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Women in Europe for a Common Future WECF

Water and Sanitation from a Gender Perspective at the World Water Forum – 4

Mexico City, 13-21 March 2006



Water and Sanitation



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About WECF

Women in Europe for a Common Future is a network of 100 organisations in 40 Countries and individuals working for sustainable development, protection of human health and environment and poverty reduction. Our international network consists of members and partners in Western and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

WECF supports partners with sustainable development projects in 25 countries:

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- Bosnia
- Bulgaria
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- Germany
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1 | Introduction

This report describes women's activities at the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico in 2006 in relation to the issues water, sanitation and gender, which were organised by the Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) network or in which WECF took an active part.

Equitable access to water and sanitation is vital to women, as in most cultures women are primarily responsible for the use and management of water resources and sanitation facilities as well as health care at the household level. Women's voices are often unheard, however, and they have little or no influence on crucial decisions about cost and technology of water or sanitation systems.

Lack of sanitation poses health hazards to women and girls, who may also suffer gastric disorders from postponing using the toilets to defecate. It is an impediment to girls' education, especially in schools where no provisions are made for girls. Having access to sanitation improves health and enables girls to attend school.

The potential contribution of women to water resources management should not be underestimated. Over the years, women have accumulated an impressive store of environmental wisdom, educating children in hygiene matters and understanding the impact of poor sanitation on health. Their contribution can vary from water police development, water engineering, maintenance and repairs, educating and awareness raising, reuse and hygiene and being in charge of the financial management of water and sanitation systems. Targeting women for training and capacity building is critical to the sustainability of water and sanitation initiatives, particularly in technical and managerial roles¹.

In many countries daily water collection is time consuming and a burden for women. It can expose women to the threat of violence. Having access to water close to the household reduces risks, as well as the

time spent fetching water, allowing time for other activities, including training, growing food and income generation.

WECF is a founding member of the Women for Water partnership (WfWfW). The WfWfW was created at the sustainable development summit in Johannesburg in 2002, to give women's grass roots organisations from around the world a common voice and advocacy platform. The WfWfW currently counts 20 member organisations, of which 8 are members of the WECF network, the other members are from Asia, Latin America and Africa.

WECF, WfWfW, WEDO, Gender Water Alliance and IUCN, among others, joined together in one common women's group, the so-called „Women's Coalition“ of the 4th World Water Forum. The Women's Coalition was an ad-hoc gathering of 36 prominent international women representing women's environmental groups and networks from around the world, especially created in order to ensure that the women's participation and gender perspectives were integrated into the 4th World Water Forum. This was the first time that such a large group of gender-sensitive organisations have been so active at a World Water Forum. The paragraphs present a selection of sessions held focusing on water and gender, organised by, among others, the Women's Coalition.

Chapter 2 describes the sessions organised by WECF during the 4th World Water Forum. Chapter 3 describes the preparatory women's network meeting, and chapter 4 gives an overview of the Local Actions presented during these two events. The report ends with the main conclusions drawn from the presentation held during the different sessions.

¹ From: Convenors general remarks of session FT3.12

2 | WECF sessions at the 4th World Water Forum

WECF organised 2 official sessions at the World Water Forum, which attracted more than 300 participants.

2.1 Access to Safe Water and Ecological Sanitation for Rural Areas, Good Practices in Latin America and Eastern Europe from a Gender Perspective (FT3.07)

Convened by:

Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), MAMA-86, Ukraine, Earth Forever Foundation, Bulgaria

Key note speakers:

Sascha Gabizon, Director Women in Europe for a Common Future, WECF and Member Steering Committee Women for Water WfWfW; Svetlana Slesarenok, Director MAMA-86, Ukraine; Peter Borkey, Environmental Department, OECD.

Objective:

To show with real examples and success cases how the problems of access to water and ecological sanitation can be addressed and solved focusing on a gender perspective. The examples were then discussed with experts from the financial sector and the government on how these good practices can be upscaled and policies in this respect adopted by international agencies and financial institutions.

Local Actions presented during this session:

Local Actions in Armenia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Romania and Mexico were presented; a description can be found in chapter 4.

This session was held at March 19 2006, and was held in the „water supply and sanitation for all“ framework theme. There was well balanced group of panellists, from EU, WHO, OECD, private banks, a gender expert, scientists and donor governments (see Annex). The session room with a capacity of 250 persons were full to its capacity due to the great response and interest of the attendants.

The session started with the identification of the problems that these organisations face:

- The OECD presented figures for the EECCA region of Caucasus and Central Asia. There is currently a very great gap between the needed infrastructure to reach the MDGs and the funding set aside in state budgets and coming from the private sector.
- The WHO presented the figures for the EECCA region on the health and water statistics. Even if centralised piped water is supplied, up to 60% of this water can contain too much microbiological pollution.
- The local actions illustrated that when there is no funding available, the only solution are low-cost alternatives that immediately improve severe health effects from water pollution and lack of hygienic sanitation. The low cost solutions which were presented were focusing on dry urine-diverting sanitation, allowing the reuse of nutrients.

After this introduction, representatives of women's organisations presented successful local actions in 5 countries, in which they managed to increase access to safe and affordable drinking water and much improved sanitation. The local actions were very well presented and showed both good practice as well as legal and financial barriers. The audience participated very actively in the debate. The following conclusions were drawn at the end of the session:

Conclusions:

- Locally produced, decentralised sanitation or prevention at source systems, e.g. ecological toilets and soil-filters, can reduce the necessary investment and maintenance costs and contributes to local economic development.
- A stronger involvement of civil society, women and minority groups in decision making on sanitation and waste-water systems is necessary to make a breakthrough.

- Financial solidarity pays off over time: the definition of a fair tariff structure, which allows on one hand cost recovery and on the other hand cross-subsidising for the poorest populations, should be done involving all stakeholders. For example, having low or no cost for the first cubic meter supplied, which is cross-subsidised by incremental water prices, discourages misuse and waste of water resources.

