the project cycle is often overlooked because of a lack of appreciation of GESI's central importance to a project's success.
 - xii) **Gender is complex:** An understanding of the complex relationships between men and women or the ways in which gender norms are embedded in institutions, market forces, and cultural interactions is often not reflected in programs and projects, particularly in sectors that are technical and male dominated including water resource management.
 - xiii) **One-off interventions:** Single interventions are inadequate to deal with the complex nature of gender inequality and social inclusion. Facilitating changes in norms and beliefs that drive gender inequality and social exclusion requires multiple interventions at multiple levels.
 - xiv) **Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is inadequate:** At both the program and project level, the gathering and analysis of disaggregated data are frequently overlooked. This is compounded by a failure to develop indicators or plan for monitoring that reflects GESI considerations.

² Troell, Jessica and Yaari, Elizabeth. "Tapping our Potential: Women's Water Leadership in the Nile Basin" 2019, Policy Paper.

³ Earle, Anton and Bazilli, Susan. "A gendered critique of transboundary water management" 2013, Feminist Critique.

5. A Systematic Approach to Promote a Transformation within Gender and Social Inclusion

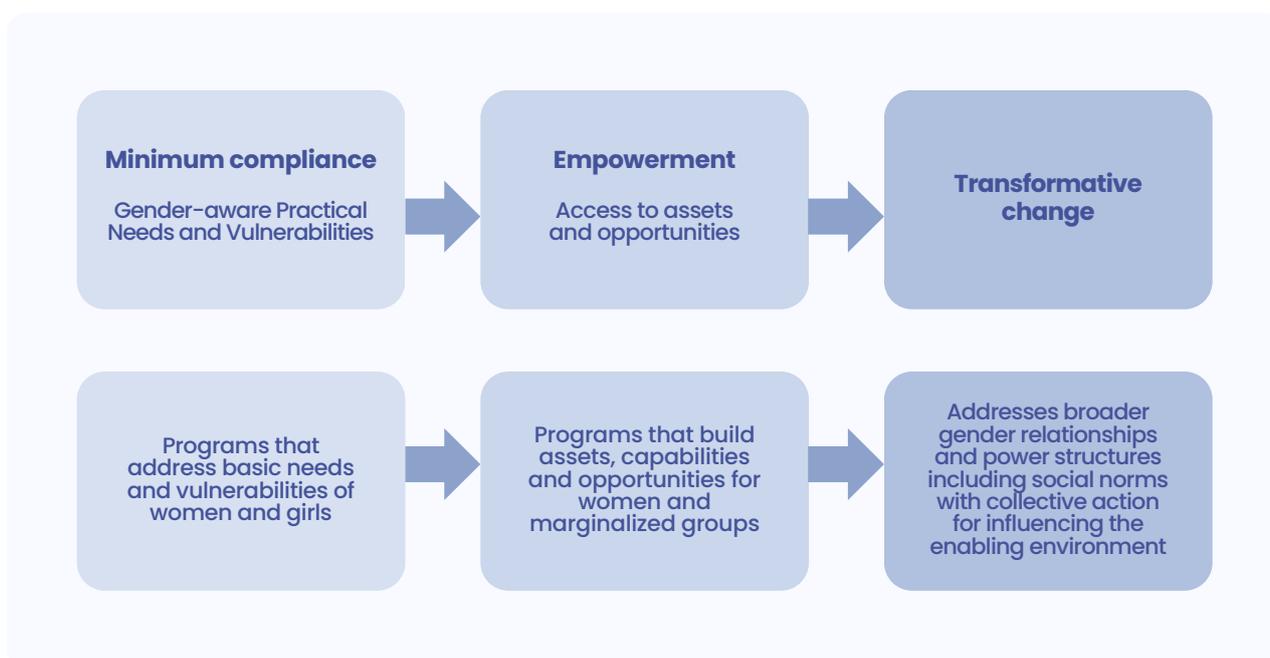
Worldwide, there is a growing recognition that being “gender aware” is insufficient.⁴

For significant sustainable change to happen, institutional and systemic transformations related to gender and power need to occur. Taking steps to foster a gender transformative approach enables deeper change at both the individual and societal levels by facilitating policy change supported by implementation mechanisms, such as budgeting or programming. A transformative approach moves away from treating the symptom of gender inequality and focuses instead on challenging structures that reinforce exclusion. It stems from a recognition that changing deep-seated patriarchal norms and values is not limited to communities and families. It also needs to be tackled within institutions and systems that often perpetuate gender inequalities. Successful gender-transformative approaches move beyond targeting the typical ministries such as Gender and Social Development to ensure the broadest sectoral reach including the Ministry of Finance and Water.

To do so requires tackling fundamental changes at all levels of society and across all sectors on an ongoing basis. As illustrated in the **diagram below**,⁵ it requires approaches and actions that move along the Gender and Social Inclusion Continuum. These approaches should range from minimum compliance on actions that address women’s practical and reproductive needs, to empowerment of women to enable them to access decision-making opportunities. They should culminate in transformative change where broader gender relationships and power structures are addressed through collective action.



A deeper investigation of multiple overlapping differences and inequities is needed while ensuring that all people regardless of sex, ethnicity, ability and other vulnerabilities can all derive benefits. It also requires moving away from one-off interventions and headcounts toward actions that demonstrate concrete changes in gender relationships and power structures. There is a need for collective engagement including implementing measures such as training and awareness raising to ensure that everyone buys into and engages with the merits of applying a gender and social inclusion lens throughout the project cycle or at all levels of an institution. Gender-transformative approaches need to be grounded in strong gender analysis and an understanding of local contexts. It therefore requires the application of a GESI lens to all of CIWA’s work while ensuring that all program staff and partners have a well-developed understanding of GESI and its applicability to the transboundary water management context.



⁴ “Gender Equality” International Development Research Center, April 2020.

⁵ Framework developed by Caroline Moser with Social Development for the FCDO-funded Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development (ICED) Facility.

