

ROLE OF WOMEN IN WATER DIPLOMACY(?)

LESHA WITMER, WOMEN FOR WATER PARTNERSHIP
(AND A FEW OTHER “HATS”)

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- 💧 WHO IS ACTUALLY MANAGING THE WATER?
- 💧 IS THERE A DIFFERENCE IN USAGES / PRIORITIES FOR ALLOCATION?
- 💧 WHY DO PEOPLE E.G. SAY THEY ARE NOT INTERESTED?
- 💧 WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THE WOMEN THAT STUDIED E.G. HYDROLOGY?
- 💧 WHY ARE SOME GROUPS NOT VISIBLE OR REALLY HEARD UP TO NOW?

GENDER OR WOMEN ISSUE?

- GENDER = A SOCIAL STATUS BASED ON CONVINCING PERFORMANCE OF FEMININITY OR MASCULINITY - CAN BE WOMEN OR GIRLS, BOYS OR MEN, OR TRANSGENDERED
- SOCIALLY ASCRIBED ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND OPPORTUNITIES ASSOCIATED WITH (WO)MEN, INCL. HIDDEN POWER STRUCTURES THAT GOVERN RELATIONSHIPS USED TO EMPHASIZE SEX INEQUALITY; NOT CAUSED BY THE ANATOMIC AND PHYSIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES, BUT BY UNEQUAL AND INEQUITABLE TREATMENT
- ALLUDES TO THE CULTURAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL CONDITIONS AS BASIS OF CERTAIN STANDARDS, VALUES AND BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS
- EQUITY = EQUAL FOOTING, FAIRNESS OF TREATMENT FOR WOMEN AND MEN, RICH AND POOR, ACCORDING TO THEIR RESPECTIVE NEEDS

SO- GENDER IS NOT THE SAME AS A WOMEN'S ISSUE

(WATER) DIPLOMACY

- 💧 ART AND PRACTICE OF CONDUCTING **NEGOTIATIONS** BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF **STATES**
- 💧 USUALLY REFERS TO INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY, BY PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMATS WITH REGARD TO ISSUES OF PEACE-MAKING, **ECONOMICS, CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, AND HUMAN RIGHTS.**
- 💧 IN AN INFORMAL OR SOCIAL SENSE, DIPLOMACY IS THE **EMPLOYMENT OF TACT** TO GAIN **STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE** OR TO FIND **MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS TO A COMMON CHALLENGE**, PHRASING OF STATEMENTS IN A NON-CONFRONTATIONAL, OR POLITE MANNER
- 💧 **ADVOCACY WITH RESPECT.**

DUBLIN PRINCIPLES (1992)

3. WOMEN PLAY A **CENTRAL ROLE** IN THE SUPPLY, MANAGEMENT AND SAFEGUARDING OF WATER.



- 💧 a place at the decision-making table
- 💧 key role in water management

SO, WHY A WOMEN'S ISSUE

- 💧 MORE AND MORE HAVE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN THE FIELD; ARE EXPERTS / PROFESSIONALS
- 💧 BUT RARELY IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS
- 💧 HOLD POSITIONS WHERE THEY CAN INFLUENCE WATER USE: MAJORITY OF THE USERS (DOMESTIC, AGRICULTURE, FOOD, (AGRICULTURE AND PROCESSING), BUSINESS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT, HEALTH CARE)
- 💧 MAIN UNPAID SUPPLIERS IN MANY PARTS OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD
- 💧 MAIN CONSUMERS > INFLUENCE QUALITY, REGULATIONS (TAP; BOTTLE)
- 💧 MANAGE AND OWN (SMALL) BUSINESSES

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

(A BIT BLACK AND WHITE)

- 💧 *WOMEN SEE AND FOCUS ON THE IMPACT ON LIVELIHOODS FIRST*
- 💧 *WOMEN TEND TO LOOK AT SOCIAL ISSUES - SHARE (AS A MINIMUM IN THE FAMILY)*
- 💧 *MEN ARE INTERESTED IN AND TEND TO SEE THE TECHNOLOGY FIRST*
- 💧 *WOMEN ARE MORE INCLINED TO LOOK AT DEMAND, MEN AT SUPPLY*
- 💧 *WOMEN TEND TO SEE THE “MERIT” ; MEN TEND TO SEE THE “MARKET“*

WATER: A MERIT (GOOD)

GOODS AND SERVICES THAT ARE JUDGED TO BE WORTH MORE THAN THEIR VALUE ACCORDING TO THE MARKET. MERIT GOODS SUCH AS WATER & SANITATION SERVICES MAY BE UNDER-SUPPLIED IN PROPORTION TO THEIR PERCEIVED VALUE (IF LEFT TO PRIVATE ENTERPRISE), AND ARE THEREFORE OFTEN PROVIDED BY GOVERNMENTS OR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