2.2. Managing Safe Drinking Water in Areas of armed conflict and ecological disaster from a Gender Perspectives: Learning from Local Actions in Central Asia and Latin America (FT5.17)

Convened by:

Women of Europe for a Common Future (WECF) and the Environment and Population Research Centre Bangladesh

Key note speakers:

Sascha Gabizon, Director Women in Europe WECF and Member Steering Committee Women for Water WfWfW; Bilqis Amin Hoque, Director EPRC, Bangladesh.

Objective:

This session was held at the 21st of March 2006 at the World Water forum in the framework theme „Risk Management“, presented successful local actions of women's organisations in 5 conflict and disaster regions. The local actions provide safe water and/or sanitation for poor families. The work of these women's organisations aims to reduce violence in conflict areas and suffering in disaster areas. This might help to prevent future conflicts.

Local actions presented during this session:

Local actions in Colombia, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh and Bolivia were presented; a description can be found in chapter 4.

The local actions were very well presented and the panel was international and from different sectors (see annex). The session room with a capacity 250 people was full due to the great interest. The audience participated actively in the debate, responding to challenges from the local actions and panellists. After the presentations key lessons were discussed:

Key Messages

- Considerable increases of donor funds to existing women's and civil society organisations are needed, both for capacity building and implementation.
- The Global Monitoring Report data should include data on quality of drinking water, access data alone gives a wrong message.

- Private banks like SNS want public participation as a guarantee for investment. Public participation should assure that funds are spent wisely and efficiently. It would be possible to provide a mixture of capital, from donor and private sources.
- Increasing the local capacity to operate water systems is a mean of strengthening social structures and democratisation.
- Use the help of local students to carry out analysis of the community's capacity and most of all having willingness to pay by home visits and focus interviews which establish expenses (not income).
- Not only sign, but also implement the operation contracts with the national government, which establish the invest-

- ments by the local authority and the state, as well as the subsidies for the water-CBOs.
- Women are the ones who manage the water in the communities, and therefore, as a women's organisation, they are more easily accepted to help to build up their community based water organisations.
- Women's organisations have a better negotiation position with armed groups, they trust women easily and believe that they will truly help the communities.
- The women that are helped to improve their quality of life will no longer migrate to the city slums.

3 | Women for Water Working Conference – financing women's projects

WECF and the secretariat of the Women for Water partnership (WfWfW) organised from the 12th to the 15th of March 2006 an International Working-conference in Mexico City. Women's organisations from all over the world got together in order to create sustainable solutions for access to safe and sufficient water and sanitation.

The following countries were present: Afghanistan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Colombia, Chile, Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands, Romania, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Lesotho and Zambia. The local actions presented by the women's organisations can be found in chapter 5.

In addition to the sharing of experiences (chapter 5), the working conference hosted a roundtable discussion on financing women's water projects.

3.1. Financing women's projects for access to water and sanitation - Roundtable Discussion

Moderator:

Sascha Gabizon, WECF director and Member of the Steering Committee of WfW.

Panel members:

D. Iskrevva, Earth Forever Foundation, Bulgaria; G. Ocampo, CONSAM Ltda, Colombia; L. Landveld, NVB Suriname; E. Anakhasyan, Armenian Women for Health and a Healthy Environment, Armenia; A. Tsvetkova, MAMA-86, Ukraine; M. Samwel, WECF, Romania; K. Hetzer, SNS-REAAL, the Netherlands.

During this roundtable discussion one crucial point in water improvement projects was being discussed: financing. The panel consisted of NGOs and a representative of a bank, the SNS water fund. Below a brief summary of the discussion can be found.

Is it true that there is no money from the government/private source to provide proper water and sanitation to the poorest communities in your countries?

In general, it is a problem that governmental investments in water and sanitation are mainly, if not totally, done in urban areas, and not in the poorer rural communities. The same is mentioned about World Bank funding in Armenia. If the government does have a national program for drinking water, like in the case of Ukraine, the local authorities lack the necessary capacities to plan, implement and managing action plans: „Sometimes money is received, but it is spent on planning how to spend it“. Ms. Amparo adds that the Columbian government has set its priorities on fighting the guerrillas, most state funds are spent on the war.

Should part of the money earned for water services in urban areas, be used to subsidise improvement of the water supply in rural areas?

Ms. Iskrevva describes that in Bulgaria the opposite takes place: „In villages, there are companies that provide services, and the

price is exactly the same as in the city, but the service is completely different, and during the dry season, there is no water.“ Ms. Ocampo explains that the context in Latin America is very different from Europe, since 70-80% of the people living in the cities are poor. Thus, general recommendations cannot be given.

It is proposed in Armenia that the first cubic meter of water should be for free, so even the very poor can have access to a small amount of water. Do you think this is a good idea?

In a country like Armenia this would be a good idea, according to Ms. Anakhasyan. In Suriname, the government allocated a significant portion of the total national budget to cover electricity and water in rural areas, but: „As NGOs, we do not consider this to be a good system, because it is also necessary to maintain fees even in poor, rural areas. We should sit down with the government to negotiate a scheme, so that everyone who can pay,

does pay, and also covers for those who cannot pay.“ In Colombia the costs of the first cubic meter is not charged for, but there is another problem: wasting water. There is enough water in most areas, thus raising awareness about saving water is a challenge.

During the discussion the issue of investments comes up again, and how the private sector could or should be involved in investing in water development in rural areas. There is no consensus at the table on whether the focus should be on an international level, a local level, and with or without involving NGOs or the private sector.