6. CIWA's Transformative Approach and Actions

Adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to gender and social inclusion:

In keeping with the principles of a transformative approach, water resource management, sustainable development, and gender are interlinked and have to be addressed in an integrated and holistic manner.

Actions will be taken to ensure that GESI considerations are integrated throughout the project cycle and at all levels and sectors of the transboundary institutions that CIWA supports. Gender analysis will be systematically applied within the context of policy, program and project design and implementation.

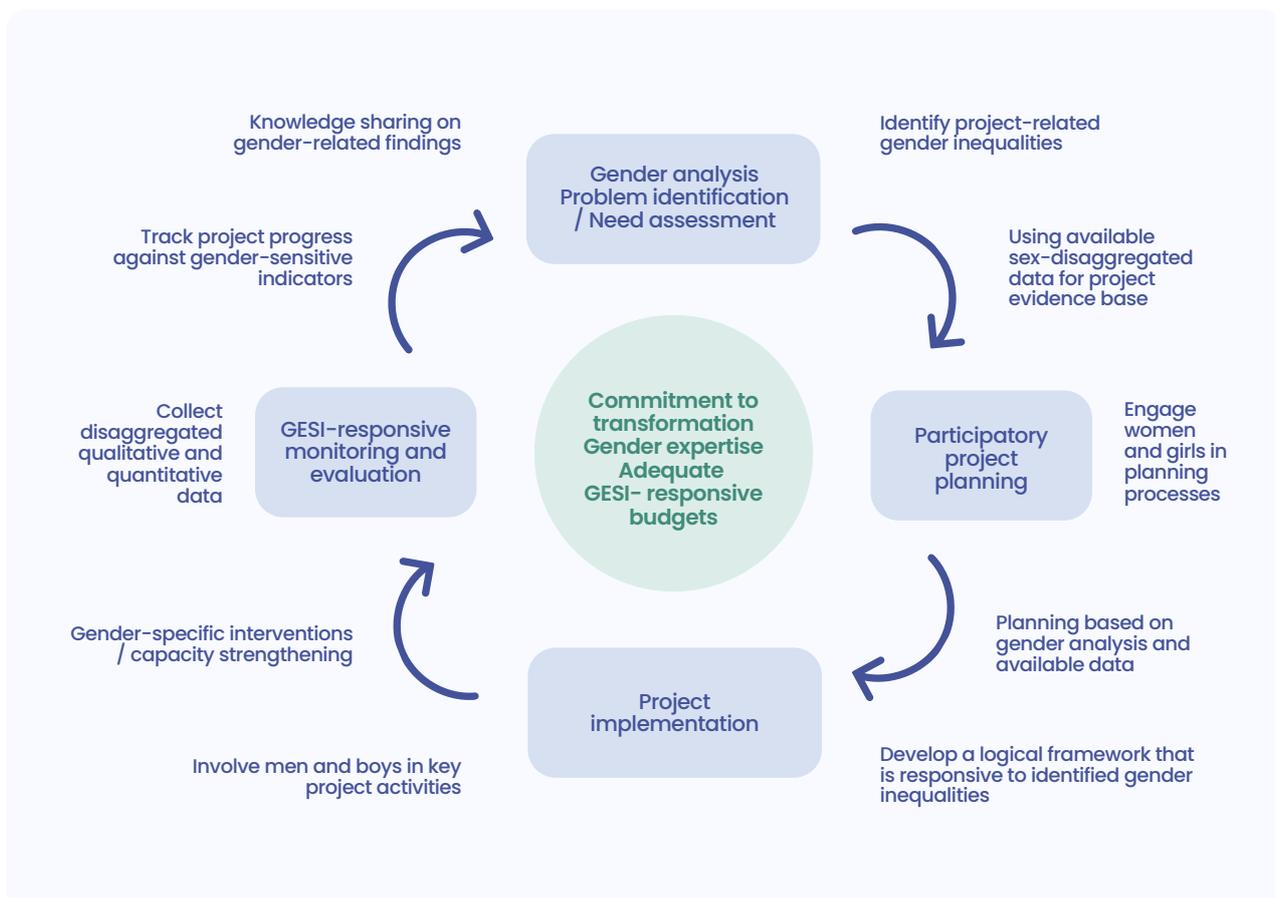
Actions will also be taken to facilitate outreach and coordination with CIWA partners or related international and local organizations that are undertaking activities that have the potential to complement or reinforce GESI actions taken through CIWA-funded programs.

Strengthen internal and partner capacity on gender and social inclusion:

Strengthening CIWA's capacity on gender and social inclusion is critical to ensuring a shared vision across the program and increased knowledge and capacity among CIWA staff, partners and external stakeholders about how and why the integration of GESI considerations is critical to the program's success.

Developing and delivering capacity building and coaching to staff and partners will be provided as a means of securing a shared understanding and ownership of the overarching framework for gender and social inclusion while fostering a commitment for everyone to take responsibility for their role in ensuring the delivery of CIWA's Gender and Social Inclusion agenda.

In addition to the delivery of broad-based capacity building, actions will include an analysis of which stakeholders within the wider program are able to affect change or play a championship role on gender equality and social inclusion followed by the provision of targeted capacity building.



6. CIWA's Transformative Approach and Actions (continued)

Bridge knowledge and data gaps:

Facilitating knowledge management and fostering a learning culture are critical to gathering best practices and lessons learned that can contribute to improving approaches to mainstreaming GESI considerations and to identify specific gender and social inclusion gaps that require targeted interventions. Collection and analysis of evidence across the program, including systematic collection of sex-, age-, and poverty-disaggregated data, will be a key activity as part of project preparation to foster improvements in the application of gender and social inclusion analysis both internally and with external partners and stakeholders.

Information on gender equality and social inclusion, including strategies, baseline studies, and the collection of qualitative and quantitative data will form part of the process to guide the development and implementation of gender-sensitive projects. The collection and analysis of data and other relevant evidence will also seek to identify actionable approaches to tackling systemic barriers to gender equality and social inclusion.

Actions will be taken to share and learn about gender and social inclusion issues of relevance to the transboundary context, including the collection and dissemination of good practices and success stories from project partners.

