



Civil Society Advocacy Case Study

under the [CSOs For Good Governance: Enhancing civil society's contribution to governance and development processes in Trinidad and Tobago](#) (CSOs4GoodGov) project

Linking Gender to Water Resource Management in Rural Trinidad Communities

Organisation(s): Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), University of the West Indies, St Augustine and the Women Gender Water Network (WGWN)

Date: 2010 to 2013

Geographic Location: Trinidad and Tobago

Partners: Community Development Fund, Ministry of Community Development; Atlantic LNG Company of Trinidad and Tobago (Atlantic LNG); GEF Small Grants Programme; Power Generation Company of Trinidad and Tobago (Powergen); and Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago (Petrotrin)

SDGs in Action:



The Institute of Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) of the University of the West Indies (UWI) St. Augustine campus and the Women Gender Water Network (WGWN) collaboratively engaged in advocacy from 2010 to 2013 on the issue of water access and management in Trinidad and Tobago. The WGWN emerged out of a research project undertaken by the IGDS from 1998 to 2002 entitled, *The Nariva Swamp: A Gendered Case Study in Wetland Resource Management*, where it was felt that water-related issues were not sufficiently examined, and there was a need to engage in work on water access and management in Trinidad and Tobago from a gender perspective. Working with the IGDS, this network is comprised of UWI scholars as well as practitioners in the public and private sectors working on the issue of water and development. It delivers training for adults and children, conducts research and data collection and develops resource materials on water access and management.

The WGWN actively advocated for gendered water use and management in communities through their Children Vacation Water Camp Programme, which were held in the water-poor communities of Biche, Matelot and Icacos, from 2010 to 2013. These water camps were funded by international development agencies, including the Global Environmental Facility

(GEF) Small Grants Programme and private sector partners, such as Atlantic LNG Company of Trinidad and Tobago (Atlantic LNG) and the Power Generation Company of Trinidad and Tobago (Powergen).

The key aims of this advocacy action were to: influence future decision-makers; increase water education; promote behavioural change among the children; empower children to be responsible; and influence the way water is used and managed at home, school and within communities. Gendered water use and management is seen as a key component in this process.

The approach enabled participatory learning for children, as well as parents, on the water cycle and sustainable water management practices and helped encourage positive behavioural changes at home and school with respect to sustainable water use, management and conservation. Through ongoing research and collaboration with the communities, resource materials such as workbooks on key gender and water related themes were also developed, even after funding for these camps had ended. Moreover, the activities also advanced research, data collection and analysis of water access and gender relations in rural communities in Trinidad by the IGDS, through

collaborating with the communities and involving them in research projects on gender and water.

Key Results and Impact

The Children Vacation Water Camp Programme was attended by over 300 children between the ages of 7 to 12 years from the three remote rural communities between 2010 and 2013. The camps increased awareness of water issues and encouraged desired changes in attitudes and behaviours surrounding sustainable water use, management and conservation by children and families in these water-poor communities.

The results were validated by follow up site visits and surveys by the WGWN and IDGS after the camps ended. The WGWN emerged the winner of the Atlantic LNG CEO's Sustainability Award in 2012, due to the success of their advocacy work on gendered water management, using the camps.

Additional benefits included the creation of networks of entrepreneurs in food production and other service providers within the rural communities. These networks in the camp communities of Matelot and Icados became a source of economic empowerment for community women long after the camps were completed.



Figure 1: Children's water camps were held in water poor communities in rural Trinidad between 2010 to 2013 and sought to raise awareness and influence behaviours of children and ultimately, communities on sustainable water use, management and conservation.

Key Lessons Learned

- Understanding the target audience and making linkages with actual community needs is essential to designing an effective advocacy strategy. Connecting the learning that the children were exposed to and entrepreneurship opportunities afforded to community women, enabled the WGWN to successfully advocate for gendered

water use and sustainable water management in the communities.

- Complex issues such as gender mainstreaming require longer term commitment to change and can benefit from a multi-pronged approach e.g. WGWN and IDGS engaged the communities through other approaches such as collaborating with the community women to create resource workbooks, after the water camps ended.
- Advocacy can benefit from building internal and external partnerships which can provide greater access to expertise and resources; this can help sustain the advocacy action even in the face of funding constraints.

Next Steps or Opportunities

The WGWN has showcased their work in water resource management at exhibitions held by the EMA between 2013 to 2016. The WGWN is currently developing a water education manual, based on the success of the Children Vacation Water Camp Programme. In addition, in February 2018 the Fundación para la Sostenibilidad y la Equidad, based in Costa Rica, approached WGWN to work with them on establishment of a water management system in a select community in Trinidad and Tobago.

Advocacy Tips

- *It is important to understand the needs and issues of target audiences of the advocacy action when designing an effective advocacy strategy. This can make the advocacy messages and actions more relevant and appealing to the target audience.*
- *The advocacy strategy must be reviewed and adapted as community needs and issues change, to ensure continued buy-in and support of the advocacy action by the target audience.*

References and Links

Resource: *Water, women and community in Trinidad, West Indies*

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1477-8947.2004.00087.x/full>

YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLwNx1cuS64Lipm0mJBxl38CyPficX2z6x&time_continue=29&v=2YdJka1oIU

Website:

<http://sta.uwi.edu/igds/genderwatercommunity.asp>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/IGDSWGWN.Children.Water.Camps.Programme/>

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