



# WASH GENDER LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Towards Gender Transformative WASH Services

January 2025



Kingdom of the Netherlands



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for every child

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# Acronyms

ASWA	Accelerated Sanitation and Water for All
ESA	External Support Agency
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FMoE	Federal Ministry of Education
FMoEnv	Federal Ministry of Environment
FMoH	Federal Ministry of Health
FMWR&S	Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation
GALA	Gender Landscape Analysis
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEESI	Gender Equality and Economic Security Initiative
GEESI	Gender Equality Empowerment and Social Inclusion
GEESI	Gender Equality Economic Empowerment and Social Inclusion
JMP	Joint Monitoring Programme
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LGA	Local Government Area
LGA	Local Government
MDA	Ministry, Department and Agency
MHH	Menstrual Health and Hygiene
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
NGP	National Gender Policy
NRWSSF	National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Framework
NTSG	National Task Group on Sanitation
NWP	National Water Policy
ODF	Open Defecation Free
PLWD	People living with disabilities
RUWASSA	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency
SMWR	State Ministry of Water Resources
STWSSA	Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Agency
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
SURWASH	Sustainable Urban and Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASHNORM	WASH National Outcome Routine Mapping
WinHCF	WASH in Health Care Facilities
WRGMP	Water Resources Gender Mainstreaming Policy





## Acknowledgement

The support received from the following collaborating organizations and persons is acknowledged:

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Gender and Adolescent Manager, UNICEF

WASH Manager, UNICEF

WASH Specialist, UNICEF

WASH Specialist, UNICEF

WASH Officer UNICEF

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Kaduna State RUWASSA

Lere Local Government Authority

Kagarko Local Government Authority

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# Executive Summary

The WASH Gender Landscape Analysis, implemented by UNICEF in collaboration with the Government of Nigeria under the DGIS-funded ASWA III Programme, provides a review of gender responsiveness in Nigeria's Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector. The assessment was conducted at the national level and in two ASWA III focus states—Kaduna and Adamawa—to examine the extent to which WASH systems and institutions are integrating gender equality principles in their structures, programs, and service delivery. Against the backdrop of persistent challenges to access to WASH services, where only 6% of healthcare facilities and 11% of schools have basic WASH services and more than 161 million people rely on contaminated water sources, this assessment seeks to highlight existing gaps and propose evidence-based, transformative solutions to WASH-related gender disparities in Nigeria.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the assessment combined policy and document reviews with primary data collection through key informant interviews, focus group discussions, facility visits, and safety audits. Stakeholders engaged in the process included Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), External Support Agencies (ESAs), NGOs, Local Government Authorities (LGAs), and rights-holder groups such as women, adolescents, people living with disabilities, and community members. Data was analyzed across eight domains of gender responsiveness, and each domain was scored using a four-point continuum—ranging from 0 (Gender Blind) to 3 (Gender Transformative). The findings show that most public institutions, especially at the local level, remain gender sensitive but fall short of being gender transformative.

Across the eight domains, the average scores reflect consistent underperformance in core areas of institutional change. For the domain which focused on transforming WASH organizations, the average score was 1.5. This indicates that while gender focal points exist in some institutions, their roles are marginal, and meaningful representation of women in technical and leadership positions remains low. For the domain on transforming policies, budgets, and institutions, the score was 1.4, pointing to the existence of gender-related policies in some agencies without corresponding implementation frameworks or dedicated budgets to operationalize them. The domain that assessed data systems scored 1.5. This shows limited routine collection and use of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data. In most institutions, gender-sensitive monitoring and feedback mechanisms are either weak or non-existent.

The domain on WASH service delivery, received an average score of 1.3. Despite growing awareness, WASH services provided often fail to account for the specific needs of women, girls, and vulnerable populations. Menstrual hygiene support, private sanitation facilities, and inclusive designs are frequently absent, especially in schools and health centers. The

domain addressing safety was one of the weakest-performing areas with an average score of 1.2. Inadequate lighting, lack of privacy, and the absence of safeguarding protocols have resulted in persistent safety concerns, particularly for women and girls. The domain which analyzed male engagement, scored 1.1. There is limited strategic effort to challenge entrenched social norms. Most programs continue to reinforce traditional gender roles. The domain that explored the agency of women and girls had an average score of 1.2. The findings highlight minimal economic empowerment initiatives or leadership opportunities for women, in WASH. Finally, the domain that assessed strategic partnerships, recorded the lowest average score at 1.0. Few formal collaborations exist between WASH actors and women-led rights-holder organizations. Where engagement does occur, it is often superficial and lacks sustained support or co-ownership of initiatives.

Overall, External Support Agencies and UNICEF staff (self-assessment for transforming ourselves) recorded higher average scores, typically between 2.0 and 2.7, due to structured gender frameworks, inclusive human resources policies, and stronger monitoring systems. In contrast, MDAs and LGAs at both federal and state levels performed poorly, with average scores ranging from 1.0 to 1.5. NGOs outperformed government actors in several domains, particularly in data use, community engagement, and advocacy. Rights-holder feedback consistently pointed to exclusion from decision-making processes, poor access to services, and lack of consultation in WASH programming.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. Women and girls remain disadvantaged in every aspect of WASH—from safety and access to participation and leadership. Despite the presence of policies such as Nigeria’s National Gender Policy (2021) and the Water Resources Gender Mainstreaming Policy (2022), these frameworks are yet to be systematically implemented or backed with adequate resources. A shift from gender awareness to gender transformation requires institutional reform, community-level action, and cross-sectoral investment.

The WASH Gender Landscape Analysis has provided a critical lens through which the sector’s progress on gender equality can be examined and improved. The findings of this assessment reveal the depth of gender gap in the WASH sector and the urgency for change. It calls on all stakeholders—government, development partners, civil society, and communities—to commit to systemic reforms centered on equity, participation, and accountability. Achieving gender-transformative WASH is not only necessary for fulfilling Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 6 but also for upholding the dignity, rights, of every Nigerian to safe, sustainable and equitable WASH services.

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the WASH Gender Landscape Analysis

The WASH Gender Landscape Analysis was developed by UNICEF under the Dutch Government-funded DGIS ASWA III Programme to bring to the forefront gender inequalities embedded in WASH systems, and guide strategic action for more inclusive and equitable service delivery. Grounded in UNICEF’s Gender Action Plan (2022–2025) and WASH Strategy (2016–2030), the assessment reflects UNICEF’s commitment to advancing gender-transformative WASH results by tackling structural and normative barriers that limit access, leadership, and agency—particularly for women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

Globally, WASH responsibilities remain highly gendered, with women and girls disproportionately responsible for water collection, sanitation management, and hygiene tasks—often unpaid and unrecognized. These inequalities persist

not only in household roles but also within WASH institutions, where women face barriers to leadership, technical roles, and decision-making power. The ASWA III programme seeks to address these challenges by embedding gender equity as a core outcome of sustainable WASH access, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (notably SDGs 5 and 6) and building climate-resilient systems that are inclusive of all.

The WASH Gender Landscape Analysis tool is structured across nine diagnostic domains—from organizational capacity and policy alignment to safety, services, partnerships, and data systems. Drawing on participatory methods — surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and observations — the assessment collects multi-stakeholder insights to analyze gender-related dynamics in WASH access and governance. It supports teams to



situate programme practices along a four-tier Gender Continuum (from gender-blind to transformative), enabling evidence-based scoring and collaborative action planning. The tool's iterative design allows its use at programme inception, midline, or endline, offering flexibility for both accountability and adaptive learning.

Ultimately, this process enables WASH actors—government agencies, partners, and UNICEF teams—to move beyond gender sensitivity and toward transformation: intentionally shifting power dynamics, redistributing resources, and dismantling harmful norms. The WASH Gender Landscape Analysis supports the ASWA III programme goal to deliver sustainable, rights-based WASH for all, especially the most marginalized.

## 1.2 Aims and Objectives

The WASH Gender Landscape Analysis aims to identify gender-based barriers, power dynamics, and institutional practices within WASH systems to guide the design of equitable, transformative programming.

Specifically, the WASH Gender Landscape Analysis seeks to assess how WASH programmes and organizational processes address gender equality nine critical domains—ranging from workforce representation and budgeting to service design, safety, agency, and data use—through the lens of the Gender Equality Continuum. This diagnostic supports evidence-informed scoring and prioritization of gender-responsive and transformative interventions within the ASWA III programme.

## 1.3 Geographical Scope

The assessment had a national and sub-national scope, spanning institutions at the national level and the ASWA III supported focal states and focal LGAs. The scope also covered selected communities, households and schools within the focal LGAs in Adamawa and Kaduna States.

## 1.4 Assessment Methodology, Framework and Tool

The assessment is structured around a standardized tool developed by UNICEF, grounded in the Gender Transformative WASH Principles. It contains a matrix of multiple-choice questions organized by domain, reflecting both organizational and programme dimensions. The tool aligns with UNICEF's Gender Equality Marker (GEM) and WASH strategy commitments and enables teams to determine positioning on a 0–3 scoring scale: Gender-blind/discrimination (0), Gender-sensitive (1), Gender-responsive (2), and Gender-transformative (3).

The tool is structured around nine domains – transforming ourselves, transforming WASH organizations, transforming policies budget and institutions, transforming WASH services, transforming safety, transforming engagement of boys and men, transforming women and girls' agency, transforming partnerships and transforming data.

Each domain is assessed on set indicators and based on these indicators, a score is assigned between 0 – 3 based on the gender transformation continuum.