Ensure monitoring and evaluation is sensitive to gender and social inclusion:

For a transformative approach to be successful, it needs to incorporate monitoring and evaluation strategies and approaches that consider gender and social inclusion dimensions. At the front end, funding will be allocated and actions taken to ensure that disaggregated data about gender disparities and social exclusions are systematically collected and analyzed to ensure GESI considerations are integrated as part of project development, implementation, and monitoring of results.

Project indicators will also be required to include reference to gender and social inclusion. As part of the monitoring process, GESI analysis will be undertaken to determine if progress is being made on advancing gender and social inclusion within each project. Where necessary and possible, log frames will be revised to include sex disaggregated information, including targets and indicators. Mid-term and final evaluations of projects and programs will ensure that GESI considerations are effectively integrated.

At the programming level, additional indicators that incorporate gender and social inclusion will be developed, and GESI analysis will form part of the midterm review and final evaluation process.

Key Actions

Program Level

- Prepare a Gender and Social Inclusion Framework:** This Framework is being developed as a living document that can be adapted when new evidence or lessons learned on GESI and its relevance to transboundary water are identified. It will provide guidance and proposed actions to CIWA staff, development partners, and country partners about how to apply a GESI lens to CIWA's work taking into consideration lessons learned in addressing GESI within the transboundary water context.
- Adopt and promote a transformative approach:** CIWA will play a leadership role in promoting the adoption of a transformative approach through engagement with relevant stakeholders, establishment of strategic partnerships as well as advocating that key documents systematically promote GESI at all levels and across all sectors of the transboundary water environment where CIWA works. Case studies of successful transformative approaches will be developed to demonstrate the success factors and challenges of applying a transformative approach.
- Enhance GESI in M&E and knowledge management:** Additional indicators related to CIWA's work at the program level will be developed to demonstrate the program's commitment to ensuring that GESI is a central part of CIWA's work. Existing indicators will also be reviewed to identify opportunities to integrate GESI considerations. Collection and packaging of evidence on GESI and transboundary water will be shared with CIWA staff and partners through virtual platforms.
- Ensure sustained oversight of GESI interventions:** CIWA management will champion the integration of GESI into all of the program's work on an ongoing basis. This will include ensuring the allocation of sufficient financial and technical resources as part of the CIWA budgeting process to facilitate the integration of a GESI perspective at the programming and project level over the short, medium and longer term.
- GESI capacity building:** A capacity building program targeted to staff and partners will be developed and pilot tested before broad-based roll-out. Training will be two-fold: 1) An introduction of key concepts and issues to establish a common understanding of GESI's relevance within the transboundary context; 2) Training on how to apply GESI throughout the project cycle to enable staff to understand how to concretely apply GESI at the project level.
- Identify and/or develop GESI tools and resources:** User-friendly tools will be provided to staff and partners to assist them to better understand where, why, and how to apply a gender lens as part of their overall work. A stocktaking exercise of current tools will be undertaken to identify current resources before developing new material. Collaboration on the development of tools and resources will be explored.
- Unpack and apply social inclusion to transboundary water initiatives:** The CIWA program will promote and integrate the perspective that men and women are not homogeneous as part of its overall approach to identifying and working with relevant stakeholders at the institutional and project level. Project material and external communication will reinforce the need to unpack the multiple identities and characteristics of men and women involved in CIWA projects.

Project Level

- **Undertake a systematic review of project documents:** All of CIWA's project documents will be reviewed to ensure that GESI is integrated throughout the project cycle and across all sectors where the project will be operating. Technical expertise will be provided to ensure that project teams understand the rationale for proposed GESI approaches and language. Complementary coaching will help to secure buy-in for the adoption of GESI approaches and inclusion of GESI references.
- **Integrate a transformative approach into project planning and implementation:** Project planning and implementation will factor in the need to undertake multiple interventions across a diversity of sectors to facilitate transformative change. CIWA projects will apply the understanding that addressing gender inequality and social exclusion requires the engagement of multiple stakeholders across a range of sectors by allocating resources to enable stakeholder mapping and engagement with a diversity of stakeholders.
- **Incorporate GESI into M&E work:** As part of the process to develop a results frameworks and indicators for projects, GESI considerations will be systematically integrated. Where possible, disaggregated data will be collected and used to guide the design of projects and tracking of results. Case studies that document successes and challenges for projects applying a GESI lens will be prepared and disseminated to facilitate expanded learning on how to apply a transformative approach within projects.
- **Allocate financial and human resources for ongoing GESI support throughout the project cycle:** As part of the budgeting process for CIWA projects, funding will be allocated to achieve GESI objectives. Budgeting will also consider the need for GESI technical expertise to guide project design and implementation. Monitoring and evaluation exercises will incorporate GESI considerations.
- **GESI capacity building:** To facilitate a transformative approach, the capacity building program will be targeted to staff and partners working across multiple sectors and activities. Targeted training and coaching will be provided in cases where there is a need to address specific GESI challenges. To ensure that GESI learning is sustained, the program will plan and allocate the necessary resources to ensure regular refresher training for staff and partners.
- **Apply GESI tools and resources throughout the project cycle: planning, implementation and M&E:** GESI tools and resources will be shared with CIWA staff and partners to facilitate their application as part of the design, implementation and monitoring of the GESI dimensions of projects. Workshops that facilitate the direct application of tools to current project contexts will also be organized.
- **Undertake stakeholder mapping to identify vulnerabilities within target populations:** CIWA's approach to stakeholder engagement will identify and document the vulnerable populations of relevance to the specific country or regional context where a project is operating. Challenges faced by specific vulnerable populations will be identified including strategies to respond to these challenges.

7. Update Since 2021 Framework Launch

CIWA launched its Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Framework in 2021 as a living document to guide CIWA's operations into the future. Since then, CIWA has supported the development and implementation of multiple measures and actions to assist with the integration of GESI into the projects and institutions that it supports. Interventions range from the development of tools, capacity building, mainstreaming GESI considerations into project development and implementation, and the development of communications material.

