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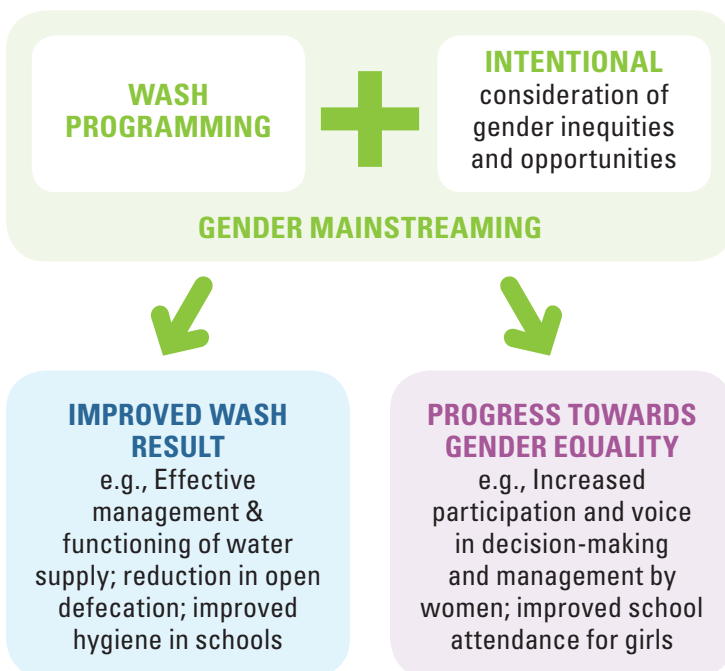
**Gender-Responsive
Water, Sanitation
and Hygiene:
Key elements for
effective WASH
programming**



Introduction

Effective gender-responsive programming in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector can contribute to progress towards gender equality and important WASH results (see Box 1). This document outlines essential elements that WASH

BOX 1: GENDER MAINSTREAMING IMPROVES GENDER RESULTS AND WASH RESULTS



practitioners should take into account at all points in the programme cycle in order to enhance a gender-responsive approach to their work.

WASH and gender equality are represented in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 6 and 5, respectively, and also contribute to the achievement of other sectoral goals across the development agenda. Likewise, UNICEF's [Strategy for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene \(2016-2030\)](#) and UNICEF's [Gender Action Plan \(GAP\)](#) recognize the importance of leveraging linkages across sectors to deliver priority interventions for children and adolescents that are well-resourced, innovative, and expert-led in order to maximize quality, reach and sustainability.

WASH programming, in times of peace and humanitarian crisis, reduces the burden of access to water, improves hygiene facilities and provides dignified menstrual hygiene management (MHM).

These are significant contributors to the GAP's programming priorities, including:

- **To advance girls' secondary education** by providing safe, girl-friendly bathrooms with provision for MHM in schools;
- **To help prevent gender-based violence (GBV) in emergencies** by having safe, well-sited water collection points and safe, well-lit women- and girl-friendly sanitation facilities with provision for MHM.

Ensuring that women and girls have an equal role in the design, management and monitoring of the WASH ecosystem can be a strategic gender-mainstreaming practice that empowers women and girls while improving WASH outcomes. Gender diversity in decision-making is linked to more effective decisions, which is one of many evidence points highlighted in the growing field of gender lens investing, which offers expanded financing possibilities for WASH programming.

BOX 2: GENDER LENS INVESTING

'Gender lens investing' is the integration of gender analysis with financial analysis to make better investment decisions. In the context of defining an investment strategy, the gender analysis can include making money available to enterprises owned by women, market analysis of female consumers, focusing on workplace equity and employment opportunities for women, and investing in products and services that benefit women and girls. [Advancing Gender Lens Investing in Asia \(USAID, 2015\)](#)



Key elements of gender-responsive WASH programming

To effectively implement the GAP, it is important to incorporate a gender lens at each stage of the WASH programme cycle (including in humanitarian emergencies) using a results-based management approach. A results-based management approach has three stages: strategic planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Planning

