CASE STUDY ON RURAL WATER PROJECTS

BELIZE
Project # GA23/BZE – BSIF/BNTF

Nancy Namis
Social Analyst
Basic Needs Trust Fund
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Lima, Peru
Belize has 2 cities, 7 towns, and 193 villages, with ethnic diversity based on geography.

The BWSL provides water for the towns and cities.

Most villages have RWSs, providing limited supplies.

RWSs are managed by appointed Water Boards.

The Ministry of Rural Development has the responsibility for these Boards.
Many villages still experienced difficulty in accessing potable water supply, resulting in water borne diseases, safety and health hazards and loss of opportunities to pursue socio-economic activities.
• Since 1997, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), through the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF), in collaboration with the Government of Belize and beneficiary communities has financed the development of water systems; treatment plants for untreated water supplies and the extension and upgrading of existing water systems.
• 85 water projects, valued at USD10.4mn, has benefitted 46,000 persons in poor, rural areas.
OBJECTIVES

• To ensure that every household has access to potable water at all times and
• Women and men are able to manage and maintain the water resource.
Project activities are executed by the Social Investment Fund/Basic Needs Trust Fund (SIF/BNTF) office. These include:

- Identification of a reliable water source
- Construction of water system
- Capacity building and technical training for community stakeholders for managing and sustaining the water resource.
• BSIF uses participatory methodologies in the identification, design, infrastructural implementation, and sustainability phases of the projects.

(These methodologies have been used in the development of water systems in Jamaica and other Caribbean countries, to foster inclusiveness essential for integrated water resource management.)
DESIGN METHODOLOGY

• Request from the community to the SIF/BNTF.
• BNTF/SIF conducts a community meeting to identify the basic needs of the community and validate the request.
• Staff apply gender sensitive approaches to complement their specific roles in the design and implementation of the project.
A CNA is conducted which includes transect walks, interviews with key informants, informal consultations with the community and separate focus groups with women and with men. (Information on water use, sources, properties and water table level gained from women and men).

There is a high participation of women attending meetings and providing relevant information which informs the design of the project.
• Pre-feasibility proposal is presented to the community in a public meeting to validate the design, scope and costs of the project intervention. Community contribution - by women, men and children - is discussed and established at this stage.

• The proposal is presented to the SIF/BNTF Board of Directors for approval.
The SIF/BNTF returns to the community for further consultation on the appropriateness of the design and for the establishment of the Project Monitoring Committee (PMC). Women are encouraged to be representative on the PMC.

This committee monitors the project from the community’s perspective. Women’s and men’s perspectives are captured.
3 major activities in this phase includes

- procurement of materials and equipment through competitive tendering
- competitive tendering of construction works
- community contribution in the form of trenching and pipe installation.
• In rural Belize, among the Mayas, for example, there is still a distinct division of labor.
• It is the tradition that men and children do the trenching and the women do the complementary tasks, such as providing meals and refreshments to the male workers.
• Establishment of, and management by the water board, is the final activity of the implementation phase.

• The Water Board has the following functions:
  – providing economic opportunities
  – decision-making
  – leadership
  – accountability
  – financial management
  – empowerment of women.
• Training is provided in technical operations and maintenance and business accounting and records management. Management to the water board forms the final activity of the implementation phase.
• The Board is crucial for the sustainability of the project.
Each rural water project is supported by the collaboration of several State agencies.

These include the Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Health, the Public Utilities Commission, the Belize Water Services Limited and the SIF/BNTF.
• The State agencies provide the capacity building support for effective functioning of the Water Boards.

• **An Act of Parliament** guides the establishment of the rural Water Boards and the explicit participation of women. Each Board is comprised of 7 members of which the Minister is responsible for the appointment of 5 members.

• **Gender equality** is a governing principle of the Act.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of Water Boards</th>
<th>No. Male / Female Chairpersons</th>
<th>No. Male / Female Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26/3</td>
<td>159/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stann Creek</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22/2</td>
<td>107/37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayo</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20/2</td>
<td>108/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4/0</td>
<td>15/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Walk</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18/1</td>
<td>84/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corozal</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>65/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>100/9</td>
<td>538/116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92%/8%</td>
<td>82%/18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACHIEVEMENT IN GENDER EQUALITY

- Facilitating women’s participation in the projects in communities has contributed to more cost effective designs. It is also promoting acceptance of their social and economic value in community life, especially in the indigenous communities.

- Gender training provided to a broad section of the institutional staff has assisted in addressing the hierarchical structures within the communities in which inequality for women is embedded. The training was conveyed as enhancing their performance, rather than an “additional task”.

ACHIEVEMENT IN GENDER EQUALITY

• There is gradual increase in representation of women in positions of influence on the water boards. Of the 109 Water Boards only 8% have female Chairpersons, of a possible 654 Board Members 18% are females.

• Active involvement of women at this level is proving to be effective in implementing the principle of gender equality inherent in the policy of the Ministry of Local Government.
ACHIEVEMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY

- Strengthened cohesion among residents.
- Greater awareness among women and men within communities of their roles in water resource use and management.
CHALLENGES

• Appointments to the water boards
• Culture and ethnic sensitivity
• Commitment and resources to increase the training and awareness of water use and management to women in communities
• Support to the application of water management principles in rural communities
• Enforcing regulations without destroying community cohesion
LESSTONS LEARNT

- Strengthen the use of gender sensitive social marketing techniques to promote the principles of integrated water resource management within communities.
- Continue to provide training or upgrade skills in gender and capacity building (leadership training and decision making skills) focusing on all stakeholders and the political administrators.
- By promoting the economic efficiencies attributed to the participation of women in water projects, there is greater acceptance of their representation at all levels of the water boards and in all phases of the projects and in community life.
FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

• Review current legislation and engender current policies such as the National Policy on Local Governance in Belize.
• Develop gender sensitive policies and guidelines to explore further use of revenues for the redeployment of revenues garnered for investment in community projects.
• Establish gender targets and indicators, in alignment with the Regional BNTF Gender Strategy.
• Legislate and establish water rates with consideration of waivers for vulnerable groups and informed by advocacy and input from women.
THANK YOU