Domains	Indicators
TRANSFORMING OURSELVES	1. Understand/investigate hidden biases 2. Stop Perpetuating discriminatory attitudes
TRANSFORMING WASH ORGS	1. Women workforce 2. Planning & Budgeting 3. Organisational culture
TRANSFORMING POLICIES, BUDGETS AND INSTITUTIONS	1. Legal and policy status 2. Planning and design 3. Budgeting
TRANSFORMING WASH SERVICES	1. Ability to meet basic needs (including MHH) 2. Programme activities that actively address gender equality 3. Time and unpaid WASH related work
TRANSFORMING SAFETY	1. Mitigation 2. Feelings of safety 3. Privacy
TRANSFORMING ENGAGEMENT OF MEN AND BOYS	1. Division of unpaid WASH labour 2. Social norms 3. Resistance of change or violence
TRANSFORMING AGENCY OF WOMEN GIRLS	1. Households decision making 2. Public and economic participation 3. Restrictive WASH related norms
TRANSFORMING PARTNERSHIPS	1. Capacity building of WASH actors 2. Advancing rights and Do No Harm 3. Strengthening rights holder organisations
TRANSFORMING DATA	1. Gender indicators 2. Sex, Age and Disability disaggregated data 3. Feedback and accountability

Figure 1: Domain/Criteria and Indicators Used in the Study

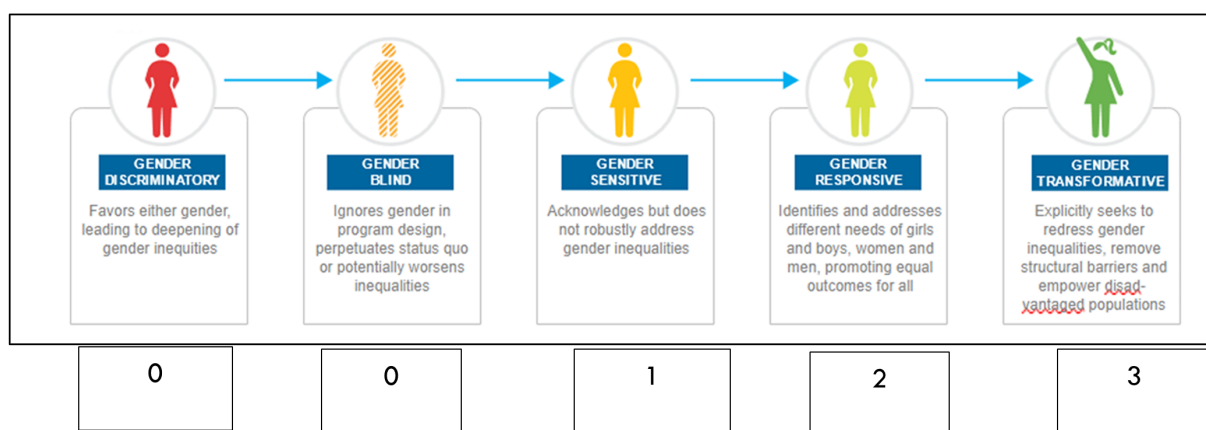


Figure 2: Gender Continuum and Scoring

(Source: Background Paper Series UNICEF Gender Policy and Action Plan 2022-2025 Gender Transformative Programming)

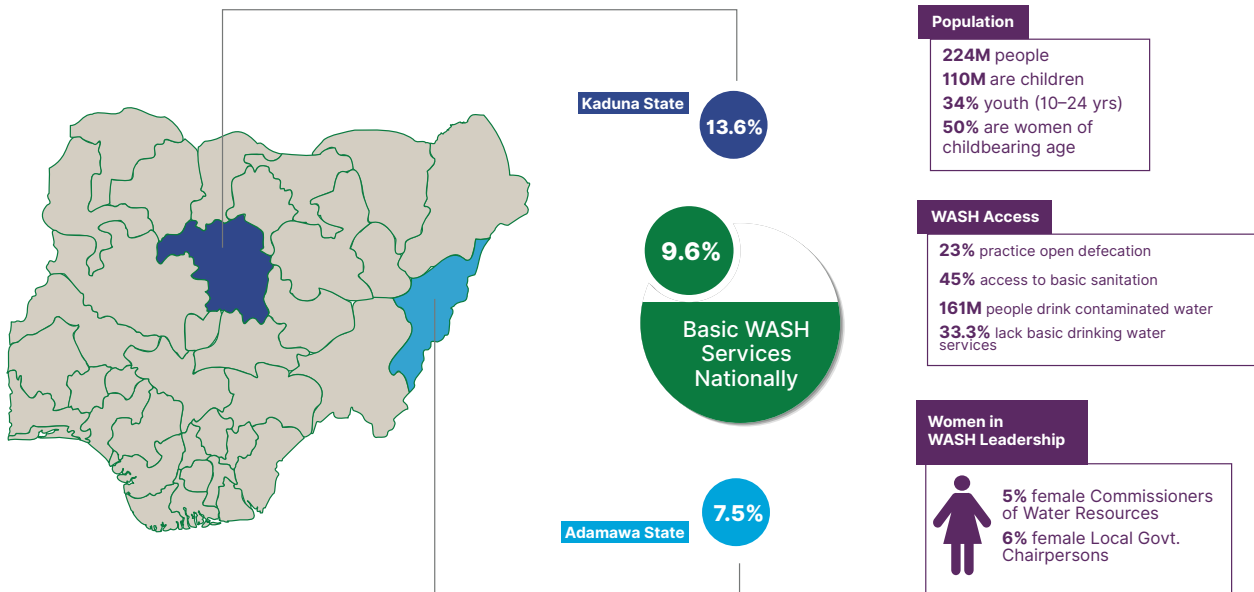
To carry out this assessment, a mixed-methods approach was used, combining primary and secondary data sources. Data collection included a **desk review** of national gender and WASH policies, UNICEF strategic documents, programme evaluations, and global indicators (e.g., JMP, MICS, DHS). A **staff survey** was administered via Microsoft Forms, to gather reflections on gender integration across programmes and institutional culture. This was followed by **Key informant interviews** (KIIs) with WASH authorities, gender experts, service providers, and rights-holder organizations and **Focus Group Discussions** (FGDs) and

participatory exercises with women, men, and adolescents at the community level, including school and healthcare facility site visits. Data was also triangulated with the **accessibility and safety audits** of sampled public and institutional WASH facilities.

Sampling was purposive, targeting individuals with direct experience or technical oversight of gender and WASH programming. Respondents were diverse in age, gender, and institutional affiliation. Ethical procedures, including informed consent, privacy protections, and Do No Harm principles were upheld throughout the process.



## 2.0 Country Setting



Nigeria’s population is estimated at 224 million, with 110 million being children. Young people aged between 10–24 years constitute 34%, and women of childbearing age make up half of the entire population (UNICEF, 2023). Gender equality remains a significant concern, as Nigeria’s ranking declined from 126 to 130 on the Global Gender Gap index between 2022 and 2023. Although 58.3% of legal frameworks support gender equality in public life, 13.2% of ever-partnered women and girls experienced physical or sexual violence within a year prior to the 2018 study. Additionally, 12.3% of married women aged 20–24 were married before age 15 as of 2021, and 67.5% of women held managerial positions by 2022.

In political participation, a 2023 study by WASHMATA Initiatives and FEMinWASH found that women’s involvement in political roles within Nigeria’s WASH sector is notably low, with only 5% of female Commissioners of Water Resources and 6%

of female Local Government Chairpersons. Concerning economic equality, reforms under SDG 5 - Target 5a resulted in just 31.6% of women owning agricultural land by 2019. Maternal mortality rates are alarming, with Nigeria recording 1,047 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020, ranking third globally behind South Sudan and Chad. Between 2000 and 2020, Nigeria’s maternal mortality decreased by only 9%, compared to Sierra Leone’s 73% reduction.

WASH statistics indicate progress in reducing open defecation, with the number of open defecation-free Local Government Areas increasing from 27 to 134 between 2019 and 2024. However, 23% of Nigerians still practice open defecation, and only 45% have access to basic sanitation. Water quality remains a challenge, with 161 million people consuming contaminated water at the source, and 33.3% lacking basic drinking water services. By 2021, less than 20% of the population had access to basic hygiene services, despite improvements from 2018.

The WASHNORM (2021) survey highlights slow progress and even regression in access to WASH services between 2018 and 2021. Nationally, access to basic WASH services stands at just 9.6%, with lower rates in states like Kaduna (13.6%) and Adamawa (7.5%). Basic water and sanitation access declined in public spaces, dropping from 9% to 4% in markets and motor parks, and from 68% to 67% in communities' drinking water services. Furthermore, women face a double burden, bearing the primary responsibility for family WASH needs while also caring for ill family members due to inadequate services.

The WASH impact on gender is well documented, though not from the rights-based perspective of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Inadequate access to the quantity, quality and agreed standards of WASH has directly and indirectly contributed to the non-realization of the rights of a significant proportion of Nigerians especially the rights of women to health, education, safety, security and a decent standard of living required for oneself and one's family as stipulated in Articles 23, 25 and 26 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights.

**The Right to Health:** Only 6% of health facilities in Nigeria are equipped with the basic water and sanitation services. Consequently, the SDG 3 Health Targets 3.1 and 3.2 which aim to reduce maternal deaths and end the preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age cannot be met. Goal 3: Good health and well-being - The Global Goals. Nigeria's maternal mortality rate (MMR) of Nigeria is very high at 1047 per 100,000 live births, particularly when compared with the regional averages of 531 deaths per 100,000 live births (aho.afro.who.int, 2022). The high MMR can be linked to the inability of health workers to comply with infection control protocols in the absence of adequate WASH.



**The Right to Education** of the female gender is also affected by limited WASH as only 11% of schools have basic WASH services and just 8% of schools have girls' toilet compartments with provisions for menstrual hygiene management (WASHNORM, 2021). Consequently, the Target 4.a of the Education SDG 4 Goal 4: Quality education - The Global Goals which aims to 'build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive....' cannot be met. This is because the inadequate WASH and menstrual infrastructure in schools causes a drop in the enrolment, attendance and completion rates of students, particularly of females. Relatedly, inadequate WASH facilities at home also affects school attendance rates as households without WASH have a greater burden of WASH-related diseases and spend more time fetching water, a responsibility borne by females as the primary care givers and collectors of water in most cultures in Nigeria.

**The Right to Work** for a remuneration that affords the worker and his family a dignified human existence is also affected by the poor education outcomes which are linked to the inadequate WASH services at school and at home. The poor education outcomes limit the type of jobs and remuneration levels that the individual, particularly disadvantaged women have access to. This is further buttressed by the finding of the Nigerian Poverty Assessment Report (2022) that the households deprived of a limited to standard level of water supply were twice as likely to live below the poverty line as those that had this basic infrastructure in place (60% versus 32%) Nigeria Poverty Assessment. The same proportion of disparity was found between the households deprived of sanitation (55%) and those that had limited to standard sanitation (28%). Non-monetary poverty measures such as education and basic infrastructure (e.g. sanitation facilities) are highly correlated with monetary poverty, affecting the ability to send children to school, food security, health, education and security.



