



# APPLYING A GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION LENS TO THE TRANSBOUNDARY WATER CONTEXT

Woman carrying jugs of drinking water, Liberia. ©himarkley/ iStock

LEARNING NOTE ONE

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## A. INTRODUCTION

**S**ocial sustainability is about expanding opportunities for all people today and tomorrow. In the past, the emphasis was on economic sustainability, and then on environmental sustainability, with increasing concerns over climate change and biodiversity loss. But with a growing awareness of the challenges of fragility, persistent inequality, and racial discrimination, social sustainability has been recognized as central to growth and poverty reduction. Sivaraman, A. Five Things You Need to Know About Social Sustainability and Inclusion, World Bank Blog, September 2, 2020

Awareness is increasing of how different aspects of men and women's identities intersect to confer vulnerability or influence their advantages (or lack of) in life. Disadvantaged groups can be discriminated against on the basis of a number of different identities ranging from ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status, or where they live. Disadvantages due to group identities frequently lead to lower outcomes in terms of income, human capital endowments, access to employment and services as well as limiting access to decision making.<sup>1</sup>

Exclusion can also trigger social tensions which can result in violence and conflict leading to further long-term social and economic costs.<sup>2</sup> At the individual level, the economic costs of social exclusion are frequently measured by wage loss, lifetime earnings gaps, poorer education, and employment outcomes. At the national level, the negative impacts tend to be estimated by calculating losses in gross domestic product (GDP) and human capital wealth.<sup>3</sup>

Who is excluded, why they are excluded and the commensurate impacts of the exclusion is heavily influenced by context and can therefore manifest differently at the local, national, regional or institutional level. Exclusion can be connected to a diversity of issues ranging from discriminatory legal or institutional systems and structures, lack of access to land or other resources, discrimination in labour markets as well as stigmatizing attitudes, beliefs, or perceptions. Oversimplifying gender issues or overlooking people's multiple identities can lead to the application of a simplistic and homogeneous approach to identifying the drivers and potential solutions to overcoming gender-based inequalities in a project or program.

<sup>1</sup> World Bank (2013a): Inclusion Matters – The Foundation for Shared Prosperity. Washington DC: World Bank.

<sup>2</sup> Khan, S. et al. Social Exclusion Topic Guide, Governance, Social Development, Humanitarian Conflict (GSDRC), DFID Crown Copyright 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Social Inclusion, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/social-inclusion>

The Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA) is a World Bank program that supports riparian governments in Sub-Saharan Africa to fuel sustainable, inclusive, climate-resilient growth by addressing constraints to cooperative management and development of transboundary waters. The World Bank positions social inclusion as creating opportunities for all people and addressing deep-rooted systemic inequalities.<sup>4</sup> In keeping with the Bank's approach to social inclusion, CIWA is committed to undertaking a Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) analysis as part of the development and implementation of all of the projects and programs that it funds. In particular, CIWA recognizes the importance of determining at the preliminary phase whether men and women and the different social identities they occupy have the same access to and control of roles, power, and resources at the institutional, national and local level within the transboundary context. At the project development phase, CIWA seeks to ensure that GESI specialists are engaged to work together with CIWA project teams to gather an understanding of the positive and negative effects that can emerge as a results of differences related to gender, class, race, age, and other intersecting social identities. The overall objective of undertaking a GESI analysis is to ensure that CIWA's interventions have the most inclusive economic and social impact possible.

The **objective** of this Learning Note is to highlight some key lessons learned and best practices related to the integration of a social inclusion perspective into CIWA's work. This approach involves a more in-depth disaggregation of male and female target audiences to identify and determine actions that should be taken in relation to identified vulnerabilities. The Learning Note draws upon CIWA's own approach and experience undertaking GESI analysis by documenting specific steps that were taken at the project development phase of transboundary water projects.

## B. KEY STEPS

### I. Conducting a Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis or Assessment

A comprehensive Gender and Social Inclusion analysis provides information that recognizes how gender intersects with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability and/or other social identities while helping to understand the different forms of involvement, behaviour and activities that women and men have in economic, social, and legal structures.<sup>5</sup>

This type of analysis can also uncover differences between and among women and men, based on the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints, and power while ensuring that the different needs of women and men from a diversity of groups or identities are clearly identified and addressed at all stages of the project cycle. The World Bank has developed the Social Inclusion Assessment Tool which is a four-question methodology to help policy makers and development practitioners assess how social inclusion can be addressed in projects, programs, policies or in analysis. CIWA has developed a tool kit on social inclusion that includes measures to do social inclusion analysis throughout the project cycle and within the transboundary water institutional context.



