Mainstreaming gender into environmental activities

Example of the work on equitable access to water and sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health

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Equitable access under the Protocol on Water and Health

The Protocol key objectives:
(a) Access to drinking water for everyone
(b) Provision of sanitation for everyone

A specific focus on equitable access:
“Equitable access to water, adequate in terms both of quantity and of quality, should be provided for all members of the population, especially those who suffer a disadvantage or social exclusion” (art. 5)
Activities on equitable access to water and sanitation

1. Setting the framework

2. Assessing the baseline situation

3. Defining action

- Good practices
- Assessment tool
- Equitable Access Action Plan

No One Left Behind

Guidance Note on the Development of Action Plans to Ensure Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation

The Equitable Access Scorecard

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Guidance Note on the Development of Action Plans to Ensure Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation
Inequities to be fought on 3 fronts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Inequities in access to water and sanitation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical disparities:</strong> water resources, WSS infrastructure</td>
<td>Certain areas of a country (rural areas, poor urban neighborhoods) have no physical access or have access of lower quality than other areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social disparities:</strong> vulnerable and marginalised groups</td>
<td>Within areas with good access, certain groups do not have access because they don’t have private facilities, the public and institutional facilities they rely on are not adequate, or suffer unintended or intended discrimination.</td>
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<td><strong>Economic disparities:</strong> affordability issues</td>
<td>Within areas with good access, the water and sanitation bill represents too large a share of disposable income for some households.</td>
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Women often not equally represented within decision-making processes

Women often had unequal access to training and credit schemes (e.g. for toilet construction and water point management)

Water and sanitation projects often not address greater need of women for privacy at water points and sanitation facilities
The Equitable Access Score-card

- Self-evaluation analytical tool
- To establish a baseline, track progress and prompt discussions on actions needed to achieve equitable access to water and sanitation
- To support the implementation of policies and practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTIONS</th>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance framework</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical disparities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable &amp; marginalized groups</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-assessment of equitable access to water and sanitation

- Completed in 8 countries:
  France, Ukraine, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Hungary, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Spain

- On going in 3 countries:
  Azerbaijan and Serbia), to start in Bulgaria

  Better understanding of equity challenges faced, awareness raised on equity gaps.

- Actions taken to address equity challenges in several countries
In most countries, separate toilets for men and women in institutions (schools, hospitals, prisons, retirement homes, refugees centers…) but sometimes not suitable for menstrual hygiene management (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

Women led households significantly less connected to water pipeline (cf. financial constraints). In rural areas, in female-headed households, smaller number of families connected to water pipeline (55% vs. 75% for male-headed households) Relevant vulnerable groups, e.g. elderly women, absent from the policy approach – (Republic of Moldova)
Examples of recommended actions to address gender challenges

- In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:
  Improve menstrual hygiene management facilities in educational facilities, as part of Equitable Access Action Plans

- In the Republic of Moldova:
  Pilot community based participation channels for most vulnerable men and women in the area of water and sanitation
Outcomes of the equitable access assessment in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
In Macedonia has lack of...

- There is no access to accurate and pragmatic information for menstrual hygiene (in the educational system)
- There is no access to water and soap in places that provide an adequate level of privacy
- There are no accessible facilities
- There is no equipment for waste disposal
Primary and secondary schools are in desperate situation in MHM

- **90%** of female students in rural areas in Macedonia do not attend school 4-5 days a month during menstruation.

- **75%** of female students in urban areas do not attend school 2-3 days a month.

- More than **80%** of students to avoid using school toilets, often due to inadequate hygiene due to lack of proper infrastructure (broken doors, windows)

- Increasing the number of urinary tract infections by **28% in boys and 40% girls**
Primary and secondary schools are in desperate situation in MHM

- **over 60%** of women and girls in rural areas and **20%** in urban areas do not use any kind of commercial menstrual products. The reason for this is the high cost.

- For a family of five women/girl with minimum monthly income of 9,000 denars, **15-17%** of income is used on hygiene products for **MHM**.
In refers to pride, dignity, education and needs:

- Unable to cope with the natural process that characterizes healthy girls, they are forced to skip school **2-3 days**.

- In rural areas, even more.

- Justification of missed classes only confirms the **institutional poor educational process**, as well as other social stakeholders: municipalities, the state ... to deal with this problem.
Importance to uncover a taboo question

Local Equitable Access Action Plans developed

Awareness raising and campaigns

Additional communities interested to engage in similar assessment work