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## THE ITALICID AND GEWAMED PROJECT

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### ITALICID: WHAT IT IS

ITALICID is the Italian National Committee of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID). ICID is a scientific, technical, professional and voluntary non-profit non governmental international organisation dedicated, inter alia, to enhance the world-wide supply of food by improving water and land management, promoting research and capacity building and adopting comprehensive approaches and up to date technique for sustainable integrated agriculture and water resources.

ICID was founded in 1950 by 11 Countries among which Italy; currently 68 member Countries are active participants of the Commission.

Recognising the vital role rural women play in food production all over the world, ICID has given always a special focus on the role of rural women in water resources and irrigation management.

### ITALICID: WHAT IT DOES

The activity of ITALICID, the Italian member of ICID, is focusing on stimulating the development and performing of irrigation, land reclamation and land, water and environment conservation and protection. Furthermore ITALICID, in close cooperation with FAO and CIHEAM-MAI Bari, has taken the initiative to focus attention on the importance of proper training of rural women in appropriate water management techniques. Between ITALICID and CIHEAM an agreement was reached and an international workshop on “New training methodologies on sustainable irrigated crops with a participative approach in the Mediterranean area” was hosted by CIHEAM in June 2000.

After this successful event, a series of four regional meetings, funded by the Italian Government Cooperative Programme (Project GCP/INT/872/ITA), in South Africa and in Cambodia, were organised by FAO/SDWW and AGLW, with a total of 68 participants coming from 21 Countries of Africa and Asia.

These four regional workshops had the purpose of training the trainers of 21 Asian and African countries and of promoting networking between the same countries, allowing participants to discuss on the similar success and constraints faced during the Food Security Special Programme (SPFS) implementation.

From these meetings, an increased capacity to address the issues of gender analysis and to use participatory methodologies to support the participatory planning of irrigation schemes among SPFS experts, as specific outputs of the workshops emerged.

### GENDER AND RELATED ISSUES

#### Gender and Agriculture

In the last few decades, agriculture has undergone important transformations. The agricultural sector was subjected to the major technological, economic, social and environmental transformations. Consequently new social realities have emerged in the rural areas.

With reference to the gender issues, there have been clear and significant changes in the relationship between women and men and a remarkable shift in the role and position of women in the society.

Although the evolution in the behavioural patterns and responsibilities in the household and work is still slow, legislation increasingly recognizes greater equality of rights for all. The principle of equal incomes and equal access to education and other public services is more and more widespread. The analysis of gender relation is now becoming promoted in studies and appraisal of agriculture and natural resources management. Gender has been incorporated as a collateral aspect of the different participatory evaluation that have been promoted during the past decades as instruments for participatory planning at the community level.

Despite a noticeable improvement in the awareness on women's contribution to development, the innovative process is far from to be sufficient to the rural women empowerment. Many institutional obstacles and technical constraints hinder the gender mainstreaming process.

During the workshop of Bari, organized in June 2004 by CIHEAM-MAIB, some indication on the barriers retarding the gender-sensitive process in the water resources management were identified. To overcome these constraints, which are operating at different levels (family, farm, community, associations, government, national and international organizations), it is necessary to settle precise goal and to identify innovative tools in order to attain determined aims.

During the last 20 years, information on rural women has increased significantly, but its validity and relevance are still questioned as gender data frequently include a lack of precision and weakness of analysis. Moreover gender-related information in general suffer from a weak dissemination system.

## **Gender and Water Management**

Irrigation is the supply of water to agricultural crops designed to permit farming in arid regions and to offset drought in semiarid areas. As such, it already plays a key role in feeding expanding population and is undoubtedly destined to play a still greater role in the future. Even in areas where total rainfall is high on average, it may be poorly distributed during the year and variable from year to year. Under these conditions, traditional rainfed farming is a high risk enterprise and only irrigation can ensure stable production.

The vital task of increasing and stabilizing food production in drought prone areas must therefore include a concerted effort to improve on-farm water management. Traditional irrigation schemes should be modernized to improve the productivity as well as to reach an efficient water use.

When properly applied, the innovative irrigation methods can raise yield while minimizing waste of water and promoting the integration of irrigation with essential concurrent operation. The improvement of the irrigation management should be based on the use of indigenous skills and materials and on the dissemination of the adopted and then adapted local technology.

The potential of human resources in this new environment must be appraised so that each person can become fully involved in the development process. However the capacities offered by information technologies are of little benefit to rural women for many reasons including lack of their training in the use of media, their social isolation, the lack of infrastructures and the limited financial resources.

