

Key actions in inclusive WASHⁱ

The United Nations General Assembly explicitly recognised access to safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right in 2010, and acknowledged the essential nature of water and sanitation to the realisation of all human rights.ⁱⁱ However in many contexts people with disabilities, women and the elderly are excluded from accessing or safely using water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services and facilities for reasons including poor or distant placement of WASH infrastructure, inaccessible toilets and water supply infrastructure, exclusion from community hygiene awareness and general WASH planning processes, and stigma and discrimination. The list below outlines some key actions for promoting inclusive WASH.

Planning and Design

- ✓ Undertake a **situational analysis** to identify the physical, attitudinal, communication and policy barriers faced by people with disabilities, women, elderly and other groups in relation to WASH.
- ✓ Carry out a **baseline** which includes population data disaggregated by sex, age, disability; include questions about menstrual hygiene, accessibility of facilities.
- ✓ Consult with and consider partnering with a local **Disabled People's Organisation**ⁱⁱⁱ. Involve people with disabilities and their representative organisations in planning, implementing and evaluating WASH projects.
- ✓ Develop an **inclusion strategy** for your agency. This strategy should explicitly respond to the situational analysis, and identify key entry points for disability and gender inclusion across all WASH programming.

Implementation

- ✓ Ensure **community meetings** use participatory approaches that enable different groups to actively participate. Consider the most appropriate meeting time to allow women and men to participate and ensure the location are convenient and accessible for people with disabilities and elderly people. Use accessible communication so that people with vision impairments or who are deaf or hard of hearing can participate.
- ✓ Raise **awareness** about the importance of inclusive WASH with partners, village leaders and in communities to address negative attitudes and encourage participation. Emphasise that to reach Open Defecation Free (ODF) status for example, everyone in a community needs to be using a latrine.
- ✓ In addition to ensuring inclusion in WASH programming, people with disabilities, women and the elderly may need **additional support** to enable their full participation. Establish processes to refer people with disabilities or the elderly to disability or health services if needed. Consider whether specific activities within communities are needed to challenge gender norms or support women's participation, or address stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities. This is called the **'twin track' approach**^{iv} to programming.

- ✓ Include a **specific budget line** for disability and gender inclusion measures and reasonable accommodations such as sign language interpretation, additional transport costs or developing behaviour change communication materials in different formats (e.g. large print or Braille).
- ✓ Ensure **information about sanitation and hygiene** includes facts about menstrual hygiene, disability, and communicable disease. This should reinforce the need to provide access to all, and challenge beliefs that result in discrimination against people with disabilities or women.
- ✓ Ensure **information is provided in local languages and accessible formats** such as large print, audio or Braille. Check whether everyone has access to relevant information during monitoring activities. Ensure girls and women have information about menstrual hygiene management.
- ✓ Provide information about **accessible designs for household toilets**, including pictures (drawings or photos) of handrails, seating options, ramps etc, with features for menstrual hygiene management.^v
- ✓ Ensure WASH facilities provide privacy for **women to wash their bodies, stained clothing and any cloths** used for menstrual hygiene management.
- ✓ Ensure people with disabilities, the elderly and women are **involved in decision making** about the location of community water points and of latrines. These should be located and installed in a way that makes them as safe, accessible and user friendly as possible for all users, including people with disabilities.
- ✓ Ensure **public or institutional latrines** (in markets, schools, health centres) include separate facilities for males and females, with accessible cubicles, and water provided inside the women's cubicles for menstrual hygiene management. There should also be arrangements for the **disposal of sanitary napkins or other disposable sanitary items**, where used.
- ✓ **WASH committees** should include women and people with disabilities, and should receive training on gender and disability inclusion. These should be facilitated to ensure meaningful participation of all members.
- ✓ Ensure **tariff systems include subsidies or exemptions options** for the poorest and people who cannot pay. These should take into account disability status as part of an overall poverty assessment.

Monitoring and evaluation

- ✓ Ensure monitoring and evaluation includes people with disabilities, women and elderly people in **monitoring activities**.
- ✓ Collect **qualitative data** from people with disabilities, women and the elderly regarding their access to WASH facilities and the extent to which they participated in the project. This could also explore changes (positive or negative) in community attitudes or their participation in community activities.
- ✓ Ensure **endline survey** data can be disaggregated by gender, disability (using the Washington Group Short Set of Questions^{vi}) and age and that surveys include questions regarding the accessibility and usability of household and community WASH facilities.
- ✓ **Indicators** should reflect targets for:
 - accessibility of shared/public WASH facilities;

- increased numbers of the most marginalized with access to appropriate WASH facilities (considering safety, dignity, hygiene, ease of use);
- Increased participation of marginalized community members, not only as beneficiaries but also in active roles with responsibilities and payment where possible;
- Increased awareness and acceptance within the community of the rights of everyone to participate and have access to WASH.

Further Information

There are many resources on accessible and inclusive WASH available. A good starting-point is the Inclusive WASH website at <http://www.inclusivewash.org.au>. It includes resources, case studies and webinars on inclusive WASH practice, with a focus on inclusion of women and girls, people with disabilities, people with HIV and other chronic illnesses, and the poorest of the poor.

ⁱ Adapted from WaterAid and WEDC, 'Inclusive WASH: What does it look like?'

http://wedc.lboro.ac.uk/resources/learning/EI_Inclusive_WASH_what_it_looks_like.pdf.

ⁱⁱ Resolution 64/292. See http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml.

ⁱⁱⁱ Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) are organisations made up of persons with disabilities and which exist to represent the interests of their members. Some DPOs represent people with all impairment types, while others may focus on a particular impairment type or sectoral issue, or represent geographical areas (local, provincial, national, regional or international).

^{iv} See explanation of the twin track approach in Australian Government, Development for All: 2015-2020. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/development-for-all-2015-2020.pdf>

^v Examples of accessible facilities can be found in 'Compendium of Accessible WASH Technologies', <http://www.wateraid.org/what-we-do/our-approach/research-and-publications/view-publication?id=aff6d098-00f2-42e5-b9a0-22ec2b264a5e>.

^{vi} Further information on use of the Washington Group Questions can be found at <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>



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