

- **Gender – Need for a Women’s Professional Network in Sanitation**

Introduction:

The gender sanitation table was moderated by Shobana Srinivasan (BORDA/ SuSanA Secretariat). The discussion was done with two rotations targeting various questions like:

- Challenges faced by women in the sector particularly in the developing world
- Do we need a women’s sanitation professional network? If yes, how can we ascertain the involvement of women from the Global South?
- What are the goals of such a network?
- What investment channels are needed to leverage on the skills and expertise of women sanitation professionals from the African continent?

Output Summary from the two rounds:

- **Challenges:**
 - Sanitation is often considered a ‘man’s’ job and young women are discouraged from entering the sector. At service levels, women are often pushed to small tasks that involved manual labour and machines are often operated by men. This situation cannot be tackled by the sanitation sector alone by training more women in the technology sector.
 - MHM is often addressed as a separate topic and not integrated with mainstream sanitation management and service delivery.
 - Women lack role models in the sector that they can look up to and be inspired.
 - Employment policies are not gender mainstreamed in many organisations.
 - Most public speakers in the sector are often men.
- **Need for a professional network:**
 - The need for a global professional sanitation network for women was considered key to achieve SDGs 5 and 6. However, gender equality rights being uneven in countries, we need to focus regionally as well. E.g: women’s right aren’t the same in Saudi Arabia and Germany
 - Involvement of women from the Global South can be ascertained by establishing local Chapter and channel funds for target-oriented activities in each region depending of the local culture and social setup.
- **Goals and activities:**
 - A sounding board advocating change in traditional employment laws and creating more opportunity for women
 - Involving men in all process to signify equality
 - Training women to confidently take up challenging jobs in the sector

- Fostering female entrepreneurs by recognising them and providing incentives
 - Capacity development through media workshops and summer schools
 - Awards and accolades for women in the sector
 - Increasing the participation of women in conferences, panels and events
 - Behaviour change programs in school targeting young adults
 - Showcasing male role models who promote gender equality
 - Training female journalists to cover sanitation stories
- Key takeaways:
 - The participants acknowledged the need to work together with existing networks and tools within the sector like UN women and Women for Water.
 - The involvement of other genders was also consider crucial.
 - Focus on conferences are a good way to start with in order to advocate equal participation of women from the sector.
 - Participation of NGOs is important for grassroots involvement and behaviour changes
 - Public utilities must also be targeted for trainings

Table rapport provided by: Shobana Srinivasan (BORDA/ SuSanA Secretariat)