Young girl using a standpipe. ©himarkley / iStock

### II. Conducting Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement to Identify Excluded Groups

A critical dimension when undertaking any GESI analysis is the need to conduct a stakeholder mapping to identify which disadvantaged groups should be considered because of their potential to have a positive or negative impact on achieving the objectives of the project or program. Once possible stakeholders have been identified who can shed light on the situation for disadvantaged groups, stakeholder engagement is the next step. Targeted interviews can be conducted with individuals and groups representing civil society, government, the private sector and other stakeholder organizations to gather information on specific disadvantaged groups. Where possible and appropriate, conducting community dialogues through the use of participatory methodologies can further enrich and cross validate the findings. These engagement processes can include collecting details on the vulnerabilities that disadvantaged groups face and possible actions that can be planned to mitigate negative impacts or leverage positive impacts. When developing the CIWA-funded Great Lakes Water Quality ASA (Advisory Services and Analytics), a stakeholder mapping was undertaken related to all of the relevant countries to the transboundary project using a web-based search to develop an extensive list of stakeholders representing relevant national and regional organizations in the region.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank. (2009). What is Inclusive Growth? Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>5</sup> C. Jost, N. Ferdous, T. D. Spicer, 2014. Gender and Inclusion Toolbox: Participatory Research in Climate Change and Agriculture. CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), CARE International and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). Copenhagen, Denmark.

The mapping focused on stakeholders who were connected directly and indirectly to the use of water and who would have knowledge about the situation of specific vulnerable groups who needed to access water from the Great Lakes region including challenges they may face. Qualitative interview guides were developed to enable team members to conduct interviews aimed at soliciting feedback on how disadvantaged groups of relevance to the project use the water and what measures need to be taken to ensure that particular disadvantaged groups are not excluded from deriving benefits from the project. Where necessary, information was also requested about the most effective strategies for engaging particular vulnerable groups such as time, location and use of appropriate methodologies.

The *Sustainable Groundwater Management Project* for SADC (Southern African Development Community) Member States Phase II is another CIWA-funded project that has prioritized Gender and Social Inclusion with the rationale that greater inclusion in water resources management can produce substantial economic, social, environmental, and financial benefits. GESI mainstreaming is seen as an indispensable tool for effective implementation of groundwater management interventions. Thus, a GESI Mainstreaming Strategy was developed for the SADC Groundwater Management Institute (SADC-GMI) with CIWA support to be implemented by 2025. The project has also undertaken a comprehensive stakeholder engagement study to assist in the implementation of the GESI Mainstreaming Strategy in the in the Khakhea-Bray TBA (Transboundary Water Association). The study included the identification of relevant stakeholder categories and their respective priorities.

Similarly, the CIWA-funded ASA *Untapping Resilience: Groundwater Management and Learning in the Horn of Africa's Borderlands*, benefited from a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) conducted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in March 2022 in the context of the Horn of Africa Groundwater for Resilience Program. The SEP identifies key stakeholders that are affected or are likely to be affected by the project and those who have an interest in the project but are not necessarily affected. The SEP also identifies the vulnerable or disadvantaged groups (VDG), delineates how the relevant stakeholders will be engaged over the different phases of the project cycle, provides a timeline for information disclosure and consultations and sets the main functions of the project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM).

The early identification of the stakeholders involved in the groundwater space in the Horn's borderlands, will contribute to the development objectives of the *Untapping Resilience: Groundwater Management and Learning in the Horn of Africa's Borderlands* ASA and to future CIWA-supported efforts in the use and management of groundwater sources.

### III. Collect Qualitative and Quantitative Data

Overall, it is important to collect relevant qualitative and quantitative data that can capture sources of gender inequality and social exclusion within a given context. Research should therefore seek to mainstream intersectional gender approaches in data collection and analysis to better understand how women and men within different social groups and geographical locations could be affected differently.