The 2021 WASHNORM survey reveals poor access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services in Nigeria, with only 6% of healthcare facilities having comprehensive WASH services and just 12% offering basic, gender-separated sanitation services. In schools, only 3% have basic gender-sensitive WASH facilities, and a mere 8% provide menstrual hygiene management for girls. Public places like markets and

motor parks fare similarly, with 33% having basic water supplies and only 20% offering facilities accessible to people with disabilities. This highlights the urgent need for policy reviews with a gender-focused approach to improve WASH access and protect women and girls' rights to WASH, health, education, and safety.



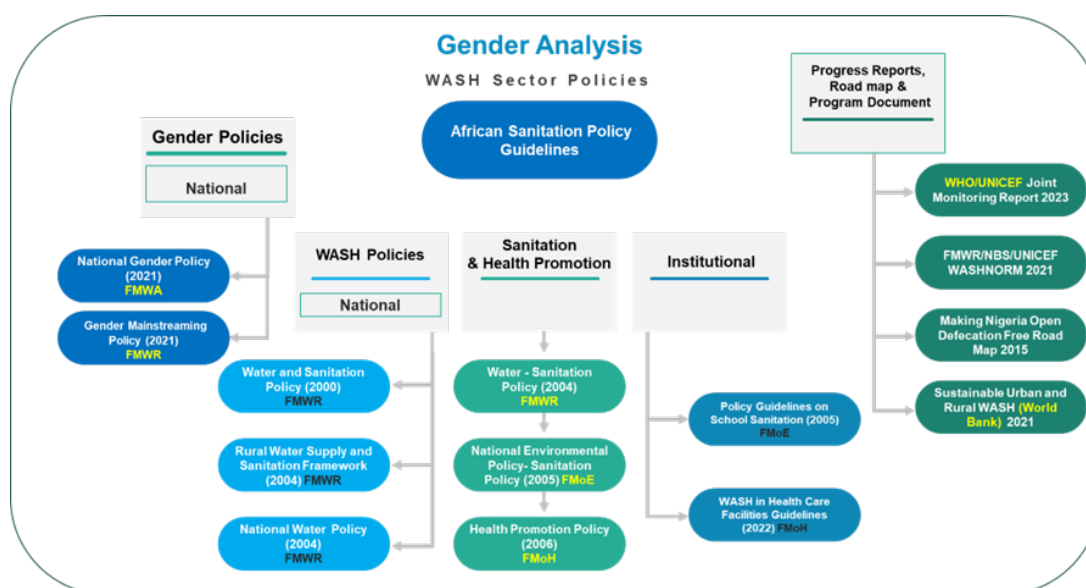
## 3.0 Summary of Desk Review Findings

The policies reviewed were grouped as shown in Figure 5 into (a) overarching WASH frameworks and policies, (b) sanitation and health, (c) institutional (d) program documents and (e) progress reports.

The desk review of policies used a gender economic empowerment and social inclusion (GEESI) lens. The GEESI approach aims to address structural inequalities in policies, programs and strategies that prevent the equitable participation, inclusion and access to opportunities,

resources, economic and other benefits by all genders.

The GEESI criteria that were used included (i) roles and responsibilities (ii) access to resources (iii) access to opportunities (iv) control of resources (v) decision-making (vi) social norms and (vii) economic empowerment. The policies were then categorized for each criterion using the gender continuum of gender discriminatory to gender transformative as explained in Figure 3



**Articulation of WASH and Gender Priorities in Sector Policies:** WASH sector policies often overlook gender priorities, missing chances to address gender inequality and support SDG 5. Although the National Gender Policy (NGP, 2021) and Water Resources Gender Mainstreaming Policy (WRGMP, 2022) don't explicitly cover WASH priorities, they offer detailed guidance for gender-transformative WASH

programs.

**Economic Empowerment:** Both NGP (2021) and WRGMP (2022) provide gender-transformative guidance aimed at addressing decision-making disparities. NGP links national development to women's economic empowerment, emphasizing the role of harnessing women's human capital. WRGMP highlights the neglect of

women's participation in water resource management decision-making.

**Access to Resources:** Reviews of WASH policies reveal a gender-blind approach regarding access to resources. Policies like the National Water and Sanitation Policy (NWP, 2004) fail to consider menstrual hygiene needs, safety, and privacy. Although acknowledging disproportionate impacts on women, these policies lack actionable interventions.

**Impact of Inadequate WASH Services:** Inadequate WASH services hinder women's ability to meet social, economic, and health needs, increasing vulnerability to gender-based violence. However, the National Open Defecation Free (ODF) Road Map (2025) and the World Bank-funded Sustainable Urban and Rural WASH (SURWASH) Program offer strategic approaches to improve WASH access, especially in institutions like healthcare facilities.

**Data:** Most WASH frameworks lack sex-disaggregated data and gender-responsive budgeting. NWP (2004) misses including gender-specific staffing ratios. In contrast, national gender policies stress the importance of such data for measuring progress towards gender equality and ensuring accountability in budgeting.

**Access to Opportunities:** WASH-related policies generally fail to promote gender equality in accessing opportunities. Exceptions include the National Water Policy (2004), which advocates for women's representation in management, and the Environmental Sanitation Policy (2005), focusing on income generation for women.

**Control of Resources:** Strategic documents often omit gender-inclusive quotas, perpetuating male dominance in resource control. Positive examples come from sanitation and health policies like the National Environmental Sanitation Policy (2005), which sets training targets for women in income-generating activities.

**Decision Making:** WASH policies largely support norms that exclude women from decision-making despite their significant role as service users. Gender policies recommend affirmative actions, gender-responsive project frameworks, and targeted leadership training for women to address this imbalance.

**Harmful Sector Norms:** Norms like volunteerism undermine women's agency, as highlighted by WRGMP (2022). Solutions include integrating gender-sensitive indicators, measuring women's participation in projects, ensuring equitable benefit distribution, and leveraging women's capacities through partnerships.

## 4.0

## Stakeholder Mapping

Tables 2 – 4 map some of the key stakeholders involved in WASH or gender equality in Nigeria. The level of interest and influence was determined using available information about mandates, status from a combination of past reports, available information and field experience.

The four categories of mapping to facilitate effective communication with stakeholders were (a) key players: those that the project needs to engage and collaborate with

closely, (b) key informants: those that need to be kept informed and their input sought occasionally (c) affected parties: those whom the project must communicate with regularly and give regular updates to (d) observers: those whom the project must monitor their interest and give updates to occasionally. <https://www.tsw.co.uk/>

**Table 2: Stakeholder Mapping of Government Ministries and Agencies in WASH and Gender**

Organisation Name	Focus Area	Influence Level (High/Medium/Low)	Interest Level (High/Medium/Low)	Mapping Position (Key Player, Keep Satisfied, etc.)
Federal Ministry of Water Resources (FMWR)	Policy Development, water resource management, WASH	High	High	Key Player
Federal Ministry of Women Affairs	Gender equality, women empowerment, gender policies	High	High	Key Player
Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH)	Public health, WASH, hygiene promotion	High	Medium	Keep Satisfied
National Water Resources Institute (NWRI)	Research and capacity building in WASH	Medium	High	Key Player
National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)	Gender-based violence, women's rights	Medium	High	Key Player
State Water Agencies (SWAs)	Provision of urban and rural water supply services	Medium	High	Key Player
National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA)	Environmental management, water quality monitoring	Medium	Medium	Keep Satisfied
Federal Ministry of Environment (FME)	Sanitation, climate resilience, environmental health	Medium	Medium	Keep Satisfied
Local Government Authorities (LGAs)	Implementation of WASH programs at the grassroots	Low	High	Keep Informed
National Orientation Agency (NOA)	Public awareness, behaviour change campaigns	Low	Medium	Keep Informed

**Table 3: Stakeholder Mapping of UN Organisations Involved in Gender and WASH**

Organisation Name	Focus Area	Influence Level (High/Medium/Low)	Interest Level (High/Medium/Low)	Mapping Position (Key Player, Keep Satisfied, etc.)
UNICEF	WASH, child health, gender equality	High	High	Key Player
UN Women	Gender equality, women empowerment	High	High	Key Player
World Health Organisation (WHO)	Public health, WASH, disease prevention	High	Medium	Keep Satisfied
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Sustainable development, gender equality, governance	Medium	Medium	Keep Satisfied
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	Sexual and reproductive health, gender based violence	Medium	High	Key Player
Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)	Rural development, gender, and water resource management	Medium	Medium	Keep Satisfied
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	WASH and protection in humanitarian contexts	High	High	Key Player
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	Environmental sustainability and water resource management	Medium	Medium	Keep Satisfied

**Table 4: NGOs involved in Gender and WASH or Gender or WASH Only**

Organisation Name	Influence Level (High/Medium/Low)	Interest Level (High/Medium/Low)	Mapping Position (Key Player, Keep Satisfied, etc.)	Focus Area
WaterAid Nigeria	High	High	Key Player	WASH and Gender
Global Initiative for Women and Children (GIWAC)	Medium	High	Key Player	Gender
Network of Female Professionals in WASH (FEMinWASH)	Medium	High	Key Player	WASH and Gender
Water with Development	High	Medium	Keep Satisfied	Gender
ActionAid Nigeria	High	High	Key Player	Gender
Society for Water and Sanitation (NEWSAN)	Medium	High	Key Player	WASH
Development Initiative for West Africa (DIWA)	Medium	High	Key Player	Gender
WASH Rights Network (NEWARI)	Medium	Medium	Keep Informed	WASH
HopeSpring Water Nigeria	Low	High	Keep Informed	WASH
Girl Child Concerns (GCC)	Medium	High	Key Player	Gender

## 5.0

### Summary of Finding from the Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions



To complement the assessment and institutional diagnostics, extensive qualitative data were collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) at national, state, local government, and community levels across two ASWA III implementation states—Kaduna and Adamawa. The findings from these KIIs and FGDs are organized by the WASH Gender Landscape Analysis domains and presented below. They provide critical insight from the stakeholders into how gender is perceived, in the WASH sector across the WASH Gender Landscape Analysis domains, while also offering contextual grounding for the scoring of institutions along the Gender Equality Continuum.

