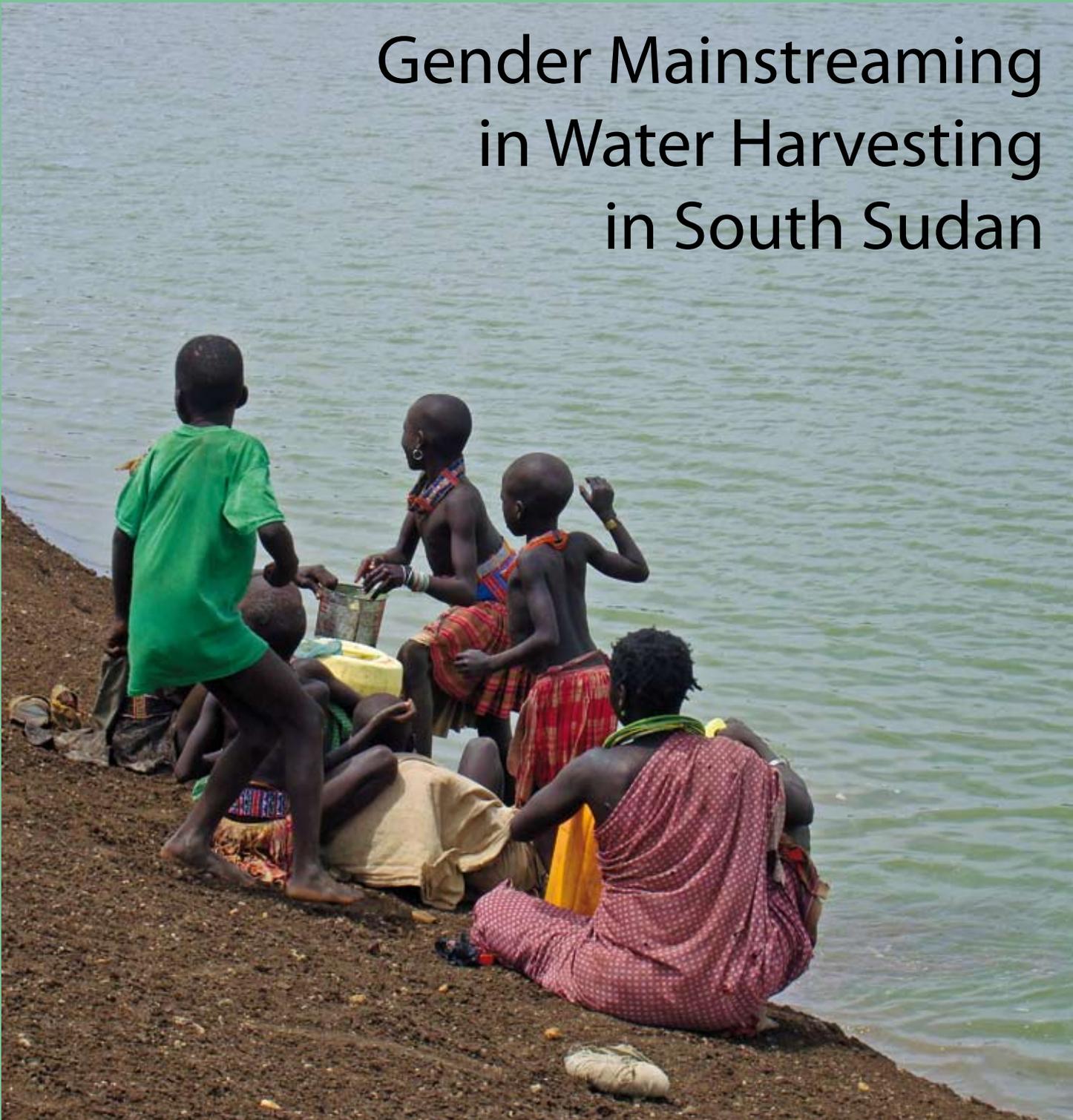




Ministry of Electricity, Dams, Irrigation and Water Resources

Gender Mainstreaming in Water Harvesting in South Sudan



TECHNICAL GUIDELINES



Food and Agriculture
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United Nations



United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office

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Cover Image: © FAO, South Sudan/J. Wani – Woman and girls collecting water from Nakurmai *Hafir* in Kapoeta East, South Sudan

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Executive summary

Resource-based conflicts over access to traditional grazing lands and water rights in South Sudan form a fundamental challenge to peace and stability in the country. To tackle the causes of conflict, the Government of South Sudan and the international community have been investing in livestock water provision over the last several years.

Unfortunately the building of water harvesting structures has so far focused mainly on the technical aspects, with less attention to social dynamics and peace-building, with impacts on the sustainability of the interventions. In order to understand water harvesting interventions in the context of livelihoods improvement, conflict resolution and policy discourse in South Sudan, FAO in collaboration with UNEP have embarked on a joint project - "Assessment of water harvesting structures for sustainable livelihoods and peace building in South Sudan", financed from the Peace Building Fund (PBF) for South Sudan.

A gender analysis was conducted to inform the government and development partners to better understand the different needs and priorities men and women as water users. The findings of the gender assessment form the basis of this gender mainstreaming guidelines for future water harvesting interventions.

It is important to recognize women's and men's rights as water users in their own right and consider the different implications of water harvesting for women, men, boys and girls in any project, programme or policy to assess how they will benefit from different interventions. Such a gender approach to water harvesting interventions would contribute to sustainability and impact on conflict reduction and peace-building.