In June 2023, CIWA also launched a special initiative, Male Champions for Women's Empowerment, to engage men to champion a favorable enabling environment for women so they can participate equitably within the male-dominated water sector. By promoting a holistic and integrated focus on GESI, all of these measures seek to collectively and holistically contribute to the achievement of a transformative approach within the transboundary water sector.

To ensure integration of social inclusion into the programs that it supports, CIWA is also seeking to ensure that its investments in transboundary water management result in project outcomes that benefit both women and men as well as girls and boys from a diversity of backgrounds including vulnerable populations. For more information on actions taken, please refer to Annex 2.

8. How to Engage on GESI with CIWA

In keeping with the promotion of a transformative approach, CIWA's efforts to address and promote gender and social inclusion will not be limited to engagement and targeting of its own staff, country partners, and development partners. Achieving a transformation in terms of overcoming gender inequality and social exclusion in the transboundary water context requires the establishment of, engagement with, a community of stakeholders who are committed to working together. Working collectively with diverse stakeholders offers the greatest potential to overcome some of the deeply-seated obstacles that sustain inequalities and exclude women and other vulnerable populations from playing a key role in improving in how transboundary water is managed. Anyone interested in advancing efforts to address gender and social inclusion within the transboundary water context can reach out to CIWA, either at the Program level (ciwa@worldbank.org), or through the citizen engagement mechanisms built into the different CIWA-funded projects.

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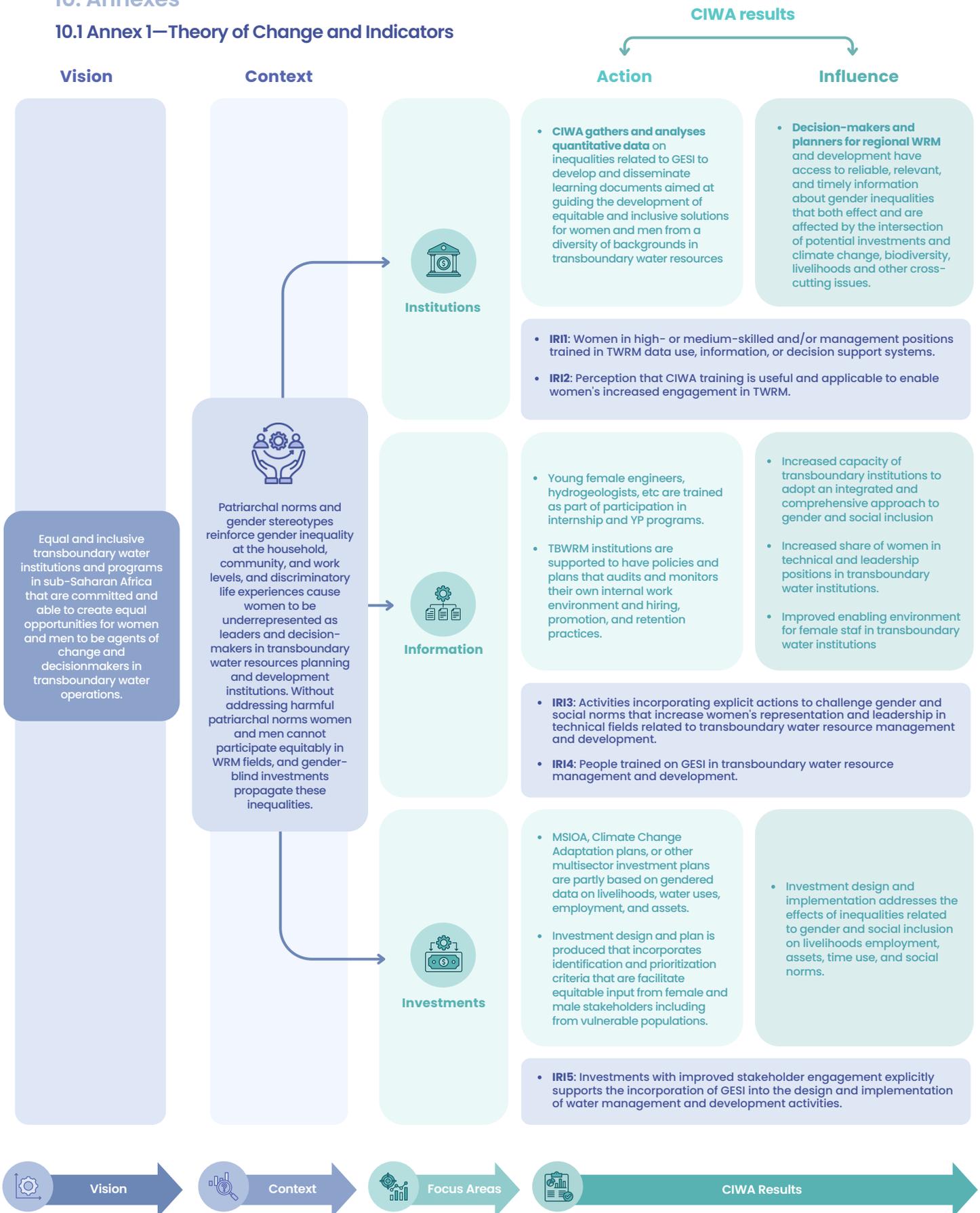
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10. Annexes

10.1 Annex 1—Theory of Change and Indicators



10.2. Annex 2—Update on results

Over the last two years, CIWA's Senior GESI Expert has developed and delivered online training on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion to CIWA staff and donors. As part of its commitment to provide technical support to implementing partners, CIWA has also supported the development and delivery of tailored training to three regional transboundary water institutions: the [Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program Coordination Unit \(NELSAP-CU\)](#), the [Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office \(ENTRO\)](#), and the [Lake Victoria Basin Commission \(LVBC\)](#). All of these organizations are implementing a key component of the [Nile Cooperation for Climate Resilience \(NCCR\)](#) project.