#### **Domains 1: Transforming Ourselves**

For transforming ourselves, UNICEF staff assessment at the national level scored

2, representing gender transformative on the gender continuum. This is due to the efforts being made in the ASWA III programme design and implementation that intentionally aims to address gender inequalities in WASH. State level assessments were not conducted separately for this domain due to limited UNICEF staff in field offices, which would not constitute as representative findings.

#### **Domains 2: Transforming WASH Organizations**

This domain assesses how WASH institutions integrate gender responsiveness into their institutional culture. The goal is to understand how gender is structurally embedded within organizational frameworks and whether women are equitably represented and empowered within WASH governance and service delivery systems.

For this domain, findings across national, sub-national levels reveal that there are some positive examples of gender integration. However, structural and cultural barriers remain widespread. For example, government MDAs consistently lag behind ESAs and NGOs in gender mainstreaming, training, and staff equity.

At the national level, only the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation (FMWR&S) had a dedicated gender focal point, though its activities remained largely peripheral. A representative expressed concern, noting, *“Gender units exist but their activities are not mainstreamed into our programs.”* In contrast, External Support Agencies (ESAs) had structured gender units and consistent training protocols, reflecting a disparity in gender responsiveness between the ESA and the MDAs they support.

Furthermore, technical teams, which are often critical in decision-making in the sector, exhibited significant gender imbalances, as highlighted by a respondent who mentioned, *“There is no female in technical roles within our WASH programs.”* Senior management similarly exhibited gender disparities, with respondents from multiple ESAs stating clearly that, *“All our directors are male,”* reinforcing a pervasive culture of male dominance at higher levels of decision making in WASH organizations.

There is not much difference between the situation at the national level and that at the state level. For instance, in Kaduna State respondents at MDAs reported limited integration of gender in their programming. Capacity assessments for gender-responsive programming were irregular, with only the State Ministry of

Education demonstrating consistent gender training initiatives through programs like AGILE. Despite gender focal points existing within all agencies, gender mainstreaming into broader organizational activities remained superficial, described by one respondent as, *“Gender activities are present but rarely integrated meaningfully.”*

The gender staffing balance was skewed significantly toward males, with female staffing ranging merely from 16% to 26%. NGOs reported better gender balance in volunteer roles but highlighted significant discrepancies in remunerated positions, particularly within technical fields. An NGO respondent clearly expressed frustration, *“Most paid roles go to males while females remain volunteers, unpaid and undervalued.”*

Similarly, in Adamawa’s WASH sector demonstrated limited gender-responsive programming. For example, except for RUWASSA and STWSSA, who had performed capacity evaluations, gender training varied considerably, with most MDAs lacking structured training. An official remarked candidly, *“Gender training is neither regular nor mandatory.”* Gender staffing imbalance was also pronounced, notably in technical roles, as indicated by an informant’s observation, *“No female technical staff exists in our water supply units; all hygiene promoters, however, are*



women.” Echoing a sector-wide issue of gender inequity.

### **Domain 3: Transforming Policies, Budgets and Institutions**

Information collected in this domain focused on how gender equality is integrated into policies, planning, institutional frameworks, and budgeting processes within WASH institutions. The presence of gender-focused action plans, legal instruments, and budget lines was used as indicators to demonstrate commitment and preparedness of agencies to deliver gender responsive WASH services. Across national state and ESA levels, there is a significant policy and budgeting gap. Gender commitments are either absent, weakly implemented, or not backed with financial resources. NGOs and ESAs show stronger policy frameworks but face limitations due to poor funding.

For example, at the national level, MDAs lacked standalone action plans on gender and WASH. The FMWR&S had a gender mainstreaming policy, yet many staff and stakeholders were unaware of its existence. Conversely, 5 out of 7 ESAs had gender policies covering issues such as gender-based violence and equity in education. However, most MDAs supported by these ESAs did not adopt gender-responsive planning approaches, with only FMWR&S cited a budget line for gender but lacked evidence that this budget line was funded. ESAs, while not always specifying WASH, did report integrated gender budgeting or line items across their programs.

In the same regard, in Kaduna state, the Ministry of Education had a gender and education policy, while RUWASSA and the Water Corporation did not have any. Furthermore, at the LGA level, no gender

and WASH policy or action plan existed, though some stakeholders believed integration into local plans was feasible. Only the Ministry of Education had a gender budget. NGOs and LGAs lacked clear allocations, and their ability to implement gender-focused programs was limited.

Similar to Kaduna state, MDAs in Adamawa state had general WASH policies without gender integration. None had gender-responsive planning frameworks or budgets. All NGOs reported having gender policies, yet none had budgets to implement them. While, Ganye LGA had a gender-WASH action plan with a budget. Shelleng LGA had neither a plan nor a budget. No network of female professionals in WASH was engaged at this level.

### **Domain 4: Transforming Data**

Information explored in this domain included WASH institutions’ routine collection and use of sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data, and whether feedback and accountability mechanisms exist to guide gender-responsive programming with these data. Across all levels, government institutions show limited capacity to collect and utilize disaggregated data for gender and disability. NGOs demonstrate better practice but remain constrained by funding. To institutionalize gender-sensitive M&E systems and embed accountability feedback loops.

At the national level for example, none of the MDAs reported routine collection of sex- or disability disaggregated data. The FMWR&S shared that gender data collection is ad hoc, typically linked to events like World Toilet Day. However, all ESAs reported collecting sex-

disaggregated data, although most do not collect disability-specific data. As reported by the respondents, barriers to gender-sensitive data collection include lack of budgets, absence of mandatory frameworks, and poor integration into routine M&E systems.

At the state level, MDAs similarly lack systems for disaggregated WASH data collection. In Kaduna state, RUWASSA and the Ministry of Education noted occasional gender analysis, but this was not institutionalized. The same was reported in Adamawa state, where MDAs and LGAs did not routinely collect gender-disaggregated or disability data and monitoring frameworks lacked gender indicators.

NGOs also varied in their collection and use of gender data, with only one reporting collection of disaggregated data which include routine collection and monitoring of gender-related indicators, like access to WASH services and decision-making roles. None of the focal LGAs collect such data or track gender outcomes.

### **Domain 5: Transforming WASH Services**

This domain examines whether WASH services meet the distinct needs of women, men, boys, and girls—especially around menstrual hygiene, unpaid WASH-related labor, and accessibility. It assesses whether gender analyses have informed service design and implementation. Information gathered showed that WASH services across all levels are not adequately designed to meet the distinct needs of women and girls. Structural, cultural, and design barriers persist further depriving women, girls and the most vulnerable access to already limited WASH services.

Many MDAs at the national level have not conducted any gender analyses of WASH services, except for an initiative by the FMoE's with the development of a national WASH in Schools policy. Whereas most of the ESAs reported carrying out comprehensive needs assessments identifying barriers like harassment, poor facility siting, and exclusion of people with disabilities. While these efforts by the ESAs are commendable, they have not translated to improvement in better design and



service delivery systems that meets the need of women and girls

In Kaduna states, cultural norms and shared facilities were identified as barriers for women. For example, household focus group discussions highlighted inadequate access to safe toilets and menstrual hygiene materials, forcing many women to resort to using clothe due to affordability issues. Similarly, pupils in schools reported during the focus group discussion that there is a lack of consultation during WASH infrastructure planning. Except for SUBEB, many of the state MDAs had not conducted gender analyses. Community women's groups emphasized that their businesses suffered from the lack of WASH access, especially during menstruation.

### **Domain 6: Transforming Safety**

This domain examines preventive measures, standards, and reporting mechanisms for addressing safety concerns. It focuses on how WASH systems ensure the safety, privacy, and dignity of users, particularly women and girls. Information gathered showed that safety and privacy concerns are not adequately addressed by public WASH systems. Standards, where they exist, are not enforced or gender informed. For example, at the national level, MDAs did not have structured systems for reporting safety or privacy issues. FMoE referenced separate toilets for girls and boys in schools but there are no mechanisms for enforcing these standards. On the other hand, ESAs had more comprehensive safeguarding systems, including whistleblowing and third-party monitoring, although most were not user-friendly for communities. In the course of the discussion, it was discovered that none of these systems have ever recorded or reported complaints

from beneficiaries. In both Kaduna and Adamawa states, MDAs reported having some response systems, including grievance committees and school-based management structures in some of the LGAs. For Adamawa in particular, the responsibility lies with the Ministry of Women Affairs. The location and citing of WASH facilities is more of a technical decision rather than considerations for safety and security. For example, slope and geology of the area will determine where a borehole is drilled than the considerations for safety and security.

Furthermore, households FGD participants reported safety concerns, especially at night, citing fear of harassment due to poor lighting and lack of security, animal attacks and lack of locks or privacy on toilets, affecting their ability to safely access WASH facilities at night. As observed in the schools visited and health facilities visited, technical standards for privacy and safety (e.g., locks, lighting) were largely absent or unenforced and fear of stigmatization discourages reporting. Although some NGOs provided better practices through community safeguarding systems and GBV reporting centers. Still, these systems are not WASH-specific.

### **Domain 7: Transforming the Engagement of Boys and Men**

Domain seven focused on information around social norms, redistribute unpaid WASH labor, and prevent gender-based resistance or violence. This domain evaluates how WASH programs engage boys and men to challenge harmful gender norms. Engagement of boys and men in gender-transformative WASH however remains minimal across all levels. Programs must systematically address harmful social norms through inclusive campaigns,

male role models, and context-sensitive advocacy strategies that promote shared responsibility.

At the national level, respondents reported that none of the national MDAs had conducted assessments on division of labor. Some respondents expressed cultural resistance to change: *'We cannot divide it... it will cause problems'* as one of the problems they face when engaging men and boys in gender discussions. Therefore, some MDAs claimed neutrality, while others acknowledged stereotypes are prevalent in their work. Though ESAs had formal mechanisms to create gender-friendly workplaces and materials, the MDAs they support still lack the capacity for such engagements.

In Kaduna State, many state MDAs had not assessed labor divisions, in the WASH sector, thus, they rely instead on sensitization and advocacy to shift social norms. Household responses indicated that men rarely engage in WASH-related chores, with a recurring theme being *'Men construct toilets, women clean them.'* Pupils in schools visited responded that girls always do chores before and after school, and some students openly resisted changing these roles, saying *'We want men to do other work and women to collect water and clean the toilets.'* Similarly, Adamawa MDAs and LGAs hadn't assessed gender roles, with cultural narratives portraying WASH labor as women's duty, encapsulated by one respondent's remark, *'It's a social contract. That is the way it has always been done.'* NGOs conducted user consultations and promoted male involvement through examples like men cleaning up after children, supported by Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials depicting equitable roles. End-users had mixed views: some called

for change, while others feared cultural backlash, and schools did not hold regular sensitizations on these themes either.