1 Strategic planning has two steps: situation analysis and programme design.

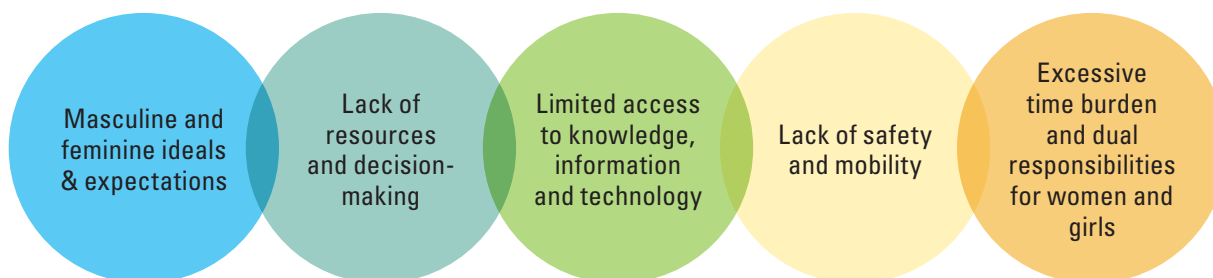
Situation Analysis

Use a gender lens in your situation analysis to identify gender-related WASH barriers and bottlenecks (see Figure 1), and

opportunities to overcome these. For all barriers and bottlenecks, it is important to make sure the most marginalized women and girls are identified, including analysis by income, disability, and ethnicity.

You should conduct a desk review (see a list of common resources in Box 3) and informational interviews to understand the barriers, bottlenecks and opportunities. Some questions that may be relevant for your interviews and desk review analysis:

FIGURE 1: COMMON GENDER-RELATED BARRIERS AND BOTTLENECKS



BOX 3: KEY RESOURCES FOR GENDER ANALYSIS DESK REVIEW

- The latest country situation analysis for information on: 1) the status of women and girls (e.g. sex-disaggregated school enrolment, workforce and political representation, health status, gender-based violence) and 2) the roles and policies of ministries and other institutions in addressing gender-responsive development.
- Ask your country gender specialist or focal point, or regional gender advisor, for the results of your country office's UNICEF gender programmatic review (if one has been conducted), especially if WASH programming was reviewed.
- Gender equality goals and targets in the Country Programme Document.
- Check the latest country programme midterm and/or annual work plan review report to understand any recent progress on gender equality.
- Documents and assessments related to any existing gender-responsive WASH programmes in the country or region.
- Any evaluation of WASH programmes that included an assessment of equity, including gender dimensions.

Key Questions

- How are existing WASH services and facilities – including in schools and health centres – intentionally designed to meet the needs of women and girls, including those with disabilities, such as adequate sanitation/provision for MHM?
- Do women/girls and men/boys feel safe using WASH facilities?
- How would WASH-task time savings offer opportunities for study time, paid employment, etc.?
- What is the level of participation and leadership of women and adolescent girls in the design, construction and monitoring of WASH facilities, and how does it compare to men's level of participation and leadership? Does the participation of women represent other dimensions of equity, including ethnicity and income?
- What are the roles of men, women, girls and boys in managing WASH facilities and services (repair, maintenance and cleaning, water collection, decision-making on management arrangements and tariffs) in the home, school and other locations? Do these tasks reduce opportunities for attending school, income generation, rest, childcare, etc.? Are there safety risks associated with these tasks?

- Are there systems in place for training and retaining female staff in WASH departments and institutions?
- What are specific menstrual hygiene practices in the communities/areas you work in? What facilities, products, and information exist to allow women and girls to address their menstrual hygiene and management needs with dignity? What are critical elements of a hygiene kit? Are facilities accessible for females with disabilities?
- Do features of existing WASH facilities help prevent gender-based violence, e.g. sex-segregated toilets, adequate lighting and privacy?
- Do existing WASH community outreach materials and activities exacerbate negative gender stereotypes? Do they include basic information about GBV risk reduction, where to report GBV risk, and how to access care?
- Are there potential public or private financing stakeholders who prioritise social impact and would be drawn to investing in WASH to support women's leadership, entrepreneurship and economic empowerment? What is the gender dimension of new products, services and business models for WASH?

Programme Design

Once you understand the gender-related barriers, bottlenecks and opportunities for high-quality, equitable WASH outcomes specific to your context, you are ready to develop creative and evidence-based interventions that achieve WASH results for all. You will need to determine the gender-responsive results you want to achieve and how you want to achieve them. You should prioritise approaches that can achieve scale and for which you can obtain adequate funding. Some questions that may guide your programme design are below.