While noting challenges in collecting sex-disaggregated data in many African countries, efforts should nonetheless be taken to collect available data and information that is disaggregated by sex and other intersecting forms of discrimination, such as age, ethnicity and any other factors deemed of value to shedding light on intersectionality issues of relevance to the project. When conducting research for the Sahel Groundwater ASA, research was conducted to collect qualitative and quantitative data using a secondary web-based research approach to identify specific disadvantaged groups in the region and the vulnerabilities that could be relevant to the design of all three components of the project. Conducting a secondary literature review was complemented by interviews with key stakeholders working in the region.



The *Untapping Resilience: Groundwater Management and Learning in the Horn of Africa's Borderlands* provides another example that illustrates the importance of data collection related to gender and social inclusion. This ASA has the development objective to enhance the Horn of Africa's institutional capacity and knowledge base on sustainable groundwater management in the borderlands, and more specifically to document the lessons learned through the Horn of Africa Groundwater for Resilience MPA. Data collected through this ASA will be key to strengthening CIWA's work in on Gender and Social Inclusion in the Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV) space.



#### IV. Identify Gender Differences and the Underlying Causes of Gender Inequalities

Once data has been collected and analysed, it is important to identify and examine differences and sources of inequalities for women and men linked to a diversity of identities. Where inequalities between women and men of different groups are found, they should be analysed to establish both their causes and their effects. It is therefore critical to uncover the underlying causes of inequalities related to gender and other social identities and to consider options that have the potential to address the cause of the problem to be able to fully meet the different needs of women and men in relation to their multiple identities. Overlooking this step can lead to unanticipated consequences for policies, programmes, and projects which could limit the effects of the intervention or lead to further inequalities and discrimination. The Sahel Groundwater project included a focus on identifying the most effective strategies to be able to educate, train, and recruit local female hydrogeologists. The project specifically sought to identify barriers to accessing education in Science, Technology, Education and Mathematics (STEM) for females coming from multiple strata of society ranging from the poorest girls living in rural areas to middle-class women based in urban areas in the region.

The findings from the analysis were complemented by an assessment of the overall education challenges that need to be considered in developing a cadre of local female and male hydrogeologists. This assessment identified regional and national partners and champions for knowledge exchange and capacity building as well as local universities that could develop potentially transformative strategies to improve the quality of undergraduate training. The findings from this study were validated at the CIWA-supported 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 devise the most appropriate solutions. Some participants highlighted specific challenges for women. This included Dr. Seynabou Cisse Faye<sup>6</sup>, 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. As a local champion of female geologists, she recalled that: “Geology was really beyond the reach of women. And there was practically no enthusiasm for training women. “I said to myself, ‘Why are there not enough women?’ That is what steered me into the field.”

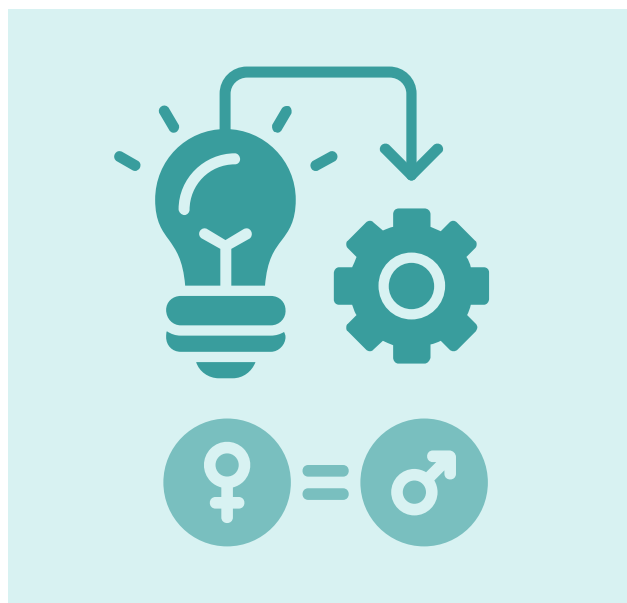


Farmer planting manioc, Malawi. ©Nikada / iStock

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Faye, whose academic focus is on pollution and groundwater quality as well as constraints on the availability of groundwater in urban settings. She eventually rose to become head of the department from 2017 to 2021 and now leads the graduate program in hydrogeology.

