



Integration of gender dimension in water management in the Mediterranean region; Bari's workshop review

Hamdy A., Quagliariello R., Venezian-Scarascia M.E.

in

Hamdy A. (ed.), Sagardoy J.A. (ed.), El Kady M. (ed.), Quagliariello R. (ed.), Bogliotti C. (ed.).

Training of trainers in INtegration of Gender Dimension in water management in the Mediterranean region. INGEDI project

Bari : CIHEAM

Options Méditerranéennes : Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens; n. 64

2004

pages 7-10

Article available on line / Article disponible en ligne à l'adresse :

<http://om.ciheam.org/article.php?IDPDF=6002369>

To cite this article / Pour citer cet article

Hamdy A., Quagliariello R., Venezian-Scarascia M.E. **Integration of gender dimension in water management in the Mediterranean region; Bari's workshop review.** In : Hamdy A. (ed.), Sagardoy J.A. (ed.), El Kady M. (ed.), Quagliariello R. (ed.), Bogliotti C. (ed.). *Training of trainers in INtegration of Gender Dimension in water management in the Mediterranean region. INGEDI project.* Bari : CIHEAM, 2004. p. 7-10 (Options Méditerranéennes : Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens; n. 64)



<http://www.ciheam.org/>
<http://om.ciheam.org/>



INTEGRATION OF GENDER DIMENSION IN WATER MANAGEMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION; BARI'S WORKSHOP REVIEW

A. Hamdy*, R. Quagliariello and M. E. Venezian-Scarascia*****

* Director of Research, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, (CIHEAM-IAMB),
9 Via Ceglie, 70010 Valenzano (BA), Italy

** Head of External Relations, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, (CIHEAM-IAMB),
9 Via Ceglie, 70010 Valenzano (BA), Italy

*** Secretary General, Comitato Italiano per l'Irrigazione e la Bonifica Idraulica,
ITAL-ICID, Via Sallustiana, 10, 00100, Roma, Italy. Email: italicid@libero.it

Bari's workshop was organized in the framework of the activities included in the project "Integration of Gender Dimension in Water Management in the Mediterranean Region – INGEDI" carried out by CIHEAM IAM-Bari Institute and financially supported by European Union as a part of the Sixth Framework Programme Priority-Specific Support Action.

INTRODUCTION

Gender issues are context dependent. Each culture has its own way of characterizing female and male role in the society. Clearly issues affecting women have become predominant features of public debate and mainstreaming.

To pursue a harmonious and systematic development of national and regional agenda and policies in the Mediterranean Region, gender perspectives in water sector must insure the interests and needs of women as well as men.

Gender issues at times have been confined as "women development" and kept compartmentalized as a marginal programme within water sector.

In the Mediterranean, gender is now a priority on the agendas of irrigation policy makers, irrigation leaders and researchers; however, a deep gender analysis demonstrated clearly the considerable gap between positive policy intentions and their conversion into concrete actions. Such slow conversion of gender policies into practice, in particular in water resources management and irrigation are the results of the lack of analytical tools and appropriate concept, the lack of comprehensive conceptual framework and appropriate implementation beside the absence of gender performance indicators and above all the vague and weak roles of irrigation institutions and agencies. The analysis also highlighted the presence of several imposing negative factors that impact and slow down the gender implementation policy.

In the Mediterranean Countries, particularly in the developing ones, we are still in need of a hard work and great efforts to bridge the gap between women and men in order to bring women into mainstreaming and thinking.

There is a need for devising strategies to attract attention of society to the contribution of women in economic emancipation within water sector that affects the overall water policy of the Country.

The slow progress in gender implementation in the majority of the developing countries of the region, asks for new gender strategies to provide the solutions to the existing constraints and leading to promotion of gender in policy planning to encourage and empower women through the management of water and structures for irrigation.

What could be this strategy? What is the most appropriate approach? What are the enabling conditions needed for putting the strategy in actions?

Such raised up issues and others were covered and fully discussed in the workshop.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The general objectives of the workshop were to bring together eminent international experts, professionals and practitioners to share data, know-how and experiences and make recommendations on policies and strategies to promote the integration of the women dimension in the Mediterranean water management and to develop adequate national and regional policies that would support the effective integration in water management.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To build a Mediterranean vertical-horizontal consensus and common knowledge regarding gender issues, measures, challenges and actions to be undertaken to support integration of women;
- To improve and to increase exchange of experiences and enhancement of cooperation among Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries in relation to relevant gender issues;
- To establish a Mediterranean dialogue among politicians, decision-makers, research Institutions, NGO's and socio-cultural organizations for the integration of gender issues in water management and use, particularly in irrigation;
- To decide on educational and training programmes to improve the capacity building on this subject and related others;
- To pave the way for a cooperative thematic network at regional level on subjects covered by the workshop theme.

WORKSHOP MAJOR TOPICS

The workshop included five sessions covering the following major topics:

- 1st session including the introductory part and the keynote speakers presentations;
- 2nd session devoted to gender mainstreaming in water management, with a particular emphasis on the irrigation sector;
- 3rd session devoted to gender and irrigation water management in the Mediterranean and including the Countries case studies;
- 4th session devoted to institutional and human resources capacity building including general discussions and recommendations. Discussion on possible monitoring and assessment indicators is foreseen in this session;
- 5th closing session devoted to the preparation of synthesis and a common conceptual frame.