The training was delivered in two parts to ensure an in-depth understanding of how to mainstream GESI at the project and institutional level:

- **Part 1** sought to establish a foundational understanding of gender and social inclusion including the importance of effective engagement of men to counter the male domination that tends to exist within transboundary water institutions. It also provided an opportunity for each organization to review and revise its respective Gender Action Plans with a focus on identifying steps to make organizations more gender friendly to increase recruitment, retention, promotion, and participation of female staff.
- **Part 2** facilitated an understanding of how to mainstream GESI throughout the project cycle including critical measures such as the preparation of a budgeted Gender Action Plan, integration of GESI into project planning and implementation, and the development of a results framework that incorporates disaggregated quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Knowledge Management and Learning Lessons:

CIWA's Framework emphasizes the importance of facilitating knowledge management and fostering a learning culture as a means of gathering and sharing lessons learned that can contribute to improving approaches to mainstreaming GESI within the projects and institutions it supports.

A key tool for capturing lessons learned has been the preparation of a series of Learning Notes that reflect successful efforts to mainstream GESI into the planning of CIWA-funded projects:

- [Applying Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Lens to the Transboundary Water Context](#)
- [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Nile Basin Transboundary Water Resources Management and Development](#)
- [Ensuring Gender and Social Inclusion is Considered at the Project Concept Phase](#)

- The Learning Notes showcase actions taken by CIWA project teams to ensure the integration of a GESI lens for diverse CIWA-funded projects ranging from the [NCCR the Sustainable Groundwater Management in the Southern African Development Community \(SADC\) Member states project](#), the [Horn of Africa Groundwater for Resilience project](#), and the [Sahel Groundwater Initiative](#). To facilitate the uptake of lessons learned within CIWA and more broadly, CIWA has also worked with its communications team to facilitate the sharing of these Learning Notes. CIWA also prepared and disseminated a [series of blogs](#) and other [social media messaging](#) about its work on GESI.

In 2020, CIWA's Senior GESI Expert presented at a conference organized by the [Institute Delft for Water Education \(IHE\)](#) entitled "Engendering Transboundary Water Governance Feminist Perspectives on Water Conflict and Cooperation." The presentation focused on sharing insights from key stakeholders on the approach to, and effectiveness of, integrating a transformative approach to gender within the Nile Basin context. As a follow-up to the conference, CIWA was asked to prepare a paper that was published in a book, "[Gender Dynamics in Transboundary Water Governance Feminist Perspectives on Water Conflict and Cooperation](#)." The paper draws on interviews with key stakeholders who have worked on gender in the Nile Basin by collecting and analyzing their views on the strengths and weaknesses they have experienced in applying a transformative approach to gender equality in their work.

Applying a Social Inclusion Lens to Identify Vulnerable Populations:

CIWA's approach to social inclusion stems from the perspective that women and men are not homogeneous, and that it is important to identify additional barriers and vulnerabilities that can prevent stakeholders from participating and benefiting from transboundary water projects and programs. To facilitate the identification of specific vulnerabilities of stakeholders that will be involved in, or impacted by the projects it supports, CIWA developed a [Social Inclusion Tool Kit](#) targeted to sociologists. To ensure that members of project teams understand and support efforts to identify vulnerable populations, CIWA also developed a complementary [two-page Summary Document](#). Designed to provide guidance throughout the project cycle, the tool kit recommends targeted measures ranging from stakeholder mapping and engagement to collection of data to analyze the situation for specific vulnerable populations. The tool kit also seeks to prompt reflection on how these vulnerable populations could be adversely affected or unable to derive the full benefits of a CIWA-funded project. Overall, information on gender equality and social inclusion, including the collection of qualitative and quantitative data on gender and social inclusion has formed part of the process to guide the development and implementation of CIWA-funded projects and to identify actionable approaches to tackling systemic barriers to gender equality and social inclusion.

GESI Technical Support to CIWA Partners (NELSAP-CU and ENTRO)

CIWA has provided direct support to CIWA partners to mainstream gender as another way to foster a transformative approach to tackling gender inequality and social inclusion. In addition to providing training on gender and social inclusion, NELSAP-CU, ENTRO and LVBC were coached on how to develop a costed Gender Action Plan (GAP). The GAP will serve as a cornerstone to guide the efforts of each organization to render the internal work environment more gender-responsive and family friendly thereby increasing the degree and level of participation of women as decision makers and leaders within these institutions. CIWA also supported the development of a GESI Mainstreaming Strategy for SADC's Groundwater Management Institute (SADC-GMI) which has been implemented since late 2021.

Monitoring and Evaluation Work

Building upon the findings from the baseline study that was conducted in 2020, CIWA is continuing to monitor and assess its performance in terms of mainstreaming GESI into the programs and institutions that it supports. In 2022, CIWA commissioned an external mid-term evaluation of its program, which favorably assessed CIWA's efforts to integrate GESI into its programming. CIWA has developed a new GESI indicator and has also been providing input into the development of a case study being prepared by the Africa Regional Climate and Nature Programme ARCAN Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Unit.

Communications and Awareness Raising

Blogs

- [Glass half-full: an equal share for women in decisions on 60% of the world's freshwater](#): This blog was published for International Women's Day 2024 with the theme of investing in women to speed up gender equality.
- [CIWA launches Male Champions for women's empowerment initiative to transform gender inequalities in transboundary waters](#): This blog gives an overview on the genesis of the CIWA initiative launched in 2023: the Male Champions for Women's Empowerment.
- [Leaving no one behind, reflections on CIWA's integration of a social inclusion perspective](#): This blog includes reflections on efforts to integrate a social inclusion lens into CIWA's work by citing concrete examples.
- [Advancing towards a more gender equal world in transboundary water management in Sub-Saharan Africa](#): This blog serves as a reflection of the experience of the GESI expert providing support to CIWA programs and projects.
- [On the International Day of Rural Women, spotlighting water sector projects that enhance African women's participation and professional development](#): CIWA's GESI expert shares her insider's perspective on designing and implementing GESI principles and tools within the transboundary water resources management context.