### **Domain 8: Transforming the Agency of Women and Girls**

This domain examines how WASH programming promotes the agency of women and girls in household decision-making, public participation, and economic empowerment. It assesses whether restrictive norms are being challenged, and inclusive practices are being institutionalized. And the information collected at the national and sub-national levels are presented below.

At the national level, while MDAs acknowledged women's involvement as co-creators in WASH services, the roles remained predominantly male-dominated, contributing to persistent gender inequalities in income-generating opportunities. Some MDAs introduced community quotas for women in WASH committees as a measure of empowerment, though active promotion of women's agency was limited. Conversely, ESAs had more robust mechanisms, including safe spaces and consultations, though many lacked specific programs for female advancement. Empowerment requires a structural and cultural shift—direct support, visibility of women leaders, and inclusive program designs informed by women's voices are essential.

In Kaduna State, MDAs emphasized the use of quotas in WASHCOMs, yet economic roles such as contractors and caretakers continued to be dominated by men. NGOs highlighted cultural and religious restrictions that hinder women's participation. Advocacy emerged as the primary strategy to increase female

involvement, with respondents stressing the need for targeted programs to advance women's roles. Household feedback indicated that men typically made decisions, although some women could make WASH-related expenses if they had their own income. However, many women lacked confidence to independently address WASH issues, and learners reported minimal female representation in school leadership roles, linking menstruation to absenteeism, stress, and inadequate safe changing spaces.

In Adamawa State, MDAs reiterated the use of quotas in WASHCOMs, with minor efforts to link empowerment to finance, such as training women in soap and pad making. NGOs noted barriers such as women's discomfort in meetings and the burden of attending multiple forums. While leadership programs existed, they were not universally implemented. Women's groups expressed that their opinions were only valued during elections, and that men typically owned WASH businesses even when women funded them. Households indicated that men made most decisions, although women could act if economically empowered, but most were uninvolved in community structures or leadership roles. Pupils in schools echoed the limited female involvement in school-level decisions especially when it comes to WASH facilities and services.

### **Domain 9: Transforming Partnerships**

The final domain analyzes the extent to which WASH actors build strategic partnerships with women's rights organizations, gender experts, and other sectors to strengthen gender equality in WASH. It includes collaboration practices and capacity-building efforts. Partnerships to advance gender equality in WASH

remain underdeveloped, especially among government actors. Most collaboration is superficial or disconnected from implementation.

At the national level, the MDAs reported a lack of consultations with women-led organizations or gender experts outside the WASH sector, indicating an absence of cross-sectoral engagement strategies. Conversely, ESAs cited partnerships with internal FMWRS gender units, the Ministry of Women Affairs, and certain external experts, although these programs were not evaluated with a comprehensive gender lens. Despite stronger consultation practices among ESAs, there was limited direct support for women networks or leveraging their capacity to meet gender targets.

In Kaduna State, the MDAs and focal LGAs seldom consulted women's groups for input on WASH services, with few exceptions such as the State Task Group's collaboration with market and faith-based entities. Most stakeholders confirmed that women's voices were not central to WASH design, with NGOs providing some support but not directly to women WASH professionals. End-users expressed frustration over their exclusion from decision-making processes, highlighting the absence of inclusive consultations. Similarly, in Adamawa State, MDAs did not routinely consult women-led organizations, and an alleged collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs was denied by the ministry. NGOs offered limited support to women's groups, mainly outside the WASH sector, and no partnerships existed with women WASH professionals. Women's groups reported their absence from participation in decisions or program designs, with end-users echoing this sentiment of exclusion in key processes.

This section provides an analysis of the gender domain scores from the Gender Landscape Analysis of WASH institutions across Nigeria. Drawing on data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions, it presents a scoring-based evaluation across eight domains. The analysis compares the performances of National MDAs, External Support Agencies (ESAs), and stakeholders from Kaduna and Adamawa States. Each group was scored on a 0-3 scale: 0 = Gender Blind/Discriminatory, 1 = Gender Sensitive, 2 = Gender Responsive, 3 = Gender Transformative.

### 6.1 Scoring Methodology

The scores are derived from triangulated data sources: responses from duty bearers (government and service providers), rights holders (e.g., people living with disabilities, women's groups), and demand-side actors (households and learners). Scores are based on concrete practices and policies

discussed under each domain. For each actor category, the average domain score reflects the extent to which gender transformative approaches are adopted.

The following steps were used to arrive at the combined scores of the GALA for the different stakeholders at National level and State levels. Interviews were conducted with each of the stakeholders selected at the federal, state, local government, community levels and schools.

The questions asked during the interviews were categorized into the GALA domains, also known as gender transformative principles. Each question in each domain was broken down into key indicators.

The information collected from each stakeholder was used by the scoring team to award scores for the stakeholders for each domain by a team according to the table below.

**Table 5: GALA Scoring Matrix and Gender Continuum**

Gender Integration Level	Score	Definition
Gender Blind	0	<b>Ignores gender and perpetuates the status quo or potentially worsens inequalities.</b>
Gender Sensitive	1	Acknowledges gender differences but does not robustly address gender inequalities.
Gender Responsive	2	Identifies and addresses the different needs of males and females and promotes equitable outcomes for all.
Gender Transformative	3	Explicitly seeks to redress gender inequalities, remove structural barriers, and empower disadvantaged populations.

The score of all stakeholders across all the groups at the different levels was combined to arrive at the combined GALA score along the gender continuum. The

scores are presented in a table as shown below and spider map (radar graph) is used to visualize the score.

## 6.2 Presentation and Interpretation of Scores

**Table 6: Stakeholders Scores on Each Domain and Key Observations for the Scores**

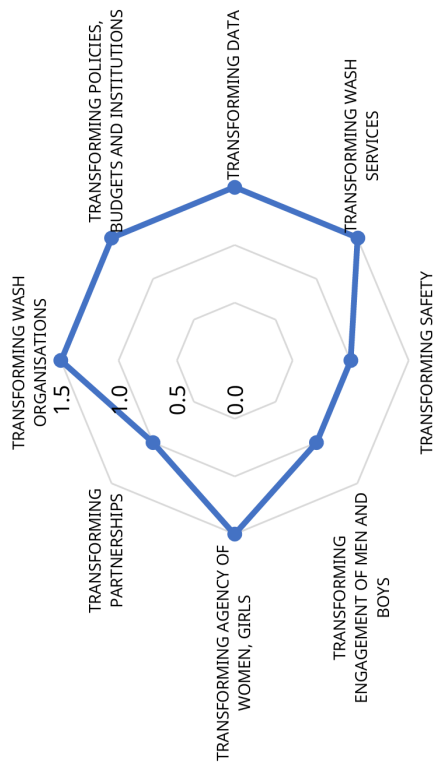
Domain	Stakeholder Group	Score	Key Observation
1. Transforming WASH Organizations	National MDAs	1	No formal gender structures; few focal points, limited training and parity.
	ESAS	2	Gender units & training exist; progressive HR; limited inclusion of PLWD.
	Kaduna MDAs	1	Focal points exist, but no systemic changes; irregular training.
	Kaduna NGOs	2	Better gender ratios and HR support.
	Adamawa MDAs	1	Absence of gender specialists and reform.
	Adamawa NGOs	2	Some equity training; leadership still male-dominated
2. Transforming Policies, Budgets & Institutions	National MDAs	1	Few gender-specific policies or budgets.
	ESAs	2	Inclusive policies/budgets; implementation gaps.
	Kaduna MDAs	1	No gender-focused WASH policy.
	Kaduna NGOs	2	Advocate for GESI inclusion in strategies.
	Adamawa MDAs	1	Gender policies mentioned but not implemented.
	Adamawa NGOs	2	Gender budgeting and planning integration.
3. Transforming Data	National MDAs	1	No regular sex-disaggregation; poor qualitative data.
	ESAs	2	Disaggregated by sex/age; disability data lacking
	Kaduna MDAs	1	No gender-disaggregated monitoring
	Kaduna NGOs	2	Sex-disaggregated data and feedback used.
	Adamawa MDAs	1	Persistent gender data gaps.
	Adamawa NGOs	2	Collect and use gender-disaggregated data
4. Transforming WASH Services	National MDAs & ESAs	2	National WASH standards exist; weak enforcement.
	Kaduna MDAs	1	Shared toilets; limited consultations.
	Kaduna Households	0-1	MHH support weak; unpaid care burden high.
	Kaduna Schools	0	No WASH clubs; poor sanitation
	Adamawa MDAs	1	Services not gender-informed.
	Adamawa NGOs	2	Gender-sensitive service design.
5. Transforming Safety	Adamawa Households & Schools	0-1	Lacking privacy and access.
	National MDAs	1	Safety features partial; policies weak.
	ESAs	2	Safeguarding and training in place
	Kaduna MDAs	1	Limited grievance redress and privacy.
	Kaduna Households	1	Night safety concerns persist.
	Adamawa MDAs	1	No technical safety measures in WASH.
	Adamawa NGOs	2	Policies for safeguarding in place.
Adamawa Household	1	Unsafe public spaces; poor lighting.	