IN ECONOMICS, A GOOD TO WHICH PERSONS ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE A RIGHT. THAT IS, A MERIT GOOD IS SOMETHING THAT SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR FREE OR AT REDUCED PRICES BECAUSE IT IS NECESSARY AND THE FREE MARKET DOES NOT PROVIDE SUFFICIENT INCENTIVES (YET) TO PRODUCE IT

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

(A BIT PROVOCATIVE)

- 💧 *WOMEN ARE MORE INCLINED TO LOOK AT DEMAND, MEN AT SUPPLY*
- 💧 *WOMEN TEND TO INTEGRATE/ LOOK FOR “HORIZONTAL” COORDINATION/ COHESION; MEN TEND TO FOCUS ON THE “SILO”*
- 💧 *WOMEN TEND TO BE MORE SENSITIVE/ AWARE RE. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES/ IMPACTS*
- 💧 *SO YOU GOT IT: LEAVING OUT THE ARGUMENTS THAT WOMEN ARE THE MAJORITY, PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY >> STILL SMART*

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

- 💧 WOMEN TEND TO BUILD RELATIONS FIRST <> MAKE LOCAL CONNECTIONS
- 💧 <> PEOPLE TEND TO GIVE WOMEN MORE INFORMATION
- 💧 ACCESS TO AREAS THAT ARE RESTRICTED TO MEN

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

- 💧 FEMALE AMBASSADORS TEND TO FOCUS ON UNDERLYING FACTORS OF LARGER PROBLEMS, BRINGING ISSUES SUCH AS POVERTY, FAMILY STRUCTURES, HEALTH CARE AND THE LACK OF SAFE DRINKING WATER INTO DISCUSSIONS
- 💧 DIPLOMACY IS REACTIVE IN NATURE, WOMEN ARE WILLING TO CONSIDER OPTIONS MORE CAREFULLY FOR A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME THAN MEN UNTIL THE RIGHT ROUTE FOR ACTION IS FOUND
- 💧 FINDING (OTHER) SOLUTIONS TO THE ROOT CAUSE OF MANY INSECURITY AND INEQUALITY ISSUES MAKES WOMEN EFFECTIVE DIPLOMATS
- 💧 *EXAMPLES: HILARY CLINTON, MARIA MUTAGAMBE, LADY ASHTON..*

“TENDENCIES” AND LANGUAGE USED

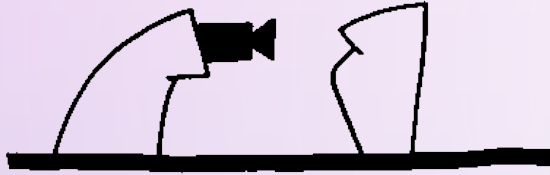
- AND “OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS” > THE MESSAGE: VICTIM, NOT ACTOR
- MARGINALIZED GROUPS? THE MESSAGE: NO SAY/ DECISION-MAKING – BUT, WE WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU
- MOST IMPACTED? MESSAGE: THE VICTIMS – NOT ACTORS
- WATER = TECHNOLOGY – WOMEN DO NOT KNOW ABOUT TECHNOLOGY
- >> NO WOMEN IN “MODERN” WATER MANAGEMENT
- >> INSTRUCTION AND EDUCATION FOR MEN

“ TENDENCIES” AND LANGUAGE USED

- ❖ WOMEN “TELL THE STORY”, BUT ARE NOT CLEAR ENOUGH ON DATA (OUTPUT, OUTCOME AND IMPACT)
- ❖ NUMBERS DO NOT TELL THE WHOLE STORY; STORIES DO NOT QUOTE THE NUMBERS
- ❖ LACK OF ACCESS TO AND COMPILATION AND USE OF DATA BY WOMEN (EVEN WHEN AVAILABLE)
- ❖ POLICY MAKERS GO BY THEIR OWN OPINION AND EXPERIENCE: “ EVERYBODY” AGREES “ ON PAPER”
- ❖ >> > NOT ENOUGH MADE-TO-MEASURE POLICIES AND MEASURES OR EVEN COUNTER PRODUCTIVE / DISINVESTMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *ACKNOWLEDGE WOMEN AS LEADERS, EXPERTS, DIPLOMATS, MANAGERS AND AGENTS OF CHANGE IN WATER - NOT JUST AS WATER CARRIERS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES*
- *INCLUDE WOMEN AT ALL LEVELS IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS BY SETTING QUOTA OF AT LEAST 40% WOMEN IN WATER GOVERNING BODIES (MINISTERS 7THWWFORUM)*
- *TAKE WOMEN'S (TRADITIONAL) KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE AND ADAPTATION STRATEGIES SERIOUS AND INVOLVE THEM*
- *SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDG 5 AND 6 WITH CURRENT TARGETS*
- *SUPPORT AND ADVOCATE FOR GENDER DISAGGREGATED INDICATORS AND DATA*



give visibility



Sharing: source, knowledge and experience



influencing policy:

right to water: amount, access, quality,
gender-sensitive and responsive



Women can manage money – get it to them

KNOW WHAT YOU WISH..