Videos

- [Ethiopia Bisrat: A Water Resources Engineer Story](#): Ethiopia Bisrat, Water Resources Engineer from Ethiopia shares her experience as an ENTRO participant, how it built her capacity and helped define her career path.
- [Woman Engineer Paves the Way for Groundwater Access in Chongwe district, Zambia](#): Eng. Beatrice Kanyamuna-Pole, Senior Hydrogeologist, in the Department of Water Resource Development, Zambia shares her journey as a woman contributing to the water sector.
- [Young Women take Charge of Managing Africa's Water Resources](#): Amna Omer used to be the Program Coordinator of Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO), a CIWA-funded internship program. She believes that this Internship program is providing a unique opportunity and exposure to young people.
- [SIWI Takeaway Two: Gender and Social Inclusion](#): Watch our takeaway series video on the CIWA participation to World Water Week 2022 in Stockholm, Sweden.
- [International Woman Day 2022: Ellen Hagerman gives us an overview of CIWA's engagements towards GESI](#): In advancing more elevated professional roles for women in the transboundary water field today, senior gender specialist Ellen Hagerman points to the importance of positioning women as leaders.

Podcast

- [Across the Pond podcast: conversation with Reginalda Joseph](#): Reginalda Joseph, Hydrogeologist, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, Namibia shares her journey as a woman in the water sector and explains how women can break the barriers. Listen to CIWA's first exciting podcast.

CIWA's Male Champion's For Women's Empowerment

The CIWA GESI Framework committed to actions aimed at identifying which stakeholders within the wider program can effect changes to address negative social norms or play a championship role in encouraging women's active participation at the institutional and project level. In June 2023, CIWA launched a pilot initiative entitled the Male Champion Forum which has since been renamed Male Champions for Women's Empowerment. This initiative has recruited a small group of Male Champions to take actions individually and collectively that seek to reduce gender inequalities. Aside from taking actions within their own work environments, the Male Champions have participated in regular virtual meetings and a one-day capacity building and consultation session and have provided input into the preparation of a draft Action Plan and web site. For more information on Male Champions for Women's Empowerment, please go to the web site link [here](#).

As the Forum moves out of the pilot phase, it is planning an in-person meeting in 2024 to review its Action Plan and to showcase its work more broadly. CIWA is also looking to recruit new Male Champions throughout the regions of sub-Saharan Africa where CIWA operates. If you are interested in becoming a Male Champion, please follow [the link to apply](#).

10.3 Annex 3 – GESI focused “View from the Field” ‘case studies

Abibata Ouattara: Access to water for women-led farming is a win for communities



Abibata Ouattara, water security specialist, Burkina Faso. ©Abibata Ouattara

Abibata Ouattara of Burkina Faso firmly believes in the value of water and women—and in their intersection.



“With water, we have health. With water, we have the financial resources. With water, we have access to better food.”

Ouattara is a water security specialist for Winrock International, a global nonprofit organization based in the United States that has projects in such areas as water security, climate change, agriculture, and resilience. She recently worked on a CIWA project to uncover the challenges of access to groundwater for irrigation by farmers in the Sahel, focusing on the constraints that women in Burkina Faso face when deploying groundwater irrigation.

She says that women encounter several major obstacles to groundwater irrigation. First, there is a lack of access to land because of socio-cultural constraints that discourage women’s land ownership. Moreover, women are reluctant to invest in wells and boreholes if they do not have secure access to land. Second, there is limited access to irrigation technologies, starting with lack of information about technology and related issues. Third, there is lack of access to financial resources to buy equipment and other agricultural infrastructure.

Ouattara suggests that to overcome the lack of access to land, the government should reserve a percentage of land developed in irrigation projects for women. She also emphasizes the importance of adapting certain infrastructure to meet the needs of women, such as the design of more user-friendly means of excavation. Finally, she stresses the necessity for governments to improve women’s access to grants and loans for irrigation.

Ouattara is a quality, safety, and environmental engineer who specializes in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in humanitarian contexts. She also obtained an executive master’s degree in development policy and practice, with a focus on how development projects can be adapted to unstable contexts such as Burkina Faso.

Her interest in humanitarian assistance led her to found a local association to help vulnerable people, especially women and children, in need.



“There is nothing more exhilarating than serving others and, as a woman, it is always with a joyful heart that one supports other women,” says Ouattara. “In fact, there is no greater joy than that of dedicating oneself to others.”



Ouattara working in the field, Burkina Faso. ©Abibata Ouattara

Asia Namusoke: Making a difference for her Ugandan community and the climate



Asia Namusoke at work on her farm in Kampala, Uganda. ©PINA

The Ugandan village of Ndeje, north of Kampala, is poor, has many people living with HIV/AIDS, and lacks the resources for climate-smart agriculture to sustain livelihoods and protect the environment.

Asia Mbajja Namusoke aims to change that.⁵⁸

With support from CIWA, the Nile Basin Discourse trained Namusoke and other women as Climate Change Resilience Champions two years ago. She has put her knowledge to good use ever since, developing programs to inspire and provide a lifeline to others in Ndeje and beyond.

For example, the training taught her the importance of planting trees, flowers, spices, and vegetables that are climate resilient.

“Light came into darkness” during the training, Namusoke says. “I realized that there were small actions one could do to make a difference.”

“The training to work with communities to promote sustainable agriculture was really inspiring,” says Namusoke, who also is founder of the People in Need Agency (PINA), a non-profit organization that helps HIV-positive women and youth play a key role in improving their lives and communities.

Her projects are especially empowering to women in her community, many of whom have faced gender-based violence (GBV) and are HIV-positive.

To address challenges faced by women and others, Namusoke explains, “I set up a demonstration income-generating and environment-friendly project comprising urban vegetables, rabbit-rearing, beekeeping, a waste recycling center, and a black soldier fly rearing operation for alternative animal protein and high-value crop fertilizer.” The larvae of black soldier fly insects can convert organic waste into high-quality nutrients for pet food, fish, and poultry feed and even soil fertilizer.

Twenty-eight families have now created their own vegetable gardens, 14 families are rearing rabbits, 11 are growing maggots, and 10 have set up beehive apiaries in their yards.