The representative of Suriname is giving an example of a Canadian company that has established itself in Suriname and that has a large budget for projects designated for its ‚social commitments‘. Another opportunity is for NGOs to present their arguments and to demonstrate concrete cases for investing in the private sector. Mr. Hetzer from the SNS Bank recom-

mends to start with something small and useful, to develop financial schemes, and to demonstrate successful examples. „In terms of loan opportunities, I have seen studies conducted by banks that indicate that women have a good record in paying back loans. Perhaps you need to demonstrate that the investment would be safe, and perhaps you can obtain a lower interest rate. This means demonstrating that money can be recuperated, that projects will be successful.“

Mrs Gabizon closed the discussion with the following question:

Would your bank be willing to provide women’s organisations with a lower interest rate, say of 2 or 3%, instead of 5%, since women’s organizations have a better pay-back record?

Mr. Hetzer:

„I would have to discuss this, but I think that should be possible.“

4 | Presentations of local women’s actions for access to water and sanitation

Water-related problems and challenges are global, but solutions for them may be implemented at the local level. A local action is defined here as any activity or group of activists focused on solving a problem that has been identified and faced by a local interest group when managing its water resources or services.

A local action is not necessarily a „project“. Rather, it may include a variety of

interconnected activities aimed at addressing a particular problem. This includes structural or non-structural actions having an impact upon local water management.

The main purpose of a local action is to seek sustainable development options for a community or region without compromising the preservation of local ecosystems. The scale of a local action will be the scale at which an effective solution

may be implemented, and depends on the magnitude of the problem to be solved.

The local actions described below were presented at the 4th World Water Forum and at the Water for Women Working Conference.

Armenia

Speaker

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WWF session

Safe water and Ecological sanitation for Rural Areas, Good Practices in Latin America and Eastern Europe from a Gender Perspective'

Although Armenia is rich in water and villages have their own springs or wells, water is not always available and mostly unsafe for drinking.

This project was implemented in the Armenian village Hyanist and is part of the 4-year water and sanitation program „Tapping Resources“, a project of WECF funded by the Netherlands government. In Hyanist village, the sanitary conditions are poor. People use pit latrines and sewage water goes directly into open drainage channels designed for irrigation, thus damaging health and the environment.

The project started in a school. The school building - like most rural schools - is in very poor condition and has pit- latrines. Preparatory work included investigation of the schoolchildren’s stool tests on the presence of helminthes, treatment of infected children and testing of drinking water wells on bacteria, nitrates, heavy metals and pesticides. Future activities are the rehabilitation of the irrigation system, explore possibilities for wastewater treatment, raise awareness about organic agriculture and installing dry-urine-diverting toilets.



Children in Hyanist, Armenia, involved in a water competition



Young and old share their knowledge - Organic farming in Armenia, training by AWHHE

Efforts also focussed on mobilising the community, the project team established a women’s committee to help with community activities and held awareness raising campaigns. Children educated through this project will be become aware of the link between safe drinking water issues and human health and about drinking water protection and treatment, and motivated to engage in sustainable development of the region.

Discussion with WECF experts, AWHHE and local authority



The old pit latrine of the school: outside, cold, smelling and far away



Bulgaria

Speaker

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WWF session

Safe water and Ecological sanitation for Rural Areas, Good Practices in Latin America and Eastern Europe from a Gender Perspective

According to UN databases, 99-100% of the Bulgaria has water and sanitation, however according to national statistics from last year, almost 40% of rural communities lack safe sanitation systems. In order to join the European Union, the government has promised to comply with high standards of water and sanitation. Cost-effective solutions are needed.

The project of Earth Forever takes place in a village where efforts are underway to improve access to safe water and sanitation, with assistance from Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF). Most households use pit latrines. Eco-san - dry urine diverting toilets - are a safe and affordable solution for villages without central sewage. Septic tanks have so far proven problematic because of the high cost of cleaning and bringing the contents to a waste water treatment plant. The project has build indoor dry urine diverting toilets connected with a bathroom, as well as 2 public ecological toilet buildings for the community house and the bus-stop at the central park. The project also trains school children on water quality and hygiene, and stakeholders on composting,



Indoor dry urine diverting toilet building for the citizen's center in Sulitsa village, Bulgaria

solid waste management and soil filters to clean waste water. Strategies are formulated for sustainable water and waste management.

The overall goal of this project is to encourage Bulgarian local authorities develop principles of multi-stakeholder and democratic strategic planning. This will contribute in making and implementing better choices for a sustainable management of water and waste streams in rural areas and provide environmental protection for village population and the natural environment.



Children testing water at the summer course organised by Earth Forever NGO



Master composter program, village Topoli



The new ecological public toilet at the bus stop

Indoor ecological toilet building for the school of Gozhuli



Indoor ecological toilet for the school of Bobrik



Ukraine

Speaker

Anna Tsvetkova, Water Coordinator, MAMA-86, Ukraine

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WWF session

Safe water and Ecological sanitation for Rural Areas, Good Practices in Latin America and Eastern Europe from a Gender Perspective

MAMA-86, a network of 17 women's organisations across Ukraine, is working with WECF on improving water supply in 3 villages in Ukraine. All villages have polluted drinking water with very high levels of nitrates, bacteria and in one case, fluoride. Financing for maintenance or extension of water supply systems is not budgeted by the state and the private sector is not interested in rural areas. MAMA-86, apart from carrying out awareness, raising and education campaigns, has developed an intermediate solution to reduce the nitrate pollution of drinking water well, caused by the use of pit latrines. MAMA-86 has built a new school toilet facility for Gozhuly village, using dry urine-diverting toilets. The toilets were built inside the school so the children do not need to go outside anymore, demonstrating that indoor ecosan toilets do not have to lead to bad smells or unhygienic situations. The toilets do neither use water for flushing, nor a sewage system, which makes them much cheaper. The faecals are composted and the urine reused as fertiliser. Besides that, common water wells have been cleaned. Educational work was focused on children: they received information regarding water wells, nitrate pollution and water in general.