Key Questions

- Have you prioritised gender-responsive programme actions that address the most critical inequities and opportunities identified in your situation analysis?
- Is gender considered as a dimension of market opportunity, as a lens on production, distribution or financing?
- Are creative interventions aligned with global and sector priorities and guidance, including the Interagency Standing Committee's (IASC) Guidelines on Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action? (see Box 4)
- Have you assessed the gender skills of qualified partners on the ground to ensure that the programme can be properly implemented?

BOX 4: GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROGRAMME DESIGN IN EMERGENCIES

- Water points should be no more than 500 metres from households.
- Handpumps and water containers should be women- and girl-friendly.
- Consult women and girls on their knowledge and practices to construct WASH facilities that respond to age, gender, disability and culturally-specific considerations.
- WASH facilities should be no more than 50 metres from homes, have adequate lighting, sturdy internal locks, and privacy fencing.
- Consult girls and women to identify the most culturally acceptable supplies for menstrual hygiene management, and ensure provisions are made for the disposal of sanitary supplies.
- Strive for 50% female representation within WASH program staff; provide targeted support for them to assume leadership positions.
- Ensure participation of women in decision-making processes (siting, design and management of WASH facilities).
- Tailor and target communication messages for women and girls.
- Include women and girls in user-satisfaction surveys, as both respondents and interviewers.

For more information, see [Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\) Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action](#).

- Are sex-disaggregated and specific gender indicators included in your results framework to adequately measure the gender-responsive results you aim to achieve? (see Box 5)
- Will indicator data also be disaggregated along other key dimensions (such as location or disability) to ensure that the most excluded are reached?
- Are resources allocated for selected gender-responsive programming actions linked to UNICEF programme and accounting codes? Don't forget to select relevant gender Specific Intervention Codes (SIC) and Gender Equality Markers (GEM) in VISION to track progress.

BOX 5: ILLUSTRATIVE GENDER TARGETS AND INDICATORS

SDG Target 6.2: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

QUANTITATIVE:

- Percentage of primary schools with access to adequate sanitation facilities for girls (global goal = 50%; modify according to your baseline)
- Percentage of primary and secondary schools with MHM as part of WASH programming
- Percentage of WASH staff aware of basic issues related to gender and prevention of violence against women and girls, including linkages between WASH programming and reduced vulnerabilities to violence
- Female-to-male ratio of WASH programme staff (of UNICEF and partners)
- Percentage of women/girls in job skills training on operation and maintenance of water supply and sanitation, including for tech-

nical and managerial roles

- Access to menstrual hygiene-related education, materials, and disposal options
- Female-to-male ratio of persons who participate in community-based WASH committees or other decision-making structures

QUALITATIVE:

How do women and girls perceive their level of participation in community-based WASH committees? What enhances and what are barriers to female participation?

For more information, see [Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\) Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action](#).





Implementation

2 Implementation is where programme planning comes to life through a variety of approaches. In addition to key questions to ask yourself, in this section we highlight a few promising gender-responsive WASH programming examples.

Key Questions

- Have you identified and implemented required activities to achieve the proposed gender outputs and outcomes as outlined in your plans?
- Have you introduced MHM services¹ to new and existing WASH facilities as needed? In particular, are WASH facilities well adapted to females' needs? Are communication messages and activities adapted with input from girls and women?
- Have you determined the implementation approaches in communities and government institutions? (see Box 6) Have you identified qualified partners, budget allocations, and ensured that actions are documented, tracked,

and reported in a timely manner?

- Are you looking at girls' and women's job skills and economic purchasing power as gendered programme angles? (see Box 7)
- Are you preventing violence against girls and women as a result of good WASH programming practices? (see Box 8)
- Have you ensured female participation in management committees and positions of responsibility to support improved functioning of water committees, water systems, and hygiene promotion? Have you provided these women with the necessary training? (see Box 9)
- Are you using innovative technology platforms to communicate messaging or implement accountability and feedback mechanisms for services?

BOX 6: ADVOCACY FOR POLICY CHANGE

In Bangladesh, UNICEF advocacy and sensitization efforts resulted in government directives to all secondary and higher schools in the country to provide gender-segregated toilets and menstrual hygiene.