Domain	Stakeholder Group	Score	Key Observation
6. Transforming Engagement of Boys & Men	National MDAs & ESAs	1	No structured male engagement strategy.
	Kaduna MDAs	1	Some sensitization; harmful norms persist.
	Kaduna Households	1	Male-dominated unpaid labor culture.
	Kaduna Schools	1	Boys resist changing gender roles.
	Adamawa MDAs	1	Gender roles reinforced by culture and media.
	Adamawa NGOs	2	Use positive male representation in messaging.
	Adamawa Communities	1	Mixed reactions to male engagement.
7. Transforming Agency of Women & Girls	National MDAs	1	Mention quotas; lack real empowerment initiatives.
	ESAs	2	Safe spaces and consultations, but no career support
	Kaduna MDAs	1	Lacks economic empowerment initiatives.
	Kaduna NGOs	2	Strong advocacy, limited systemic change
	Kaduna Households	1	Limited decision-making power.
	Kaduna Schools	0-1	Leadership lacking; poor MHH support.
	Adamawa MDAs	1	Token inclusion; no programs for women
	Adamawa NGOs	2	Leadership training and support.
	Adamawa Womens Groups	0	Excluded from planning/design.
	Adamawa Households	2	Some conditional autonomy.
	Adamawa Schools	0	Boys dominate leadership.
8. Transforming Partnerships	National MDAs	0-1	No formal consultations with gender groups.
	ESAs	2	Use gender analysis; limited direct engagement.
	Kaduna MDAs & LGAs	0-1	Few formal partnerships with women's networks.
	Adamawa MDAs	0	No engagement with gender actors.
	Adamawa NGOs	1	Some engagement, not WASH-specific.
	Adamawa Women Groups	0	Excluded from consultations.

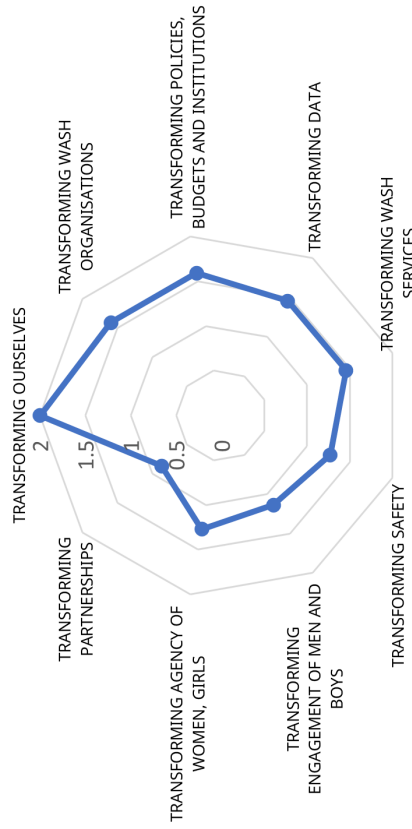
Table 7: Summary of Scores Across Stakeholders at National and Sub-national Levels

Criteria	National MDAs SCORE	National ESAs Score	Average National Score	Kaduna MDAs	Kaduna NGOs	Average Kaduna Score	Adamawa MDAs	Adamawa NGOs	Average Adamawa	UNICEF	Combined Score
TRANSFORMING OURSELVES										2	
TRANSFORMING WASH ORGANISATIONS	1	2	1.5	1	2	1.5	1	2	1.5		1.6
TRANSFORMING POLICIES, BUDGETS AND INSTITUTIONS	1	2	1.5	1	2	1.5	1	2	1.5	2	1.6
TRANSFORMING DATA	1	1	1.0	1	2	1.5	1	2	1.5	2	1.4
TRANSFORMING WASH SERVICES	1	1	1.0	1	2	1.5	1	2	1.5	2	1.4
TRANSFORMING SAFETY	1	2	1.5	1	1	1.0	1	2	1.5	1	1.5
TRANSFORMING ENGAGEMENT OF MEN AND BOYS	1	1	1.0	1	1	1.0	1	2	1.5	1	1.2
TRANSFORMING AGENCY OF WOMEN, GIRLS	1	1	1.0	1	2	1.5	1	2	1.5	1	1.3
TRANSFORMING PARTNERSHIPS	1	1	1.0	1	1	1.0	0	1	0.5	1	0.9
Average Score	1	1	1.2	1	2	1.3	1	2	1.4	2	1.2

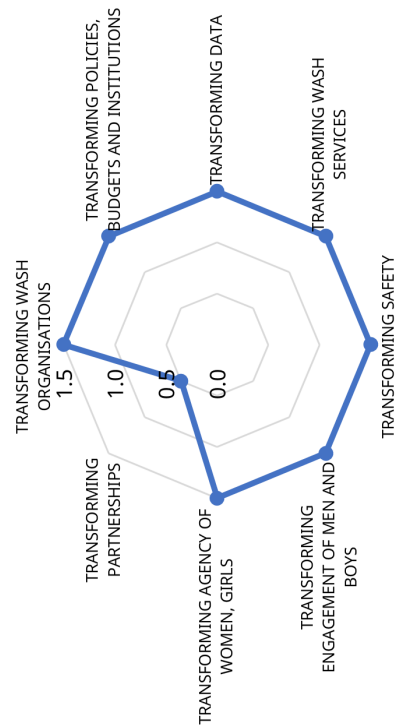
**Figure 7: Average Score for All Stakeholders in Kaduna State**



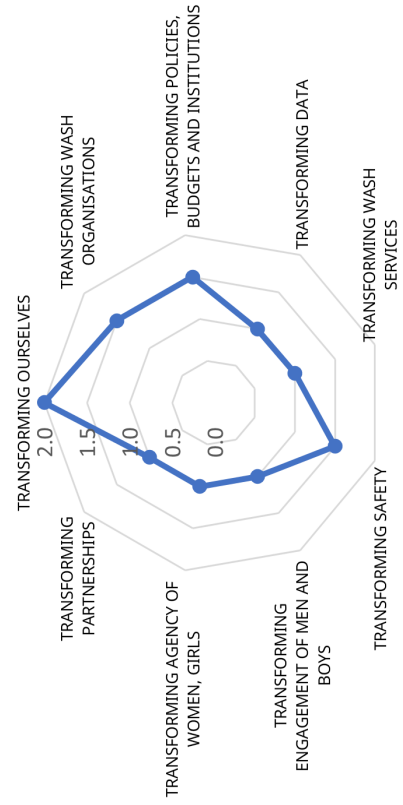
**Figure 5: Average National Combine Score**



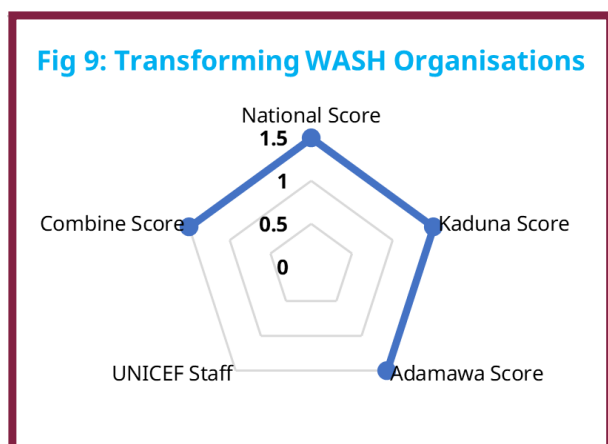
**Figure 8: Average Score for All Stakeholders in Adamawa State**



**Figure 6: Average Score for All Stakeholders at the National Level**



## Transforming WASH Organisations

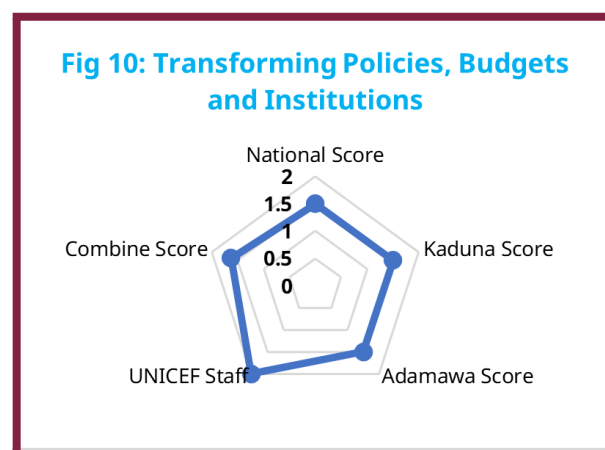


Across the assessment, the domain on transforming WASH organizations surfaced as one of the clearest indicators of institutional intent versus actual structural transformation. UNICEF staff self-assessment had the highest average score of 3 out of 3 (Gender Responsive). This score suggests that internally, there is a solid grounding in gender-responsive practices—women are well represented, managers are held accountable for gender results, and inclusive language is the norm. However, the data also reveal the constraints of relying solely on an informal cultural ethos. The absence of mandatory gender training, limited tracking of gender pay gaps, and lack of budgetary commitment to internal change agents underscore the need for a more structural, rather than behavioral, transformation.

At the national level, ESAs demonstrated stronger performance, scoring 2 (Gender Responsive) compared to the MDAs' score of 1 (Gender Sensitive). The ESAs have HR systems that attract and retain diverse talent and incorporate gender into job descriptions and institutional policies. In contrast, MDAs have yet to institutionalize such practices, often relying on centrally driven postings that disregard gender or disability considerations. Technical

staff in MDAs also displayed limited gender expertise, with most gender focal points serving in administrative—not programmatic—capacities. At the state level, NGOs with a score of 2 (Gender Responsive) similarly outperformed government MDAs with a score of 1 (Gender Sensitive). LGAs were found to be largely gender blind (Score = 0), lacking any structured organizational approach to gender inclusion. This hierarchy of institutional readiness reflects the varying mandates and capacities of duty bearers and service providers and illustrates the crucial role of organizational structure in fostering sustainable gender equality.

## Transforming Policies, Budgets, and Institutions

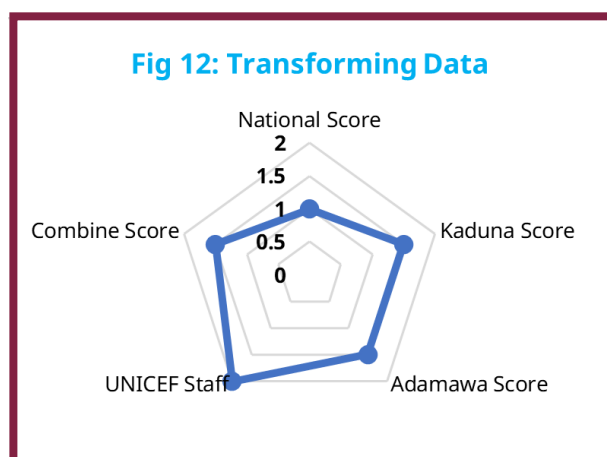


Progress on gender integration into policies and budgeting systems has been uneven as shown by the information gathered. While UNICEF scored an encouraging 2 through the self-assessment process, indicating a shift from symbolic inclusion to operationalized intent, half of respondents confirmed that gender-dedicated funds were not always sufficient. At the national level, ESAs with a score of 2 again performed better than MDAs with a score of 1. The former have developed action plans that explicitly integrate gender objectives and have begun to allocate

budgets toward gender equality outcomes. MDAs, on the other hand, lag behind often recognizing gender differences without deploying the resources to address them.

