Women for Water Partnership

Partners from the margin to the mainstream.
by Lesha Witmer, Steering Committee

Women for Water Partnership

Unites 90 women’s organizations & networks (More than 2 million women) on gender-sensitive and pro-poor Integrated Water Resource Management

www.womenforwater.org
WFW

- Women’s organisations
- Working on poverty-water-sustainable development-gender nexus
- Adhering to the Dublin Principles for participatory gender sensitive IWRM
- Rights based approach
- Functional Networking

WfW: network

- International
- National
- Local

Professional background
Political affiliation
Advocacy
Rural women
Face and interest groups
Identify constraints

Dublin Principles:
1. Fresh water is a limited and vulnerable resource and essential for life, development and the environment.

| sustainability | rights based approach
| pro-poor water management |
| Not just supply drinking water |

2. Development & management of water (and sanitation) should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy makers at the lowest appropriate level

| Not just supply drinking water |
| Not speaking the same language |
| gender and cultural sensitive |
| equity mainstreaming > equal footing |
| demand based on informed choices |
Identify constraints

3. Women play a **central role** in the supply, management and safeguarding of water.
   - no place at the table - good intentions
   - actors, but only seen as target group
   - Division of roles – traditions
   - Not recognized as experts / managers
   - Not seen as capable to manage technology – the wrong people get trained
   - No land – and water rights / safe tenure

Identify constraints

4. Water as an **economic good**.

   - Focus on low investment,
   - not on (low) exploitation cost / affordability
   - Ownership
   - Maintenance and management
   - Large-scale infrastructure building
   - Does not benefit the most needy
Create a paradigm shift from vulnerable group to partner

- correct the imbalance
- Create partnerships, join forces locally and globally
- give local women a voice

provide enabling environment for implementation

- give visibility
- provide seed money to get started
- Capacity development
- Knowledge & experience sharing (exchange); complementary, not competing
- influencing policy and “translating”
working conferences

- Capacity development
- Cases: zero, developing, up-scaling
- Experts, partners
- Functional networking
- Visibility
- “Translation”: policy <> practice

Program / Project approach

- Women are “entry” point
- Organization & community development > enabling environment
- Self confidence & backing from partners
- Resources to develop projects and “take time” (process)
- No project without management -, organizational skill - and vocational training
- No project without (self) employment / local economy development
Why does this partnership work?

- Strength, not weakness is the starting point
- Take everybody serious
- Equal footing & ownership
- Functional networking
- Partner and community development
- Seed money
- Cooperation with others
- practical
Network or incrowd?