The beauty of Namusoke’s projects is that they have a range of benefits from food security to climate change mitigation and better health outcomes.



“We work under the principle that the Sustainable Development Goals are integrated—they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.”

⁵⁸ <https://www.ciwaprogram.org/blog/green-homes-for-sustainable-development-creating-climate-change-resilience-in-slum-communities-of-kampala-uganda/>

A woman who makes honey from her beehives, for example, can sell the product in the local market and generate income. “This person can then keep her clinic appointment to obtain life-saving medicine because now she can afford transportation to the clinic,” Namusoke says.

“We work under the principle that the Sustainable Development Goals are integrated—they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.”

For example, she says, “if you have food in the compound that was grown using sustainable principles, you can achieve the climate aspect of it and the food security aspect of it, too.”



“The innovation is designed to strike a balance between therapeutic and profitable goals, which are the two key pillars of our income-generating project,” she says. “Community members are engaged as waste collectors, project staff, [and] in marketing and sales, and are assisted to start project-related businesses in their homes and communities.

“This allows them to occupy their time, earn a living, learn skills, and also help with climate and environmental protection efforts,” she says.

Her community, like many throughout Africa, is ill-equipped to cope with climate shocks.

“When it rains, sometimes it floods, and then drought may occur,” she says. “We don’t have the capacity or resources to irrigate the fields,” which leaves residents vulnerable to variable and unpredictable rainfall.

At the CIWA-supported training, Namusoke learned that each community is required to have a water management committee.

She met with village leaders and convinced them to form such a committee, and it is now educating residents to stop throwing garbage into drainage systems and to remove dirty bottles and other waste from water points to prevent contamination. The committee has also placed garbage collection bins throughout the community and is encouraging people to recycle.

Namusoke hopes one day to establish regional climate change training centers.



Asia Namusoke on her farm in Kampala, Uganda. ©PINA



“There is so much to learn,” Namusoke says. “Then you can really transform your community.” She adds, “Climate change resilience begins at home.”

Matlhogonolo Mmese: An aspiring hydrogeologist in Botswana

When Matlhogonolo Mmese of Gaborone, Botswana was age 16, she thought long and hard about which career to choose and decided to become a doctor.

But soon after, she realized that she didn't have a passion for medicine. She thought some more and chose hydrogeology. That decision stuck.

Today, Mmese, 25, is pursuing a master's degree in hydrogeology at the University of Botswana.



“In our country, most of the water that we drink is a little bit salty,” she says. “I want to help provide not just clean water but water that tastes good.”

Salty water does not plague the capital city of Gaborone. But Mmese gained first-hand knowledge about the status of water growing up in different towns in Botswana, because her mother, now retired as an immigration officer, was posted throughout the country.

Mmese received her undergraduate degree in applied geophysics from the University of Botswana.

Now, as a graduate student, she has won a Young Professionals scholarship of approximately US\$12,000 from SADC GMI to pursue fieldwork for her thesis. The scholarship will help pay for tuition and expenses during her field study, especially for data collection and processing.

“Matlhogonolo Mmese is a talented and motivated young female geoscientist with limited financial resources aspiring to be a professional hydrogeologist,” professors Rubeni Ranganai of the University of Botswana and Modreck Gomo of the University of the Free State wrote in her scholarship application.

Mmese's thesis is focused on the factors that control the occurrence of groundwater on the Botswana side of the Khakhea-Bray Transboundary Aquifer, which is shared by Botswana and South Africa. She plans to develop a conceptual model of the TBA using geophysical and hydrogeological data, with the ultimate goal of better management of groundwater resources.

As one of only two women among seven students in her master's degree program, Mmese is aware of the challenges faced by women in the male-dominated field.

“There is a need for you to prove that you belong there,” she says. “You need to put in more work to prove that you are good at your job.”

Women have one advantage, she says. “Women are responsible. So, men tend to trust women. That's the upside.”



Matlhogonolo Mmese during her thesis' fieldwork in Botswana.
©Matlhogonolo Mmese

Male Champion Forum: Who has the power to make decisions?"



"Who has the power to make decisions?"

Everyone in attendance knew the answer —men.

"Women are seen as being in the rear seat," said Donald Kasongi, a researcher and policy analyst from Tanzania who has worked for years to mainstream gender in transboundary water resources management, including for eight years as the Secretary General of the CIWA-supported Nile Basin Discourse.

Kasongi was participating in the Male Champions for Women's Empowerment workshop in June 2023, which was organized by CIWA as part of its work to bring a transformative gender lens to water resources management. The participants were chosen for their commitment to, and experience with, promoting gender equality.

CIWA has designed a pilot program to foster a cadre of men to spur changes in social norms and values on gender in transboundary water management and development, a sector that is dominated by men and strongly influenced by patriarchal norms and values.

CIWA believes that engaging men is key to transformative change and that working directly with pioneering men can help overcome male resistance to women having equal roles.

"The issue is representation" of women in the water sector, says Assefa Gudina, ENTRO's gender focal point.

Dereje Gebremichael agrees. "The water sector is male dominated. It starts from the attitude of (male) leadership in RBOs," says Gebremichael, a senior grants acquisition and planning officer for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-church Aid Commission who formerly worked for Ethiopia's Ministry of Water and Energy.

In the context of patriarchal cultural and social norms, women are stereotyped as being only water users rather than also as people who should have autonomy to make decisions about water use and management.

CIWA's Male Champion Forum has the following goals:

- Increase awareness about the critical role that men can play in championing gender equality in the transboundary water context.
- Identify actions and initiatives that Male Champions can take to advance gender equality in transboundary water institutions.
- Facilitate opportunities for Male Champions to take individual and collective action to promote opportunities for women to play a greater role in decision making in transboundary water institutions.
- Improve representation of women in decision making.

Along with the issue of representation, Gudina says, is the need for more women to enter education programs in water resources management. He also says that there should be a stronger professional transboundary water network for women to advance their careers.

The men shared their reasons for joining the Male Champions for Women's Empowerment.