This guideline is a reference document for gender mainstreaming in water harvesting in South Sudan and is meant for organizations investing in and implementing water harvesting projects for livestock.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
KII	Key Informant Interviews
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
WHS	Water Harvesting Structures

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

After a short period of calm soon after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, resource-based conflicts over access to traditional grazing lands and water rights escalated in all states of South Sudan, forming a fundamental challenge to peace and stability in the country. Disputes over political boundaries that delimit pasture, water and migration routes have exacerbated the situation. Typically these conflicts are among pastoralists themselves and between pastoralists and farmers in different ethnic communities and are particularly heavy in the drought-prone “arc of conflict” extending through Jonglei, Lakes and Eastern Equatoria States. To tackle the causes of conflict, the Government of South Sudan and the international community have been investing in livestock water provision (including *hafirs*¹) over the last several years. By increasing availability of water for livestock in communities under stress, it is expected to decrease conflict as cattle keepers need to travel less to access water and there will thus be a smaller likelihood for confrontation.

Unfortunately the building of water harvesting structures has so far focused mainly on the technical aspects, with less attention to social dynamics and peace-building, with impacts on the sustainability of the interventions. In order to understand water harvesting interventions in the context of livelihoods improvement, conflict resolution and policy discourse in South Sudan, FAO in collaboration with UNEP have embarked on a joint project - “Assessment of water harvesting structures for sustainable livelihoods and peace building in South Sudan”, financed from the Peace Building Fund (PBF) for South Sudan.

As an important part of this assessment, a gender analysis was conducted to inform the government and development partners to better understand the different needs and priorities men and women have for water harvesting interventions. Women in South Sudan often have less access to productive resources, services, and employment opportunities than they would need to be fully productive. They are burdened with time-consuming domestic tasks such as collecting water and fuel wood. It is important to recognize women’s and men’s rights as water users in their own right and consider the different implications of water harvesting for women, men, boys and girls in any project, programme, or policy to assess how they will benefit from different interventions. Such a gender approach to water harvesting interventions would contribute to sustainability and impact on conflict reduction and peace-building. The findings of the gender analysis form the basis of this gender mainstreaming guidelines for future water harvesting interventions.

This guideline is a reference document for gender mainstreaming in water harvesting in South Sudan and is meant for organizations investing in and implementing water harvesting projects for livestock. The primary target groups comprise of staff from the Ministry of Electricity, Dams, Irrigation and Water Resources (MEDIWR) at the national and state levels. The guidelines may also be of interest to the international community particularly NGOs, UN, donors and private contractors.

Section one of the guidelines highlights the way gender, conflict and water are interrelated in the South Sudan context. Guidance for considering gender aspects at different stages of the pre- and post- construction phases to ensure effective and sustainable water harvesting interventions is presented in section two. Key gender concepts are included in the annex.

1 *Hafir* is a hollow dug in the ground to store runoff water after the rainy season

1.2 Context

Cattle rearing and acquisition is central to the cultural identity and status of pastoralist communities in South Sudan. Young men are responsible for guarding the cattle, and engaging in fighting in order to protect the wealth of their families is seen as a sign of bravery and male self-worth. Masculinity and rites of passage associated with cattle acquisition and protection put young men under pressure. During the seasonal migration of herders from one state or county to another in search of water and pasture for livestock, young men stay together in cattle camps, increasing the probability of violent clashes between groups of young men.

Formerly, when conflicts occurred between villages, clans or tribes, the casualties were low because traditional weapons (sticks and spears) were used and traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms were used to control them. However, in recent years intra- and inter-ethnic conflicts have become more violent particularly among pastoralist groups due to several reasons, such as the availability of firearms, weakening of local conflict resolution mechanisms², culture of impunity, growing inequalities and poverty, as well as droughts which heavily reduce water availability³. They are characterised by violent armed conflicts resulting in alarming numbers of accompanying casualties. In addition, there has been extensive looting and destruction of property and livelihoods assets, appropriation of massive numbers of cattle from villages and cattle camps, displacement of large numbers of men, women and children and in the worst cases widespread civilian casualties through deliberate targeting (murder, violence and sexual violence) of women, children and the elderly. This triggers reprisal attacks to recoup lost cattle and loss of life. The cycle is exacerbated by the absence of other livelihood or employment opportunities for youth⁴.

Women suffer as victims of violence but also have enormous untapped potential for conflict resolution and peace building. The women of South Sudan played an instrumental role in the liberation country's struggle and they continue to carry out advocacy regarding peace building.

1.3 Main findings of the gender analysis

The gender analysis reveals a general lack of awareness of the different roles and priorities of men and women in the design and management of the existing water harvesting facilities. The initial community mobilization and consultations to create awareness on the construction of Water Harvesting Structures (WHS) only involved community leaders, who were all men. The planning did not involve a gender analysis or gender-sensitive feasibility studies to inform type, design, size and cost of WHS. Women were thus not consulted in the siting or design of the *hafirs*. This has led to many of the other problems identified:

- An important aspect left out in the planning is that the *hafirs* are often the only source of water, and are thus used also for collecting water for domestic purposes. However, they are often situated in remote locations, and for women and girls to collect water, they have to walk 5-7 km being exposed to the risk of sexual violence which could result in conflict. The daily trips used to collect water take a significant

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