Through this project, local representatives and citizen's groups also experienced what they can do for their own community by lobbying with higher authorities, for example, the children have tested nitrate levels in all water wells, mapped the results and presented the results to the local authorities. With help of other women's organisations they lobbied and got granted for new water pipes, a water pump and an electricity system for their community.

Stefan Deegner (TUHH) showing the pupils from a school in Ukraine how to use the Ecosan facilities properly



Romania

Speaker

Margriet Samwel, WECF water coordinator
(replacing Claudia Tulei, GeoSan Romania,
absent because of illness)

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WWF session

Safe water and Ecological sanitation for Rural
Areas, Good Practices in Latin America and
Eastern Europe from a Gender Perspective

Garla Mare is a poor village with 3500 citizens in the southern part of the country. This village has neither a gas supply nor a drinking water- and sewage system. Most of the wells are polluted and do not meet WHO health standards for drinking water. In fact, all tested public wells are polluted with nitrates, faecal bacteria and pesticides. The high levels of nitrates in the drinking water are caused by urine from latrines and, to a lesser extent, by fertilisers used in agriculture. Women are double affected by the unfavorable health situation, due to their responsibility for sick people, the high workload, and their vulnerability during pregnancy and lactating. Children's health and development suffers from unbalanced diets, in the years previous to the project, every year several babies were hospitalized with blue baby disease (metahaemoglobinemia) caused by too high nitrate levels.

The project focused on improving water quality, sanitation and addressed poverty. To integrate the local society, two NGOs were founded. A new generation of dry urine-diverting toilets, hand-washing basins and water filters have been installed in elementary school. The ecosan toilets are cheap, clean, do not pollute groundwater and produce an excellent fertiliser. Now, the organisation uses urine as fertiliser, in particular for corn and paprika. In 2006 one more public toilet



School children testing nitrates with Anna Samwel, WECF

using the urine diversion system, was built for the town hall, as well as 5 toilets for private households. Since the project started, no more cases of blue baby disease have occurred in the village, contrarily to neighbouring villages where this continues to happen.

A further problem addressed in the village, is the lack of solid waste management. The project team has developed a strategy for managing, collecting, treating and recycling solid waste, and the municipality has installed waste containers and collects waste separately. Plastic waste is brought to a city 80 km away for recycling.



A household Ecosan toilet in the village of Garla Mare, Romania

Inside view of the school toilet in Garla Mare



Mexico

Speaker

Aurora Raminéz and Petra Peña, Centro de Mujeres (Women's Centre) Tonantzin, Mexico

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WWF session

Safe water and Ecological sanitation for Rural Areas, Good Practices in Latin America and Eastern Europe from a Gender Perspective

The Centre de Mujeres Tonantzin undertakes trainings, empowerment programs for women to develop leadership skills, citizen's actions and focuses on water issues. The Centre is helping very poor families living in the slums of Ciudad Juárez along the Mexico-US border where 700.000 people live in a desert-like area without any water and sewage services. The women, in order to support their families work in factories, clean houses or sell second hand clothes.

Families built latrines that lead to bad smells and contamination. Water sources are scarce and are over-exploited. In order to solve this problem 250 in-house bathrooms with a dry urine diverting toilet and tap for washing were built in the last 6 years. One challenge is that some women stop using their ecosan toilets. The compost and urine reservoirs have to be emptied out which means heavy work for women: men do not help them. It is important to provide follow-up for one year on the use and maintenance of eco-san toilets, but people complain about community workers checking on

their toilets. Small income-generating sources are being created so that families can contribute and thus commit to the construction of the eco-san toilets and water filters.

Additionally, 25 waste-water filters where plants clean the waste water were built. This water is used for orchards, the elaboration of natural medicine and the sowing of 1000 trees a year against desertification. Moreover, women were trained as bakers, toilet-bowl builders and producers of natural medicine.

13

A wetland filter cleans household wastewater



Philippines

Speaker

Therese van Gijn, Case of Bohol, the Philippines, municipality of Guindulman

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Bohol is an island province that lies between Central Visayas and Eastern Visayas and has a population of around 1.236.100 (2004). Bohol is composed of 48 municipalities and 1.114 barangays. Thirty of these municipalities (62.5%) are situated along the 654 kilometres long coastline. Communities in the interior are mostly engaged in agriculture as their primary source of income. More than 60% of the population lives from agriculture. 47.5% of the households are living below the poverty line. The farm and non-farm labourers depend on seasonal employment to survive. This is hampered by limited and poor quality irrigation, low values of crops, low soil fertility and inadequate technical inputs.



Colombia

Speaker

Gloria Amparo Ocampo Barriero, Consultoría Sanitaria y Ambiental (CONSAM), Colombia

WWF session

Managing Safe Drinking Water in Areas of Armed Conflict and Ecological Disaster from a Gender Perspective'

The project takes place in Cauca, Chocó and Nariño located in jungle and forests along the Pacific Ocean. It aims to strengthen community water management. The weaknesses of community management systems are: lack of training, lack of the necessary elements for providing services and maintaining systems, lack of governmental support, and the fact that services are not paid for. The problems are most serious in these poor and isolated communities that consist of vulnerable groups. There is a large number of female headed households, since the men are unrolled in the guerrilla or dead. Because of the ongoing war, armed groups and drug dealers, the government is absent. These areas are important, since they are environmentally strategic and essential to water availability for the entire country.

The results accomplished are:

- 23 functioning Community Based Organizations (CBOs);
- 35 women and 44 men have been trained;
- 250 people involved in hygiene, water and sanitation activities;
- 10 social control committees and 2 citizens monitoring groups.

We learned that we need: to respond to local demand and build capacity, so people will commit; studies on the ability to pay for water fees are needed; long-term funds; governmental involvement; control entities within the state in order to prevent political manipulation; criteria to select appropriate technologies and processes in order to maintain the implemented technologies and a women's representation by quota to give recognition to women.