Gebremichael candidly acknowledges that the promotion of gender equality has some benefits for men.

"I want to engage in the CIWA Male Champions for Women's Empowerment to empower women in the work environment. They will help me share the work and projects."

And, he says, gender equality strengthens communities. "The community always gives men all the responsibilities in life," he says. "If I am a male champion working for gender justice, it makes the community a more powerful one. So, let's empower men to work toward gender equality."

Daniel Asrat, a monitoring and evaluation consultant in the Ethiopian Ministry of Water and Energy, says, "As a Male Champion, I represent my three daughters. I represent my wife. I represent my sisters, and I represent my female neighbors."

The participants in the workshop agreed on next steps, including holding monthly meetings, developing a plan of action for the initiative, launching a social media platform, and working to expand the network.



CIWA Male Champions who participated to the pilot workshop in June 2023. ©CIWA

The Nile Basin's Pioneering Approach to GESI

The Nile Basin is one of the most challenging places in the world to advance gender equality. Patriarchal beliefs, including stereotypes that women can't understand technical issues, and male resistance to sharing power often give women little voice in decision-making processes about water resources, even though water is critical to their livelihoods and families.

Women need to work together "to make decisions about how much water is needed, where to get the water, and how to organize themselves to extract water from a riverbed," says Donald Kasongi, former secretary-general and now chair of the Nile Basin Discourse's (NBD) Tanzanian chapter, which has been working with CIWA to transform gender relations in water resources management across the basin.

CIWA's GESI Framework recognizes that most approaches to addressing gender inequality, such as counting the number of women at meetings to demonstrate results, are inadequate to make lasting progress toward equality. Its GESI approach is about shifting mindsets and taking a holistic approach by addressing gender norms and roles; power and decision-making; access to, and control over, resources; and institutional barriers to women's full participation.

Kasongi is doing just that in the Nile Basin.

While working on gender issues for 15 years, Kasongi says, he finds himself "digging deeper and deeper to understand social norms. It's not about how many women are in the room. It's about making sure that women are agents of themselves."

He emphasizes that a one-size-fits-all approach to GESI won't work in such a diverse region. While some eastern and central Nile countries are more open to reconsidering patriarchal norms and values, in countries where women are seen as property of the male heads of households, a different approach is required.

In those countries, NBD, with support from CIWA, works with traditional male leaders to try to instill in them an appreciation of women's contributions to bringing water home to their families and the importance of including them in decisions about managing community water resources. These leaders in turn talk with male heads of households to encourage the same understanding and acceptance of women's water-related roles and the need to involve them in water resource decision-making. NBD also engages influential women from colleges, universities, and the news media to help shift community norms and attitudes.

Kasongi says:



"They are on the frontlines of their communities and know what's possible, what's not possible, and what are acceptable strategies"



© NBD - Women Training on Green Jobs and enterprise, Uganda, August 2021

Training the next generation of groundwater specialists in the Sahel

As climate change diminishes the availability of surface water in Africa, groundwater has emerged as a vital untapped resource. But, in the Sahel, a global hotspot for climate change and one of the poorest regions in the world, limited knowledge about groundwater resources hampers efforts to develop strategies to cope with water scarcity. Nor are there enough hydrogeologists trained in the sustainable management of this resource.

CIWA is playing a pivotal role by convening stakeholders around the goal of increasing the cadre of Sahelian groundwater specialists and improving their skill level. It supported a weeklong roundtable discussion in March 2022 in Nouakchott, Mauritania, which brought together academics responsible for training groundwater specialists in six countries to identify the main gaps in training and forge solutions.

The countries—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal—made a potentially transformative decision to both improve the quality of undergraduate training to retain students interested in groundwater studies and to create a common master's degree program in hydrogeology. Because many Sahelians pursuing careers in groundwater must attend universities abroad to obtain advanced degrees and may remain overseas to work, a homegrown master's degree program could reverse that trend and build up regional expertise.

"This roundtable made it possible to deepen the discussions, share experiences from each country, fill in the gaps, and find solutions," said Dr. Seynabou Cisse Faye, a senior hydrogeologist and associate professor who is responsible for hydrogeology training in the Department of Geology at the Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar in Senegal.

The challenge of increasing the number of women in the geology department drew Dr. Faye to the field of groundwater. "Geology was not a very attractive subject for women, and there was practically no enthusiasm for training women," she recalls.



"I said to myself, 'Why are there not enough women?' That is what steered me into the field,"

says Dr. Faye, whose academic research topics include the vulnerability and pollution of aquifer systems in urban, mining, and agricultural areas and the contribution of isotopic tools to the study of pollution. She eventually rose to become head of the geology department from 2017 to 2021 and now leads the master's program in hydrogeology. She is also the scientific manager of the department's hydrochemistry laboratory.

Dr. Faye saw first-hand how hard it has been to recruit students interested in becoming groundwater specialists at her university. "Our big problem right now is training," she says.

Because of limited university resources, about five times as many students apply to the hydrogeology program as can be enrolled—far less than is necessary to meet the region's groundwater resource management needs. And, as became evident at the roundtable, the quality of training opportunities across the Sahel is spotty, leaving some students unable to train in the field of earth sciences and thus acquire basic geology skills or obtain internships or jobs

Exploring these shared challenges and opportunities across the six countries helped build trust and cooperation. "We share certain basins, the climate, socio-economic contexts, and the unavailability of water resources," Dr. Faye says. "It was in our interest to pool our resources and create a unifying program" that will allow universities to exchange students and skills which can be beneficial for all countries."

She said that CIWA can continue playing "a decisive role in facilitating meetings between training institutions in the field of water resources in different countries, creating frameworks for reflection to improve knowledge, identifying shortcomings, and trying to find solutions together."

Roundtable attendees were enthused about the proposed master's degree program, expected to take three years to develop and implement, to tap into the region's valuable groundwater resources. "It is an extraordinary idea," she says. "It will be something great, really fantastic."



©Jorge Trevino / CIWA - View of the Chari River from the LCBC building, February 2022