## V. Identify Targeted Interventions

Once causes of gender inequality and social exclusion have been documented, it is important to identify targeted interventions that can offset these gaps and inequalities. It is equally important to describe in the project proposal how the project will affect the everyday lives of women and men or specific groups of women and men, taking intersectional inequalities into account. As part of the process to consider irrigation options that both men and women are able to access, the Sahel Groundwater Initiative assessed how the gender division of labour related to agricultural production and patterns of decision making could affect women's ability to access irrigation technologies that were being considered for the groundwater project. The assessment looked at the barriers and constraints that women and men coming from a diversity of backgrounds face in participating in and benefiting equally from the project. This included identifying the type of agricultural production undertaken by men versus women, determining who has access to financial resources to be able to purchase possible irrigation technologies as well as gathering an understanding of who controls resources that are generated through the sale of any agricultural produce generated from the irrigation technology in the region.



Women carrying water to their village, Kenya. ©hadynyah / Getty Images

The activity's from the gender assessment identified that leaders of the plots should be women and farming systems should include women/mixed gender/youth cooperatives, women farmers who are heads of households, or single-family farmers. The creation of women's cooperatives was also put forward as a way to address disadvantages that women face in accessing land ownership, recognition by local authorities, financial backing, awareness and training, and agricultural support.

## VI. Planning for Implementation

Under-represented groups should ideally be involved in project implementation to ensure that their differing needs, preferences, and constraints are addressed as well as to ensure that their local knowledge and resilience strategies are accessed to develop more effective and equitable solutions. Consideration should therefore be given to which groups of women and which groups of men (based on their ethnicity, social status/economic class, and age) might be excluded based on these intersecting identities, and whose voices need to be empowered through targeted actions to have them represented based on their role in project-relevant activities.



For example, if a project identifies that a specific group of women, such as women from natural resource-dependent communities, are primarily responsible for safeguarding natural resources, then implementation measures should be planned to address the barriers that specifically hinder them from fully participating and benefiting from relevant interventions.<sup>8</sup>

CIWA prioritized Gender and Social Inclusion in Phase II of the Sustainable Groundwater Management project in SADC member states because the team determined that greater inclusion in water resources management was critical to producing substantial economic, social, environmental, and financial benefits as well as being able to foster effective implementation of groundwater management interventions. The project also aimed to promote the role of women and vulnerable populations as principal educators and leaders of home- and community-based water and sanitation practices. CIWA supported the development of a GESI Mainstreaming Strategy for SADC-GMI, which has been under implementation since later 2021. Some of the indicators for implementation of the GESI Strategy are mainstreamed in the subgrant Manual that will be used by the Member States to roll out implementation of the pilot infrastructure projects at community levels.

## CONCLUSION

CIWA recognizes that addressing social inclusion is a complicated matter that requires the adoption of a transformative approach as captured in CIWA's *Gender and Social Inclusion Framework*. While the more in-depth measures articulated above will be undertaken by Gender and Social Inclusion experts working on CIWA teams, concretely CIWA seeks to promote a broad-based understanding of social inclusion across all levels and sectors of the projects and transboundary institutions that it supports. Specific measures include offering training to project staff and partners on gender and social inclusion, developing tools and resources on social inclusion such as the recently developed social inclusion tool kit as well as communicating about our experience applying a social inclusion lens in information material such as this Learning Note.

### For Additional Information on the World Bank's Work on Social Inclusion

A new Global Practice called Social Sustainability and Inclusion (SSI) – formerly known as Social Development – reflects the importance the Bank places on addressing barriers to development and strengthening our focus on people who have been excluded from economic and social opportunities. The Social Sustainability and Inclusion Global Practice (GP), formerly known as the Social Development GP, has a new strategic direction that focuses on creating more inclusive societies, enhancing the empowerment of citizens, and fostering more resilient and peaceful communities.

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<sup>7</sup> CIVICUS Gender and Social Inclusion Tool Kit, <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/es/centro-de-medios/recursos/manuales/3764-the-gender-and-social-inclusion-toolkit>

<sup>8</sup> Sivaraman, A. Five Things You Need to Know About Social Sustainability and Inclusion, World Bank Blog, September 2, 2020 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/09/02/five-things-about-social-sustainability-and-inclusion>