Sri Lanka

Speaker

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WWF session

Managing Safe Drinking Water in Areas of Armed Conflict and Ecological Disaster from a Gender Perspective'

After the Tsunami 2004, thousands of people in refugee camps were given shelter and food, but they shared only one toilet. Many went into the surrounding areas to relieve themselves, until a girl was raped. NetWwater, the Network of Women's Water Professionals in Sri Lanka, got together with universities and designed emergency latrines. The first latrines called 'Amila', which means priceless and clean in Tsingali, were simple pit latrines, but as the area is sandy, the pit was an old oil-barrel foreseen to last 3 months. Due to the fact that the refugees needed to stay longer and longer in the camps, NetWwater developed 2 other models, one with a desludging capacity and one with an aerobic filter.

after a disaster, there is no time to look for new alternatives. Technical and logistical support is needed immediately. Now, the University of Morretuwa and NetWwater are conducting research, testing and confronting the problem of costs. With the toilets installed since the disaster, children who had never used a toilet before in their lives now have access to these toilets.

Netwater received the Kyoto water price in Mexico, for their work on sanitation for refugees.

Simple construction of a pit latrine in Sri Lanka



There are people who have never used toilets as we know them, so the toilets must be easy to build and use, low cost and must have the capacity to function in adverse conditions. The problem is that



Drinking water well built in Afghanistan, benefitting 26 users

Afghanistan

Speaker

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WWF session

Managing Safe Drinking Water in Areas of Armed Conflict and Ecological Disaster from a Gender Perspective'

Katachel has conducted various projects in north Afghanistan over the last twelve years. It is the only NGO that works in Northern rural Afghanistan, and its project staff need armed guards. It has financially assisted 300 widows, to help them send their children to school. It has financed emergency health care and built 170 shelters for the poor. The project team constructed highways and 62 small bridges, to bring villages out of their isolation. It has set up income generating projects for returning refugees, for making shoes and tents. In addition it has built 20 schools. Katachel built 770 wells to supply clean water. This year it will be building 60 more wells with support of WECF.

Katachel is also addressing the matter of acceptance of improved sanitation. When the organisation tries to talk about toilets in general, people just laugh and no one

wants to talk- it is a bit of a taboo, which makes it hard to get ecosan toilets accepted in Afghanistan. Priority is placed on children understanding why they should use ecosan toilets, so the organisation provided training for teachers. They were very interested, but it was difficult-in part because the information was written. In Afghanistan, more than 90% of the people are illiterate.

In Akachal it is the boys that need most support. The boys spend all day getting polluted water from a 15 kilometres far river, having only two hours left for school. Drilling a well for the village would be essential, but financial means are lacking.

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A woman with her child next to a well built by Katachel, WECF's programme partner in Afghanistan



Ashes are strewn on top of the faeces after defecation



Chile

Speaker

Presentation by María Angélica Allegría, Gender and Water Alliance, Chile

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WWF session

Bottom-Up Meets Top-Down: Learning Lessons from Latin America and Africa

The Gender and Water Alliance focuses, among other things, on drinking water and sanitation.

During this presentation was stressed that when people in rural sectors are connected to a water supply system, they sometimes do not understand that it is drinking water, and use it for other domestic purposes. Thus, it is also important to speak of water governance. Water governance is a concept that involves the capacity of countries to achieve sustainable growth of resources, to design public policies that are widely accepted and to implement those policies. This means reaching consensus and agreements, and requires proper management of systems, which involves social participation and problem solving.

The Gender and Water Alliance worked together with women's organisations in

the public sector and developed a book collecting the stories of 17 Chilean women who are agricultural producers and micro-entrepreneurs. The most important aspect of the book is that it addresses the importance of interaction between public organisations on the one hand, in this case the one in charge of loans, and civil society groups on the other hand, in this case a women's organisation. After the women in the stories have gained access to water, they have been able to conduct social and environmental activities like crafts, rural tourism and agricultural activities, together with their families.



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Bangladesh

Speaker

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WWF session

Managing Safe Drinking Water in Areas of Armed Conflict and Ecological Disaster from a Gender Perspective'

Bangladesh suffers from annual flooding. In the last 40 years, large floods and cyclones have cost between 300.000 and 900.000 lives, and billion dollars of damage. Recently a new disaster arises; arsenic pollution of drinking water wells, which can lead to cancer and be deadly, affecting 30 to 60 million people. The Global Monitoring Data are confusing: according to the GMDs Bangladesh has a high access to drinking water.

The legislation in Bangladesh gives opportunities for women to become involved in finding solutions to the above described disasters, gives men and women equal rights, and policies on safe drinking water for all were adopted. But, despite that, floods and scarcity of water and arsenic pollution increased, there is little knowledge about operation and management of water supply systems and a lack of strategies for international river basin development. Still, a minimal amount of women take part in decision making,

management or planning processes, do not receive training, as opposed to their male colleagues, and women's needs in disaster shelters are neglected.

Steps to take:

- Improve policy, program and institutional capacity for appropriate gender mainstreaming;
- Improve capacity building programs including knowledge and facilities;
- Develop appropriate technologies;
- Support networking and collaboration among women focus groups at local and international level;
- Develop appropriate global and local monitoring programs, add water quality data;
- Include river basin based (national and international) initiatives in IWRM towards sustainable drinking water.

Water wells in Bangladesh are largely polluted with arsenic



Uzbekistan

Speaker

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WWF session

Managing Safe Drinking Water in Areas of Armed Conflict and Ecological Disaster from a Gender Perspective'

In Uzbekistan 5 million people continue to use water from open canals and polluted wells. Mehriban is a women's environmental organisation working on health, environmental and women's issues in Uzbekistan. It is estimated that almost all women are anaemic or suffering from iron deficiency, due to a combination of poverty, low nutrient diets, and polluted drinking water. There is a high rate of kidney problems linked to drinking water, and there is a problem of iodine deficiency.

