

## ASSESSMENT OF GENDER INTEGRATION CAPACITIES AMONG THE USAID WA-WASH PROGRAM PARTNERS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a cross cutting theme in the implementation of the USAID Water Supply Hygiene and Sanitation (USAID WA-WASH) Program, gender mainstreaming aims to ensure gender equity. In order to reach this objective, the Program through CARE conducted an assessment to determine whether gender issues are being effectively addressed by the partner organizations and to evaluate the capacity of implementing partners in integrating gender in their respective program activities. The assessment aimed at identifying gender differentiated needs, gaps, priorities, and inequalities in terms of opportunities and outcomes in each partner organization. Specific objectives of the assessment were: (1) assess gender integration in partners' approaches, frameworks, and tools; (2) develop a gender monitoring and evaluation tool; (3) develop a gender mainstreaming strategy for USAID WA-WASH Program; and (4) identify potential local gender champions in the WASH sector.

The gender assessment was conducted with 10 of the USAID WA-WASH Program partners namely Winrock, WaterAid, CARE, SOS Sahel, FIU, IRC, IWA, RAIN, Eau Vive, and VDS. The assessment was conducted at two levels. First, a preliminary self-assessment was conducted in September 2012 through a simple survey administered through emails. It was a quick appraisal of partners' capacities in gender integration. The self-assessments showed that the gender capacity of USAID WA-WASH partners ranged from moderately to highly experience in regard to gender integration concepts and tools. All the partners either had at least one staff with exposure to gender concepts or are actively supported by experienced gender staff from the organization's headquarters. Five of the eight USAID WA-WASH Program partners reported that gender integration was "sometimes" part of their organizations' approach to developing projects and interventions and three reported that it is "always" part of their organization's approach.

In terms of experience in gender integration, three partners reported that their West African WA-WASH Program staff had little or no direct experience in gender integration while two partners reported that their staff had some experience in gender integration and two partners (CARE and WaterAid) reported that their West African staff have "a lot" of experience in gender integration in programs. Two partners (IWA and RAIN) responded "not applicable" to this question as their programs do not directly work with the members of the community. The different levels of capacities in gender integration among the various Program partners justified a need for an in-depth assessment of each partner's gender capacities, strengths, gaps and tools.

Further, the results underscores the need to develop a gender mainstreaming strategy for USAID WA-WASH Program to ensure all implementing partners integrate a harmonized gender strategy in the implementation of their respective Program activities. The overall objective of the gender mainstreaming strategy is to ensure that all actions planned within the USAID WA-WASH Program take into account all implications on women and men.

Specifically, this strategy will ensure women and men concerns and experiences are an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Program. To achieve this objective, a detailed gender integration assessment and analysis to reveal gender differentiated needs, gaps and priorities and gender inequalities in terms of opportunities and outcomes was necessary. The in-depth assessment was conducted between January and February 2013. It evaluated tools such as partners' performance monitoring plans, baseline survey reports and budget analysis, gender equity and diversity gap analysis, the organization environment survey and finally the most significant gender tools and approaches.

The results from the detailed assessment showed that only three organizations had at least one staff member assigned to address gender issues. These organizations are Winrock, Wateraid and CARE. In addition, these organizations had experience in integrated gender approaches. In relation to gender policies, only WaterAid and CARE had specific gender policies within their organizations. Only CARE and WaterAid had specific gender issues that promote women empowerment.

The assessment further revealed that the national policies in the WASH sector in Burkina Faso did not adequately address gender issues, notably the reforms in the drinking water system decree of 2000. In Ghana, the national WASH policies emphasize representation of women in WASH management committees.

Monitoring and evaluation tools in the majority of the organizations assessed did not take gender into account; although data was disaggregated according to gender, interventions did not integrate gender adequately. Local champions were identified as the most active women and men (male gender champions) in gender issues in communities. The most significant gender tools identified were equity and inclusion approach by Wateraid and village savings and loans associations (VSLA) approach by CARE.

The results from the in-depth analysis contrasted the results from the self-assessment. For instance, the self-assessment showed that most organizations had a specific gender staff and gender approaches within the organization. However, the in-depth analysis showed that only three organizations had gender staff and gender approaches. The results underscored the need to develop a gender mainstreaming strategy for USAID WA-WASH Program to ensure all implementing partners integrate a harmonized gender strategy in the implementation of the Program activities.

*The full report is available (in English) upon request via our website. For more details about our program activities and other reports please visit <http://wawash.fiu.edu/>.*

This publication was funded by the people of the United States through the Agency for International Development (USAID) within the framework of the West Africa Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (USAID WA-WASH) Program. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Agency for International Development of the United States Government.