UNICEF Gender Annual Results Report (2015)

¹ UNICEF MHM programming has found that the lack of separate sanitation facilities for girls with the privacy, supplies, and clean water required for MHM, makes managing their menses during school hours difficult and stressful, and in some contexts causes girls to miss days of school.

BOX 7: LINKS TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN

In Nicaragua, UNICEF supported the Southern Autonomous regional government with vocational training in masonry and plumbing for adolescents. Girls were encouraged to participate in the traditionally male-dominated sector, and 25 per cent of graduates were girls. The training paves the way for girls and women to take up nontraditional, economically empowering roles within the sector.



UNICEF Gender Annual Results Report (2015)

BOX 8: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

In 2009-2010 in North Kivu Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the WASH, protection and health sectors joined forces to prevent GBV. The link between sanitation and vulnerabilities to GBV was apparent: due to lack of private latrines, women had no choice but to defecate in the open, often at night and at a considerable distance away from their homes, increasing their risk of sexual assault. Women also faced violence, including rape, when collecting water from springs outside the village.

The sectors worked together to tackle these issues. The WASH team focused on construction of basic services in public places, promotion of household sanitation, health promotion, careful design and maintenance of water points (e.g. clearing pathways, fencing around water points to make areas safer, ensuring good flow of water, etc.) and appropriate siting of latrines relative to houses. In addition, protections were established involving men, women, a community leader, church members, local authorities and the police to raise awareness about sexual violence and its impact on the community, monitor WASH facilities and pathways to water points, and act as first points of contact for sexual violence reporting, medical and psychological help. The involvement of women in all programme stages resulted in a positive impact, and this approach has now been replicated in other areas.

House, S., Ferron, S., Sommer, M., Cavill, S. (2014) Violence, Gender and WASH: A Practitioner's Toolkit - Making water, sanitation and hygiene safer through improved programming and services

BOX 9: WOMEN IN KEY POSITIONS ON WATER USER COMMITTEES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH IMPROVED WATER SYSTEMS

UNICEF in Vanuatu has actively promoted the participation of women in water-user committees since 2012. However, advocacy efforts to male-dominated government departments have proved challenging. To encourage greater inclusion of women in water management, UNICEF undertook an analysis of water inventory data to determine whether female participation is associated with improved functioning of water committees and systems.

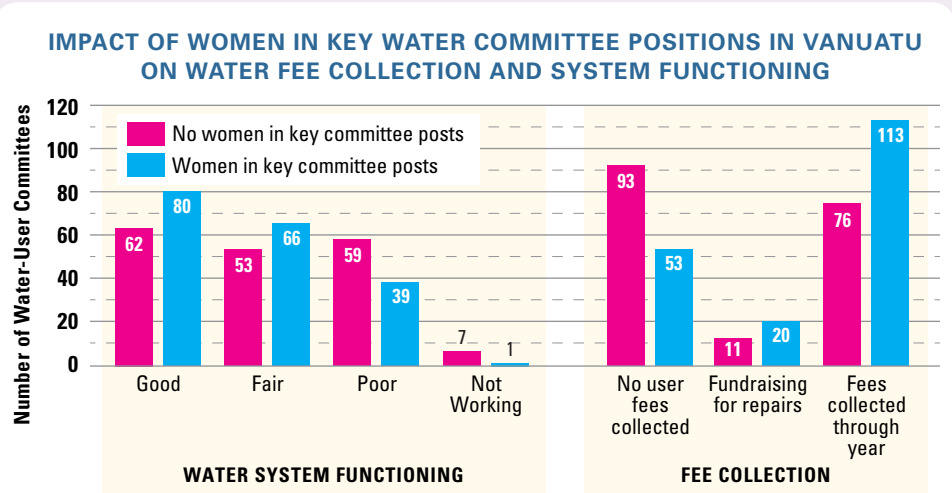
To that end, in 2014 UNICEF supported the introduction of mobile phone technology (AKVO) as a tool to collect data and monitor progress towards water targets. The household and water inventory data on women's participation in water collection and water-user committees for five of six provinces was analysed. The role of women in water-user committees was studied with respect to the functionality of both committees and water systems. The outcomes of the project include:

- Approximately two thirds of water (64%) is collected by females, 58% by women and 6% by girls, though this varies across provinces.
- Of the 1,244 community water points, 29%

have a water-user committee. Of the total 2,237 committee members, only 16% are female. The larger the committee, the smaller the proportion of female members.