The Mehriban project is executed in a rural village of about 700 inhabitants. The project includes work in a rural school that has a latrine in very poor condition and only one drinking water well. The well water has been analysed, both locally and in Germany, and it has been discovered that the water is, according to European

Union and local standards, too salty to use as drinking water. Mehriban has been testing a solar desalination household water-cone. The average production of distilled water was low, but the water was safe. The central drinking water supply system that serves part of the village is of good quality. A new dry urine diverting toilet was build for the local school as well as 10 household toilets. Mehriban is conducting an awareness raising campaign, including seminars and the preparation of informational materials for teachers and for inhabitants on water and sanitation.

The Aral Sea environmental disaster is an international problem, so international actions should be taken.

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School children – winners of the drawing contest "hygiene and health"



WECEF expert shows the advantages of ECOSAN

A family in front of their household toilet constructed by WECEF's TMF partner in Uzbekistan



Tanzania

The Tanzania Gender Networking Program

Speaker

Asseny Alemyo Muro, Tanzania

WWF session

Bottom-Up Meets Top-Down: Learning Lessons from Latin America and Africa'

The Gender Networking Program brings the ideas of men and women together, creates leaders in the area of gender by training, advocacy and information dissemination, while focussing on access to safe water. In Tanzania gender is mentioned in policies, but nothing has put into practice yet.

A link must be made between HIV-AIDS, its prevention and water services. In compliance with HIV-AIDS policies, people with this illness are sent home, and women are the ones to take care of them, in addition to their other responsibilities.

At least 24 buckets of water are needed for the basic needs of a household. Beginning in the mornings, women go to get water, and when they arrive home, their children and household chores are waiting for them. In rural areas, women cook

or bake cookies to sell, and if they arrive late, their sales drop.

Women must walk through forested areas to obtain water. Traditionally men are those who defend women, but women carrying water are alone, and there is a high incidence of rape. Also, in accordance with Tanzanian culture, a husband may divorce his wife if there is no water available for their baths. Women suffer from oppression and violence from husbands and other male relatives, in relation to water.

Women in Tanzania plans to form alliances with the majority of the poor and the women, and to pressure the government to review policies and to take actions, to include budget for water and education.

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Bolivia

Speaker

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WWF session

Managing Safe Drinking Water in Areas of Armed Conflict and Ecological Disaster from a Gender Perspective

Cochabamba was the scene of a water war, during which 30 civilians died. The reason for this water war was that the richer Northern part of the town received drinking water, but the southern parts did not. The southern parts were asked to pay high prices by the new privatized American company for drinking water connection; prices they could not afford pay. The American firm was thrown out, the leader of the water revolt is now Minister of Water in Bolivia, but the poor Southern neighbourhoods of Cochabamba are still not connected to the municipal water supply. Uberlinda Reyes from Cochabamba, has set up a neighbourhood water supply company, with 260 fellow citizens, supported by the program „Agua Tuya“. They have negotiated with the municipal water supply, so that they could buy the needed equipment directly from the factories at reduced prices. They receive the water in a central reservoir, and from

there, the citizen's organisation is responsible for distributing the water to the 260 households and for collecting the water fees. By this method, they managed to reduce the water price from 0,4 USD to 0,2 USD per cubic meter. This is a very encouraging example, and could be replicable for other households of Cochabamba. However, to connect all households the municipality has calculated 80 million USD. How should this capital be found, and how should it be repaid, when the inhabitants of Southern Cochabamba are so poor, with an average income of 20 USD per family per month? The programme Agua Tuya, together with more citizen's initiatives, as well as with support of the private Dutch bank SNS, could maybe put together a mixture of donor and private funding, and apply the example of Uberlinda Reyes community organisation.



„Aqua Tuya“ in Bolivia provides 24hrs continuous drinking water 7 days per week, what the municipal supplier was not able to deliver

Tanzania The Tegemeo group

Speaker

*Resti G. Mngale, Tegemeo Women Group,
Tanzania*



Invited by the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme, members of the Tegemeo group participated in the Gender Festival in September 2005 at Dar es Salaam. This festival brings together women and other activists within Tanzania and neighbouring countries to share experiences in the process of women fighting for emancipation. This experience was a real eye-opener. The members learned that as citizens, even being poor and living in a remote area, you have the right to hold your government accountable. To embed the activities in the water and sanitation policy, the Tegemeo group contacted the responsible authorities to achieve guarantees for future support and sustainability, by the Intermediary Gender Networks (IGN).

The Tegemeo Group wrote a proposal for the project 'Water and Development

project in Mweteni-village'. Through this project, they want to provide and improve water supply and sanitation in Mweteni-village through full and equal participation of women. The water problems in the village consist of: lack of clean drinking water and hygiene, loss of water, not enough water for cattle and agriculture and hard work for women and children. They aim for clean drinking water and to create more time for women and children to spend on income generating activities and education.

Now, the Tegemeo Women Group, in collaboration with the local government of Mweteni-village, is seeking concrete support from donors to assist in the implementation of this project proposal.

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Suriname

Speaker

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WWF session

*Session WWF: Bottom-Up Meets Top-Down:
Learning Lessons from Latin America
and Africa*

The program aims to support six communities that lack potable water. Residents are depended on unsafe water from ravines and rivers as drinking water. For years, technical personnel focused on preparing installations for providing water, but no one was concerned about involving the local community. Since 2005, there has been a shift to focus on participation and on managing the installation, because that is where participation of people is needed.