VENUE, DATE AND PARTICIPANTS

The workshop was held in Bari Institute from June 3 to June 5, 2004; 28 experts from 12 Mediterranean countries participated in the previously mentioned workshop (figure 1)

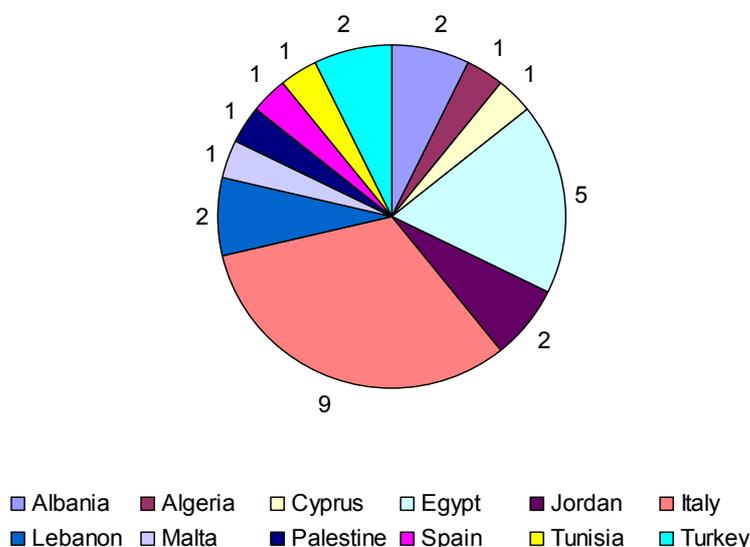


Fig. 1. Mediterranean experts participating in Bari's workshop

In addition, Bari Institute greeted a participant from an extra-mediterranean country (The Sweden). Besides representatives from most of the Mediterranean Countries, 40 experts from various International and Regional Organizations contributed to the event, such as CEDARE – Cairo (Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe); European Union, FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), ITAL – ICID, Institut International Jacques Martain, UNDP, World Water Council, Global Water Partnership, ... etc.

BARI WORKSHOP'S OUTCOMINGS

Complete discussion of all the presented papers, which lasted for 2 days, and the ones related to several brainstorm workshop included in the programme, came up with the following conclusion and recommendations, and clearly identified the main problems that are limiting the integration of women in water management including:

1. **Legislation:** Legislation often does not sufficiently consider the access of women to land and water in most Mediterranean countries. Women are absent in the decision-making process, government agencies are not taking enough initiatives in educating women in water management issues. Legislation must be modified to be more gender-sensitive.

2. **Communication and Awareness of Gender Issues:** Education at primary and secondary school, vocational schools and universities in gender issues is of utmost importance for increasing the awareness of the public and the government bodies. Little is done in this important area compared to the actual needs.

3. **Inadequacy of Analysis:** There is a poor analysis of gender issues in water policies. New tools and guidelines are needed.

4. **Lack of Participation of Women in Water Governance:** Women are mainly absent in the management and policy making processes. Very few women are active in Water Users Associations and Water Cooperatives. The same applies to most irrigation and water supply agencies.

5. **Centralization of Water Management and Governance:** There is an excessive centralization of decisions and insufficient knowledge of local problems resulting in very poor technical assistance at local level.

6. **Institutional Capacity:** There is a lack of coordination mechanisms among relevant institutions and bodies within countries and more at regional level and limited skills related to participatory and gender approaches.

7. **Extension:** The extension services directed towards women are unsatisfactory. There are few female extension officers/gender specialists. Training material is rarely gender sensitive.

8. **Impact of Globalization:** Globalization is affecting social roles in rural communities and agricultural management, including irrigation. Many women are changing their attitude towards agricultural work.

9. **Cultural Heritage and Social Norms:** In most countries inequity and inequality are dominant because of social and cultural reasons.

10. **Poverty:** Most working women are engaged in agriculture and are the most disadvantaged group of their society. Due to lack of training and other reasons they remain unskilled workers.

11. **Lack of Access to Information:** There is insufficient knowledge among men and women about their own rights, and there is lack of access for needed information and technology.

12. **Lack of Gender-Sensitive Indicators:** There is an absence of institutional set up that is responsible for monitoring the process of gender integration into water management.

13. **Gender-disaggregated statistical information** Still limited availability of statistics disaggregated by sex with a gender perspective and therefore it becomes difficult to quantify the gravity of situations related to the access of women and men to land and water resources.

Consequently, based on the recommendations and the reflections expressed by the participants during the workshop, Bari Institute started preparing a new ample project intitled: "Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions Into Water Resources Development and Management in the Mediterranean Region". The project is already submitted to the EC and it is now under exmination, hopefully to be approved. The project is fundamentally based on networking activities and will last for four years.

The proposed project aims at solving those problems closely related to the access to and information dissimination and to improve coordination but also can contribute substantially to reduce the extent of most of the problems listed above. This will require that the national coordinators get involved in far more reaching activities like: a) sensitize decision-makers, b) promote gender lobbying,

c) assist in leadership promotion, d) build capacities\skills, e) develop communication strategies, and
f) promote the establishment of information\research centres.

Further informations are available on the following website:
<http://ingedi.iamb.it>