- Just over half (51%) of the committees have a woman in a key position. The most common posts are secretary (27%) and treasurer (20%); a female chair is unusual (4%).

- Water committees with women in key posts meet more frequently (41% meet at least twice per year compared to 31%), demonstrate improved water system functionality (78% in good/fair condition versus 64%) and more effective fee collection (61% collect fees regularly versus 42%), than committees without women in key posts. See below chart.



Improving Water Supply in Vanuatu: Women in Key Roles (UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, 2017)



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BOX 10: MONITORING FOR GIRL'S AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND SAFE ACCESS TO WATER

A project that brings household water connections to a marginalized community would advance a fundamental WASH priority: increased access to safe drinking water. It could also be designed to advance and measure results related to gender equality, such as reduction in the time spent by women and girls fetching water at a shared tap or a far-away water point. The programming and measurement could also demonstrate how time saved opens up new opportunities for women and girls, such as more study time, paid employment, rest, and more quality time with family. The project could also be designed to create and measure entrepreneurial opportunities for women to provide and maintain water supply services. Measurement could also look at reduction of risks and vulnerabilities that women and girls are exposed to in water collection, including sexual assault.

- Is the monitoring system (data collection, methods and approaches) providing the necessary information to measure progress in advancing gender equality and/or women's and girls' empowerment?
- Have you meaningfully engaged the participation of national and sub-national gender institutions in monitoring efforts? Have you been transparent in your monitoring findings to ensure accountability to girls and women?
- Based on monitoring data, what corrective actions are needed to achieve the intended programming results?
- Were women and girls in the community involved in the identification of questions for the evaluation, collection of data, and interpretation of findings?

Monitoring and Evaluation

3 Monitoring provides regular data on the implementation of programme activities and progress towards planned outputs to support quality, timely implementation, and strengthen accountability and transparency - which allow for course correction (see monitoring examples in Boxes 10 and 11).

A gender-responsive evaluation will reveal the outcomes of the programme, including its impact on women and girls. It will tell us whether we achieved our intended gender-responsive results, the most effective pathways to those results, and what were obstacles to progress. Quality evaluations can provide important lessons learned for future UNICEF programming (see an evaluation example in Box 12).

Key Monitoring and Evaluation Questions

- Are you implementing the gender-responsive WASH intervention as planned?

BOX 11: MONITORING FOR SANITATION SOLUTIONS AND GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOMES

A village sanitation project that results in universal construction and use of sanitary latrines that allow safe disposal of faecal matter would achieve an important WASH result: reduced burden of diarrhoeal disease. In addition, it could also achieve key gender equality outcomes by intentionally supporting women's leadership in the design and management of new community sanitation facilities. Such a project could also measure the changes in girls' confidence, self-efficacy and school attendance when it is safer, easier, and more dignified for them to use the toilet and address their MHM needs. It could also measure the reduction of women's time spent on caretaking responsibilities as a result of the decreased burden of childhood disease, leading to more time for other opportunities.

[UNICEF Menstrual hygiene management resources](#)



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- How did the gender-responsive WASH interventions contribute to achieving the desired gender impacts, such as improving school attendance and learning for girls, raising awareness of hygiene practices e.g. menstrual hygiene practices, generating income and employment for women and girls, increasing participation of girls and women and promoting their decision-making authority at the national and local levels?
- To what extent are any positive gender-responsive results sustainable over time?
- Are there any unintentional results of the gender-responsive WASH interventions?
- Is gender part of WASH programming investment and financing evaluation metrics? For example, is success more likely when management teams have women in leadership roles?

BOX 12: EVALUATING FOR IMPROVED WATER SUPPLY AND BETTER EDUCATION FOR GIRLS

In Morocco, the World Bank's Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project aimed to reduce the "burden of girls who were traditionally involved in fetching water." The objective of the project was to increase access to sustainable potable water supply in rural areas, while promoting improved wastewater management and hygiene promotion. In the six provinces where the project was based, the time spent collecting water by women and young girls was reduced by 50 to 90 per cent. Due in part to more convenient access to water, girls' school attendance increased by 20 per cent in four years.

Adapted from [World Bank Report No. 25917, 2013](#)

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