The situation at the sub-national level mirrored this pattern and similar to the transforming WASH organization domain. NGOs in both Kaduna and Adamawa states scored a 2 for their ability to integrate gender into both policy and programming, while MDAs scored only a 1. LGAs remained largely gender blind. Particularly troubling was the limited consultation of rights holders, such as women’s groups and associations for persons with disabilities, during policy formulation. Their marginal role in planning processes compromises the equity and efficacy of interventions and underscores the need for participatory approaches that go beyond tokenistic inclusion.

### Transforming Data

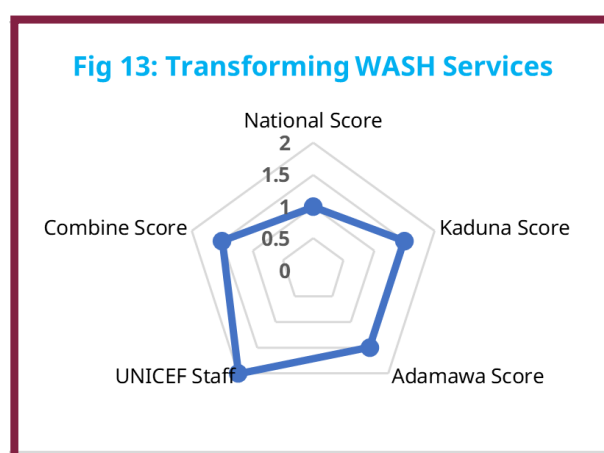


Data systems, though improving, are yet to reach their full potential in driving gender-responsive WASH outcomes. Again, UNICEF’s self-assessment average score of 2 reflects consistent collection of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data (SADD). However, there remains a disconnect between data collection and data use for informed programme decision

making.

NGOs in both Kaduna and Adamawa also scored 2 in this domain, as they demonstrated effective use of disaggregated data and beneficiary feedback to adjust programming. Their systems for tracking qualitative and quantitative gender indicators were significantly more robust than those of the state MDAs, which scored 1. MDAs reported collecting some disaggregated data but rarely used it to influence decision-making or monitor gender equity. At the LGA level, informants indicated that indicators for gender were present in theory but were not routinely monitored. Furthermore, community respondents, including rights holders, emphasized the lack of meaningful data feedback loops, especially for marginalized groups such as people with disabilities.

### Transforming WASH Services

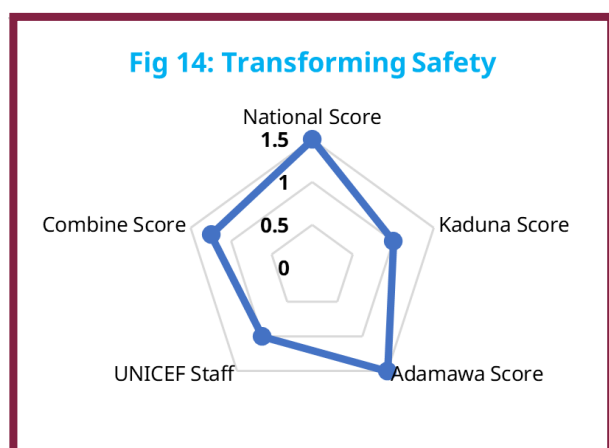


The provision of WASH services that meet the differentiated needs of women and men is at the core of gender-responsive programming. Based on information gathered and analyzed, UNICEF through the self-assessment and other ESAs and NGOs from the data gathered have made significant progress with average scores of 2.

The national and state MDAs scored 1 in this domain, indicating awareness but limited practice. In contrast, LGAs and school-level WASH services in Adamawa and Kaduna states received scores as low as 0, reflecting a very limited regard for the lived experiences and needs of female users of WASH services. Rights holders emphasized that women and girls often avoid using public WASH facilities altogether due to privacy concerns, especially during menstruation. These accounts provide a justification for the low scores.

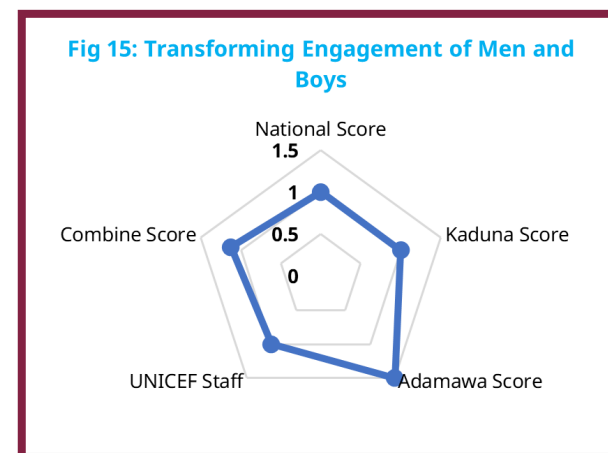
### Transforming Safety

For this domain, the average UNICEF staff self-assessment score is 1.5, with an even lower score among LGAs scoring 0 and MDAs scoring 1 at both the national and sub-national levels. Other ESAs scored 2 and NGOs in Adamawa state also scored a 2. The findings reveal a systemic gap in safeguarding policies, risk mitigation strategies, and infrastructure design. Fewer than half of all stakeholders have dedicated risk-mitigation budgets, and very few conducted routine safety audits with right holders and users.



In both Kaduna and Adamawa, schoolchildren, women, and people with disabilities reported feeling unsafe in or around WASH facilities. Many cited fears of harassment or lack of privacy as deterrents to usage. Even where facilities were available, safety features like locks, lighting, and gender-segregated stalls were inconsistently applied. These safety gaps are not simply technical shortcomings; they represent a violation of rights and dignity, particularly for women and girls. Moving forward, safeguarding must be embedded in all WASH project life cycles, with dedicated funding and continuous community-led risk assessments.

### Transforming the Engagement of Boys and Men

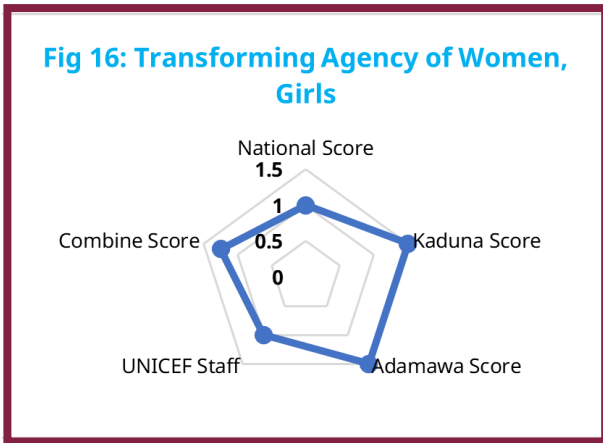


This domain scored the lowest across nearly all stakeholders, with averages ranging between 1 and 0. There is little evidence of systematic efforts to challenge unequal gender norms, redistribute unpaid WASH labor, or engage men as allies in gender transformation. Where male engagement did exist through hygiene promotion or other community WASH activities, it was often informal and lacked strategic intent. Thus, UNICEF self-assessment, and all other stakeholders – ESAs NGOs, national and state MDAs scored 1 except for Adamawa NGOs that

scored 2.

School discussions in both Kaduna and Adamawa revealed that boys and girls continue to perceive WASH as a woman's responsibility. This indicates a failure to confront dominant social norms that entrench inequality. Engaging fathers, teachers, and community leaders as role models could catalyze broader shifts in gender norms and expectations.

### Transforming the Agency of Women and Girls



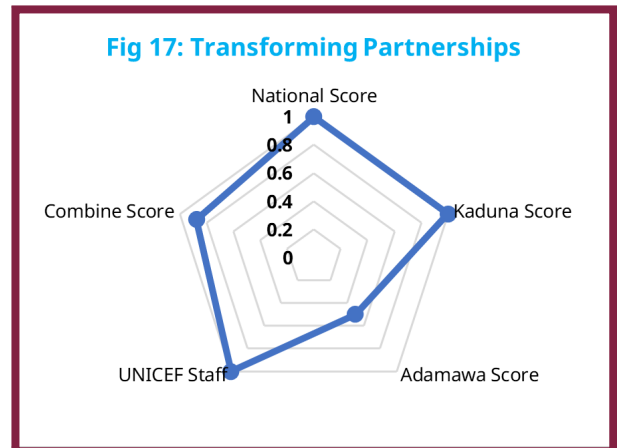
While agency-related indicators reflected pockets of progress, such as women's participation in WASH committees and localized decision-making, the overall scores remained in the sensitive band. UNICEF self-assessment scored 1, and ESAs and NGOs scored 2. In contrast, LGAs in both Adamawa and Kaduna states scored 0, confirming the near-total absence of programming focused on empowerment, economic participation, or leadership. While MDAs at the national and sub-national levels scored 1.

The feedback from women's groups in both states highlighted that restrictive norms continue to define who speaks, who decides, and who leads. The exclusion of women from fee collection, supply chains,

and decision-making perpetuates both economic and symbolic marginalization. FGD participants shared that even when women participated, they were often relegated to peripheral or unpaid roles. Without disrupting these entrenched hierarchies, WASH programs will continue to reinforce, rather than challenge, gender inequality.

### Transforming Partnerships

Partnerships emerged as a significant bottleneck in advancing gender-transformative WASH programming. While UNICEF self-assessment scored 2, and ESAs also scored 2, national and state MDAs and LGAs scored 0 and NGOs scored 1.



Interviews with rights holders revealed that very few CSOs representing women or people with disabilities were engaged beyond consultation events, and even fewer received financial or technical support.