## **PROJECT GOALS AND ACTIVITIES**

The main goal to be achieved for gender mainstreaming are: the visibility, income increase and livelihood improvement of the rural women, their access to resources and to education and formation, the involvement on the small scale food production and on integrated water management, encouraging them to participate as member in the farming activities and in the water users' association and to decision making process.

In the “era of communication”, information is becoming the basis of development and its insufficient flow may contribute to a new dimension of poverty. The integration of gender consideration in statistical systems and the introduction of new methodology will help correcting the present gender inadequate bias.

In order to accurately formulate statistical lay-out, policymakers and NGOs need to consider that gender analysis expertise are essential for this activity. The institutionalization of a gender approach can facilitate collaboration between users and producers of data; however, a methodological guidance is needed both in the collection phase and during the tabulation and analysis stage.

The role of government can be crucial since they are entirely responsible for their own data collection. They need to review existing sources in order to identify the appropriate measures to be taken and to determine the framework for the compilation, analysis, presentation and diffusion of data.

To develop a common ground for strategies to be implemented with the aim to increase the women empowerment in the Mediterranean area on irrigation management three main activities are suggested below.

### **Planning of Data Collection**

The first activity consists in the establishment of a common framework of gender-sensitive disaggregated data with the involvement of all partners who can contribute to the implementation of the data base. The collection of data can be integrated by questionnaires to be completed with the support of delivered instructions and sent by e-mail to the central website.

Four different set of gender-disaggregated data are needed for a data base regarding water resource management:

- Socio-economic aspects.
- Water and soil resources.
- Agriculture.
- Irrigation.

One of the main component of this activity is to review the existing information. Some of disaggregated data can be provided by the FAO Programme WCA 2000 where it is possible to find the gender-related structural information on demographic characteristics, educational status, employment, land and water, crops, ... etc.

The main body of statistic produced by FAO are derived from periodic agricultural censuses and from yearly surveys of agricultural production. The Programme WCA has put special emphasis on various items that can provide gender-related structural information on agricultural activities. These data can be used as a framework for conducting further samples surveys.

### **Identifying Indicators**

With the aim to monitor the gender-related progress or the change in response to interventions, some specific “indicators” can be developed. They can also be used at a regional, national or global level to monitor broader impacts of policy and international pressures on rural women empowerment.

The gender-sensitive indicators can be utilized to assess the measurements of progress made towards gender equality in the area of water resources management and thus contribute to the goals of sustainable development.

Afterwards to turn these indicators into number, gender disaggregated data are required. To date, FAO has developed an inventory of gender-sensitive indicators, through the identification of factors that put differential pressure on the management and use of the land and water resources.

## **Internet Network**

An internet network to disseminate the gender sensitive information can be established with the aim:

- to improve communication among the participants and interested institutions;
- to facilitate access of rural women to information on irrigation innovative technologies;
- to disseminate the use of gender-related indicators in the women mainstreaming assessment process;
- to promote the gender mainstreaming approach in water resources management.

## **ITALICID ACTIVITIES**

1. Development and implementation of a structural database: a database will be created, and continually up-dated, utilizing the statistical gender-disaggregated data on water management issued by ISTAT (The Italian National Institute of Statistic Science). The national database will include an inventory mainly on:
  - farm holding, surface, cropping and irrigation characteristics.
  - share of dependent and independent work in agriculture among women and men.
  - rural women's education, formation and access to extension.
  - women participation to water management and irrigation.
  - role of women in the decision making in agricultural and Water User's Associations.
  - good practices for WUA management.

The gender disaggregated data will be collected and processed to produce information useful to know the women participation to the socio-economic development process of the country.

2. Web site establishment and operation: the information produced by data elaboration and processing will be implemented on the website of ITALICID for the dissemination of the knowledge on the mainstreaming gender conditions in Italy. The web-site of ITALICID will be linked to the CIHEAM-MAI Bari website and, through it, to the internet network of the other participants of the project, in order to provide a necessary information coordination and dissemination and a greater interaction and exchange of experiences.
3. Preparation of the national meeting on gender dimension awareness at different society levels in Italy: in collaboration with ONILFA, ITALICID will organize a national meeting to discuss the importance of the gender dimension in water management for rural development in Italy and to provide a report on raising public participation and awareness of Italian rural women on irrigation decision making policy.