Planning has been carried out with different organisations, such as the Water Company of the City of Amsterdam, the Suriname water company, and the VAM (Women at the Labor Market) foundation, which trains women. During meetings, ideas were introduced for forming water committees and about the need to pay for water services. A survey held in the local communities demonstrated there is

support for forming water committees and to have representatives of their own group. Women's participation is very important, since they are the most important users and organisers in relation to water. In 2005 the local government signed an agreement to maintain the water supply system.

Women were especially encouraged to become trainers for the technical administration of the water supply system, to improve the position of women. Now, three villages profit from water installations that distribute filtered river water. Future plans include establishing and assisting pilot committees, and other water-related activities, such collecting and storing rainwater, to be used for drinking, watering, bathing and irrigation.

Mexico Agenda Azul

Speaker

Karla Priego, Agenda Azul in Mexico

WWF session

Bottom-Up Meets Top-Down: Learning Lessons from Latin America and Africa



The Women's Agenda Azul (Blue Agenda) is a project initiated by the Gender Network, which was formed in 1992 as a result of preparatory meetings for the Rio Summit. It is working to identify the needs and problems of women with regard to the use of water, and to draw attention to issues at international, national and regional forums.

The lack of adequate water supply has been identified as one of the burdens carried by women. The Mexican state of Chiapas produces 70-80% of the country's water supply, which is dedicated to producing electricity, while indigenous communities in that state do not have sanitation systems. Women from the highlands have to walk 5-6 hours to get the water they need, impacting their other activities and development.

Only in 1% of Mexico's National Water Commissions women take part. In general women do not know who might be able to help them to resolve their problems. Water issues are not only related to using water in households. Today women must become technicians in the use of water. They need to know how to write a report, and how to negotiate with authorities.

It is important to try new methods within legal frameworks and regulations. One idea is to create a water protection law enforcement agency, in which participate both men and women. It could be like the Latin American Water Tribunal, a place where people could present cases of injustice.

Mexico Alternativas y Procesos de Participacion Social

Speaker

Gisela Herrerias, Tehuacán, Puebla, Mexico

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The organisation works in the poor Tehuacán region in the Mexican state of Puebla, where the most important needs are water, followed by food, and then income.

The organisation uses a method in which they ask women to classify their activities, identifying the mandatory activities that they cannot stop doing without problems arising, such as making tortillas or fetching water. Then, there are some allowed activities, a meeting at school or a visit to the health centre, and some prohibited. It is important to identify these, if women are to participate, to avoid conflicts. The objective is to increase the space for different, allowed activities. Some women have to wait for hours in order to bring 40 litres of water home. Bringing water closer to home would mean more time to work, take part in a decision-making process etc.

The organisation decided to recuperate pre-Hispanic technologies for increasing the availability of water, and construct terraces and small dams for irrigation. Protecting even a small amount of water represents a significant change for local residents. It is also very important for people to understand that creeks can be maintained as sources of clean water. When sewage systems were first installed, people began to send sewage into the creeks.

Besides: Only if we act in accordance to our principles, will we be able to pass them on: In this project female engineers have increasingly been hired and there is a flexible work schedule and a day care for the children of mothers and fathers working in the project.

Mexico Terra de mis Amores

Speaker

*Luz Bella Ramírez Romero Uruapan,
Michoacán, Mexico*

This project called Tierra de mis amores is carried out along the Cupatitzio River in Uruapan, Michoacán. It is a beautiful river that begins in a park right in the middle of the city, and immediately turns into sewage water. The Cupatitzio River provides drinking water to the city of Uruapan (350.000 inhabitants), and other municipalities, and is also used for irrigation purposes. It is one of the main tourist attractions in the state of Michoacán, but every day 80 tons of garbage is dumped into the river, which includes untreated sewage, industrial wastewater and dangerous chemical substances.

A part of this project is to assess the effects of environmental deterioration on the river and on the lives of those who use the river. The objective is to map the quality of the river water, and to conduct a study of the river and its history over a 30-year period. Already, 40% of the river volume has been lost. The purpose of

conducting this study is to find solutions, and to participate in making concrete proposals.

A campaign „No Trash in the Cupatitzio River“ was held to increase awareness among the population. Institutions, academic and research centres, companies, civil organisations and even those fulfilling their military service participated. Instead of marching on Sunday mornings, these young men would pick up trash, and some of them said that this is the first time they have done something useful during their military service. The participants were mostly women.

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Mexico Coperativa San Isidro

Speaker

Martha de la Cruz, Jalisco, Mexico

This network in the Mexican state of Jalisco is working in sustainable fair trade at a local level. A crisis began in 1995 due to high agricultural production costs and low prices for products, and farmers began to migrate to seek work elsewhere. However, rural women do not migrate from their communities and rather look for options within their communities.

In the Guadalajara area, these women, with support from their families, began to promote projects designed to decrease malnutrition of children and women during their reproductive years. With support from the RASA network, 20 women and their families are producing about 60 products. They have basic infrastructure for production, a training program, a store with agricultural products and their own brand of agricultural products, plus a restaurant with agro-ecological food. The project participates in the RASA network, coordinating efforts with 30 groups of small producers of regional products.

However, the project has difficulties obtaining enough water for its production. It has a six-hectare plot of organic edible cactus, and has drilled two wells, but has not yet found water, since it is located in a very dry area. It is working on developing a way to collect rainwater, but currently must purchase expensive water from other communities. It is finding that water is increasingly privatised, with water rights going to foreign corporations. The 52 communities in the area have neither sewage services nor running water.

Mexico

INEGI

Speaker

Hortencia Medina, INEGI Mexico

A representative of INEGI, Mexico's Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information, spoke about using official statistics in the area of water with a gender perspective, since women and men have different perceptions and attitudes with regard to water. Access, use, control and profit from water, using INEGI statistics, with a particular focus on drinking water for domestic use, according to population censuses and surveys, can be useful indicators.