### 6.3 Consolidated Summary of Scores for Each Domain

Table 8: A Comparison of Domain Scores Across National and Sub National Levels

	National Score	Kaduna Score	Adamawa Score	UNICEF Staff	Combined Score
TRANSFORMING WASH ORGANISATIONS	1.5	1.5	1.5	2	1.6
TRANSFORMING POLICIES, BUDGETS AND INSTITUTIONS	1.5	1.5	1.5	2	1.6
TRANSFORMING DATA	1	1.5	1.5	2	1.5
TRANSFORMING WASH SERVICES	1	1.5	1.5	2	1.5
TRANSFORMING SAFETY	1.5	1	1.5	1	1.3
TRANSFORMING ENGAGEMENT OF MEN AND BOYS	1	1	1.5	1	1.1
TRANSFORMING AGENCY OF WOMEN, GIRLS	1	1.5	1.5	1	1.3
TRANSFORMING PARTNERSHIPS	1	1	0.5	1	0.9

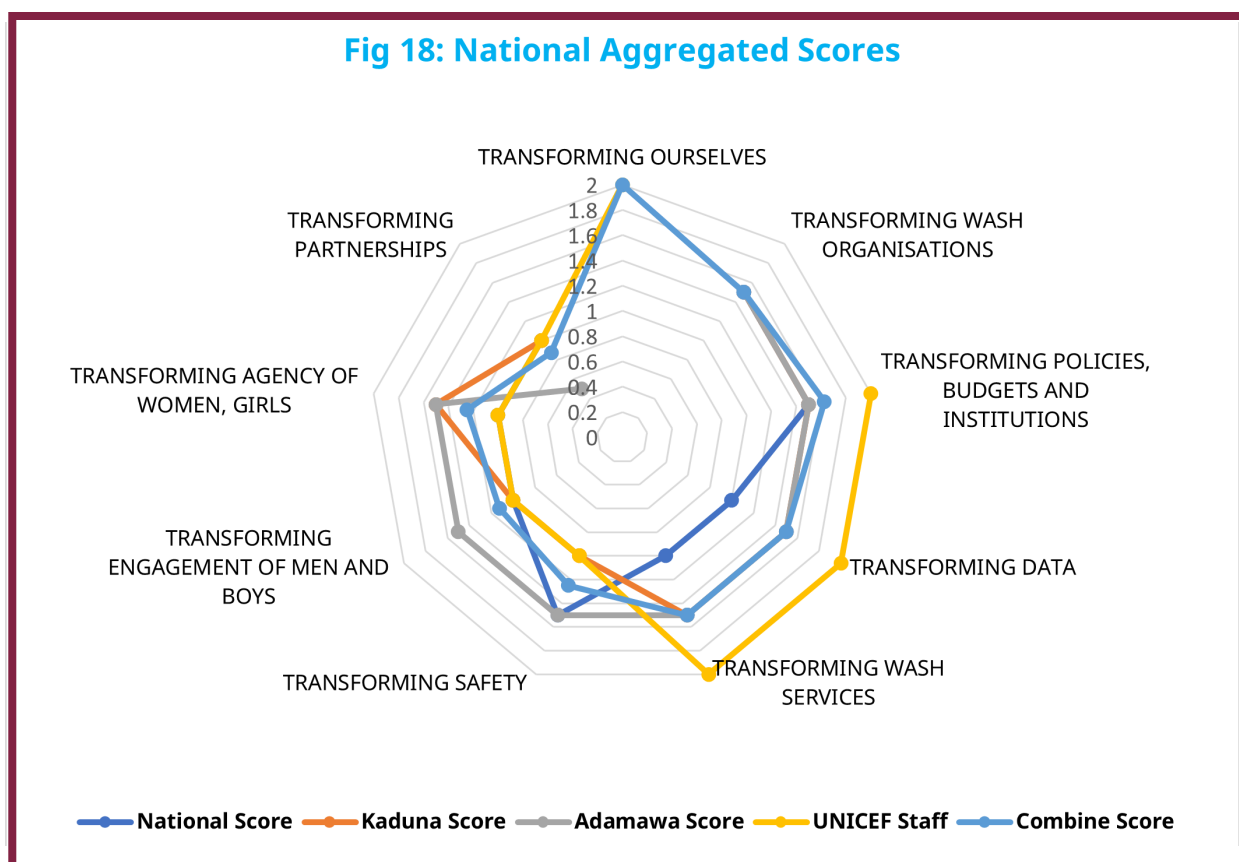


Table and graph in figure above provide a consolidated snapshot of the average scores across the eight GALA domains, comparing performance across national-level stakeholders, Kaduna and Adamawa States, and UNICEF staff self-assessment. The data indicate a relatively consistent pattern, with most domains scoring between 1.0 and 1.6 on the 0–3 gender continuum scale. Notably, UNICEF staff self-assessment results outperformed all other groups, particularly in the domains of transforming WASH organizations, policies and institutions, and data use, where they achieved a score of 2. This suggests that staff of the organization has internalized gender-responsive practices to a greater extent, though still fall short of the gender-transformative target. Actors and stakeholders at the national and sub-national levels had similar scores across most domains, reflecting systemic issues and shared structural limitations in institutional responsiveness. Across all actors, the weakest performance was in the domains of transforming engagement of men and boys (average score: 1.1) and transforming partnerships (average score: 0.9). This score highlights the absence of targeted male engagement strategies and limited collaboration with gender-focused civil society organizations. Conversely, the relatively higher scores in transforming WASH organizations and institutional frameworks (1.6) point to some recognition of gender within organizational

structures, though operationalization remains weak. For the ASWA III project, the data underscore the critical need for capacity-building, deeper engagement with rights-holder groups, and sustained advocacy to move institutions and systems from gender sensitivity toward true transformation.

The recommendations listed below are based on the need to achieve gender transformative WASH programming by addressing the underlying issues of gender inequality through systemic changes. These include the lack of capacity of duty bearers, ingrained prejudices and resistance to change of the statutory duty bearers and end users, and the intersections of gender and vulnerability with poverty. Consequently, there is a need to work within and outside the WASH sector, influence policies and coordination structures, and change harmful sector practices such as the sectors' contribution to the exploitation of women through non-remuneration for WASH related work and time spent (SDG Target 5.4). Other sector practices that need changing include the development of plans, strategies and WASH designs without the right holders, 'Nothing for Us without Us'

Table 5: GALA Scoring Matrix and Gender Continuum

Domains	Indicators	Recommendations	SDG 5 Target
TRANSFORMING WASH ORGANIZATIONS	Women in workforce	Establish a Gender and WASH Thematic Group and communities of practice at national and state levels for sector coordination of interventions and shared lessons in collaboration with women affairs, UN Women and other key stakeholders.	Target 5.1 End Discrimination Targets 6.1 and 6.2
	Planning & Budgeting	Develop and implement Gender responsive/ transformative and socially inclusive action plans in collaboration with right holders for women and PLWD	
	Organizational culture	Develop an advocacy plan for Gender and WASH at national, state and local government levels (specifies the key messages, the advocacy fora and expected outcomes)	
TRANSFORMING POLICIES, BUDGETS AND INSTITUTIONS	Legal and Policy status	Edit and roll out the Water Resources Gender Mainstreaming Policy (2022) , and sensitize stakeholders on WRGMP and the National Gender Policy	Target 5.b promote empowerment through technology
	Planning and design	Support the integration of the recommendations of the National Gender Brief of the technical team on sanitation into the ongoing national WASH policy	
	Budgeting	Review State WASH policies for the integration of gender equality priorities	
TRANSFORMING WASH SERVICES	Ability to meet basic needs (including MHH)	Support research to identify perceptions of women and right holders about volunteerism and quantify the financial value of the time and unpaid WASH related work and develop a policy brief of findings for advocacy	Target 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices Target 6.1 and 6.2
	Programme activities that actively address gender equality	Develop a WASH and Gender Implementation Protocol which specifies steps such as the identification of gendered needs (including for MHH and remuneration for project work done)	Target 5.2 – End violence and exploitation of women Target 6.1 and 6.2
	Time and unpaid WASH-related work	Commission research to quantify and use findings to review programs	

Domains	Indicators	Recommendations	SDG 5 Target
TRANSFORMING SAFETY	Mitigation	Coordinate and support the collation, harmonization and review of existing standards and technical designs for safety, climate resilience, gender sensitivity and social inclusiveness	Target 5.2 – End violence and exploitation of women
	Feelings of safety	Facilitate a process of dissemination of the reviewed gender sensitive and social inclusive technical standards for safety within and outside the WASH Sector	
	Privacy	Establish, strengthen and link WASH programs to preventive and response referral systems	
TRANSFORMING DATA	Gender indicators	Facilitate the review of the gender indicators in the WASH information management system and WASHNORM and sector wide utilisation of a comprehensive gender and socially inclusive framework for monitoring, evaluation and learning with feedback mechanisms.	5.1 End discrimination against women
	Sex, age and disability disaggregated data	Engage stakeholders within and outside the sector to integrate WASH in Gender indicators into the Management information systems of the Health and Education Sectors	
	Feedback and accountability		
TRANSFORMING MEN AND BOYS	Division of unpaid WASH labour	Develop a National and State Communication Strategies for gender and WASH with key messages, IEC materials and participatory tools to address the division of WASH labour, harmful social norms, resistance to change, and WASH and menstrual hygiene restrictive norms and taboos	5.1 End discrimination against women
	Social norms	Sensitize and engage boys and men as champions of the key messages in the communication strategies	5.4 Value unpaid care and promote shared domestic responsibilities
	Resistance to change or violence	Establish and strengthen WASH Clubs in schools, using them as a peer-to-peer conduit for communicating gender transformative message	
TRANSFORMING AGENCY OF WOMEN, GRILS	Household decision making	Refer to Recommendation 1 - communication strategy (household decision making and restrictive WASH-related norms)	5.4 Value unpaid care and promote shared domestic responsibilities
	Public and economic participation	Recommend quotas for women and the vulnerable in leadership and service provision	5.B Promote empowerment of women through technology
	Restrictive WASH-related norms	Facilitate economic empowerment e.g. female led Waste in WASH to Wealth Projects and other technical projects	
TRANSFORMING PARTNERSHIPS	Capacity building of WASH actors	Support a gender and WASH capacity gap assessment, develop and roll out capacity building plans targeting the output of a critical mass of gender and WASH experts at all levels	Target 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices
	Advancing rights and Do No Harm	Develop a mentoring plan to strengthen right holder organizations for women, people living with disabilities and facilitate partnerships with professional networks and women within and outside the sector	
	Strengthening rights holder organizations	Support the Establishment of State Chapters of Networks of Female Professionals in Nigeria	

# WASH GENDER LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

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January 2025



Kingdom of the Netherlands



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