The participation of women in water management can be observed. Statistics show slightly more participation by women as technicians and workers; however there are no women at the management level in the National Water Commission. It may be that women have a vision pointing to a different direction for potable water services.

One can look at differences between households headed by women and by men; at rural versus urban areas, and especially at the indigenous population;

and at the northern Mexican states in comparison to the southern states where poverty is associated with access to water. Besides, it is important to look at water access and quality. In Mexico 96% of the rivers and wells are polluted.

It is important to analyse the questions that should be included in censuses, based on the type of information needed for decision-making, for example: household income and expenditures in relation to water, also related to gender; where water is subsidised, and whether for corporations or for households; the increasing consumption of bottled water and the time devoted to bring fetch water, by women and by men.

5 | ECOSAN excursions for WECF and WfW members

On Wednesday 15th of March WECF and WfW members were invited to visit two different Mexican towns where Mexican Organisations have installed Ecological Sanitation systems.

Attendants had the chance to learn about the projects that these Mexican organisations carry out. The organisers explained all different eco-sanitation techniques within the demonstration centre where they have models of each of the following techniques: dry diverting toilets, grey water treatment ponds, rainwater capture and storage, composting, liquid and solid fertilisers, etc. There are toilets made out of different materials, produced in different countries, with very sophisticated or very simple designs that give the opportunity to the visitors of the centre to learn about the different tendencies of the use of these toilets.

After the group came back from San Juan's, they had the possibility to visit Ron Sawyer's house in Tepoztlán, the Director of the organisation SARAR. At Ron Sawyer's place the group could see in practice how dry diverting toilets and grey water treatment ponds could be successfully implemented and used at home, representing a solution as well for those who not necessarily suffer from water access or sanitation issues.

Two WECF members went home with moulds to make their own urine diverting toilet seats, which they had bought from „Terra“, and allows them to construct hundreds of toilet seats at about 5-10 euro piece.

Contact data of the visited NGOs:
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Ron Sawyer, Planeta: rsawyer@laneta.apc.org



WECF and WfW members at the ECOSAN excursions

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6 | Conclusions

WECF and WfW successfully mobilized women's organisations from around the world at the World Water Forum in Mexico. In a 2 day capacity building and sharing of experiences, „work conference“ the women's organisations developed common statements and presentations. During the 3 day world water conference, WECF organized 2 official sessions, one on women's successful experiences with sustainable sanitation for poor communities, and one on women's key role in creating access to water and sanitation in conflict areas. WfW secretariat organized one session on bottom up work by women's organisations. Together with other women's networks, WECF organized an exhibition and discussion space, organised several press conferences, and invited 30 participants to take part in a study visit to decentralized sustainable sanitation projects in 2 villages near Mexico city.

Throughout the WECF and WfW sessions at the World Water Forum 2006 a few key messages were repeatedly stressed:

- The time that women and children have to spend on fetching water, they cannot spend on income generating activities or education, and thus hampering their development.
- Governments and the private sector in developing and transition countries are hardly not interested in investing in water and sanitation services in semi-urban and rural areas. This gap is increasingly be filled by NGOs and women groups successfully operating community based water organisations.
- Women's organisations should get more strongly involved in advocating for more funding for rural water and sanitation programmes.
- The banking sector has positive experience with investing in women, and

would be willing to give preferential conditions to women's water and sanitation projects.

- It is useful, where possible, to make people pay for water services, based on a solid estimation of how much they are able to spend, total expenses should not exceed more than 2,5-5% of their household budget. Solidarity schemes should provide cross-subsidising from the affluent consumers to vulnerable groups, in particularly female headed households.
- Women are still too little involved into decision making processes, planning, implementing and managing of water and sanitation services, specific promotion of women's participation is necessary.
- Official data on water access and sanitation services and policies are not always a useful or accurate reflection of reality, independent testing by women's organi-

sations proves to be an important source for information and policy recommendations (for example, low cost nitrate tests allow indicative monitoring of water quality).

- Women are mostly unaware of their great potential and possibilities to change their own situation, demonstration projects by local women groups gave great examples of how fast and sustainable change can be made.
- Raising awareness, education and involving and committing the local population are key factors in making a project succeed.
- Women suffer from violence and oppression related to limited water and sanitation services, at the same time, have more trust from all parties involved in the conflict, and can therefore achieve results

not possible for government organisations. International support for such courageous women’s organisations operating in conflict regions should be provided.

- The human right to water and sanitation should be recognized globally, and criteria for its implementation developed.

The women’s organisations were united and achieved broad visibility for their views and achievements at the World Water Forum, becoming recognized players in the water sector.

WECF and its partners will continue to work on strengthening women’s participation in international policy making, and will prepare to do so at the WWF-5 in Istanbul.

7 | Annexes

1. Panelists

Session FT 3.07: Access to safe water and Ecological sanitation for rural areas good practices in Latin and Eastern Europe from a gender perspective

**Box 1:
Panelist**

Government	International Institutions	Universities	Women’s Organisation	Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Francois Münger, Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adriana Hulsman, EU Water Technology Platform • Andrea Tilche, Director, EU DG Research, Technology • Roger Aertgeerts, WHO Regional Office for Europe, Water Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claudia Wendland, Expert Ecological Sanitation, University of Technology, Hamburg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iztá Castañeda, Gender Dept, UNDP Mexico 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Borkey, Environmental Department, OECD • Kajetan Hetzer, SNS Bank, Water Fund

**Box 2:
Panelist**

Government	Civil Society	Universities	Women's Organisation	Finance
• Hortencia Medina, INEGI (Mexican Statistics Institute)	• Gisela Herrerias, Alternativas	• Carmen Ledo, Bolivia • Elke Mülegger, Austria	• Johdah Bokhari, Gender Dept, Pakistan	• Kajetan Hetzer, SNS Bank Netherlands

2. Contact Information Conveners Sessions World Water forum

**Box 2:
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