



# Gender and Social Inclusion

M&E Note 9

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## Introduction

Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) is a core focus of the Civil Society Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Fund. Ensuring that women and girls have equal opportunity, representation and involvement in WASH programs, and benefit equally from their outcomes, makes sense not just from a human rights perspective, but also for the sustainability of WASH program outcomes and ensuring long term impacts. Innovative approaches to ensuring the full participation of women in all aspects of WASH has been shown to significantly enhance the sustainability of WASH interventions<sup>1</sup>.

Similarly, Australia’s aid program aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (and before that the Millennium Development Goals) which has pledged to leave no one behind, thus ensuring that minority groups, marginalised people and those who are currently excluded from full participation in and benefit from aid investments have the opportunity to fully participate. This includes people with disabilities and to this end Australia has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and is committed to ensuring development activities include and benefit people with disabilities.

The Fund was designed with these considerations in mind, and the Fund’s performance assessment arrangements reflect these priorities. All projects in the Fund were required to demonstrate how women, girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups would participate in and benefit from the Fund’s investments. Many Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have GESI as core components of their work and so were already aligned with the Fund’s requirements. Across the Fund there are numerous examples of innovative approaches to GESI, and significant achievements. An overview of these initiatives and achievements is presented in the sections that follow.

<sup>1</sup>For Her, It’s a Big Issue: Putting women at the centre of water supply, sanitation and hygiene. Evidence Report produced by the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and WEDC, 2006.

## FAST FACTS



- By the end of Fund around 70% of supported WASH committees are projected to have equal or better representation of women
- 30% of Fund projects are specifically focusing on menstrual hygiene management
- More than 13 studies on gender or social inclusion in WASH

## FUND CSOs



- Australian Red Cross (ARC)
  - Concern Universal
  - Habitat for Humanity (HfH)
- International Development Enterprises (iDE)
  - International Rescue Committee (IRC)
  - Live & Learn Environmental Education
  - Plan International Australia (Plan)
  - Save the Children Australia (SCA)
- SNV Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV)
  - Thrive Networks (Thrive)
    - WaterAid
    - Welthungerhilfe
  - World Vision Australia



Female sanitation teacher, iDE Cambodia. *Photo: Paul Tyndale-Biscoe*

## Promotion of Gender Equality

Initiatives within the Fund to promote gender equality can be broadly grouped into those that advocate for gender equality or raise awareness of gender issues in WASH, and efforts to ensure women and girls have equal access to improved WASH outcomes. Whilst the two groupings overlap, the former can be seen as laying the foundation for improved gender equality in a general sense, and the latter aims to address practical issues on the ground.

### Advocating for Gender Equality and Gender Awareness Raising

The most common technique for raising the profile of women in WASH projects is to ensure that there is equal representation of women on WASH committees. Across the Fund, projects are aiming to form or support around 2,500 WASH committees, of which around 1,700 are projected to have equal or better representation of women. In aggregate, half of the total Fund target of 26,000 WASH committee

members supported through Fund activities are women.

Several projects have taken this a step further and work to ensure that women are not only represented on committees but have technical or managerial roles. For example, ARC in Nepal and Bangladesh seek to empower women on WASH committees through targeted leadership training and ensuring they are in decision making positions; in Vietnam, Thrive is advocating for women's representation on the project steering committees run by the government's provincial and commune people's committees. The number of committees with women in managerial or technical roles is one of the Fund's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and at mid-term the CSOs are reporting that 55% of the Fund-supported WASH committees have women in these roles.

Not all projects are working with WASH committees, but these have still sought ways to ensure women's



involvement. In Zimbabwe, Welthungerhilfe has placed GESI champions in each of the local authorities with which they are working, as well as facilitating these roles in health clubs, residents' associations and other supported groups. In Cambodia, iDE have changed the terms and conditions of their sanitation teachers (their sanitation sales force) to make the positions more favourable to women—for example by allowing part-time work and allocating sales areas close to home for female sanitation teachers.

Forming strategic partnerships with women's organisations is a common strategy to ensure a clear and effective approach to gender. Several of the Australian CSOs, including Live & Learn and WaterAid, have partnered with the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) to bring that organisation's experience and focus to bear on their projects. IWDA, for example, has provided gender training to all four of Live & Learn's country project teams and continues to provide support throughout implementation.

At the local level a number of projects have partnered with national women-focussed organisations to directly implement their projects with examples including the three Vietnam-based projects—iDE, Plan and Thrive—which all work closely with the Vietnam Women's Union. iDE support Women's Union members at commune level to conduct sanitation sales meetings and promote improved hygiene behaviour, while Plan and Thrive support members to conduct community outreach programs. WaterAid in Mozambique is partnering with the Forum for African Women Educationalists Mozambique to run gender workshops and training for council members and local partner staff in the two towns in which the project operates. In PNG, WaterAid is partnering with a local women-focussed NGO, Susu Mamas, that works on maternal and child health issues. Together they are striving to reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality through better access to, and use of, improved WASH. In Bhutan, SNV supports female entrepreneurs through a local foundation, Tarayana, that has a formal relationship with the

Public Health Engineering Division of the Ministry of Health.

The local context in which projects are operating often dictates or influences the specific angle or aspect of gender that projects focus on. In Pakistan, arguably the most challenging context in the Fund for promoting women's involvement, IRC has developed an innovative way to include women in their project by teaming them with brothers and uncles to enable them to promote improved hygiene behaviours amongst households in the target areas. In many of the countries where Fund projects are being implemented (notably in the Pacific), gender-based violence is endemic and a significant issue that projects grapple with. In PNG, both Live & Learn and WaterAid have specifically developed materials to raise awareness of gender-based violence and for use in training programs for partners, staff and change agents.

Other efforts to raise awareness of the importance of women and girl's participation in WASH include promoting gender equality at schools through training of teachers and school WASH club members. A number of projects specifically target menstrual hygiene management, including Concern in Malawi, ARC Bangladesh, Live & Learn in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, WaterAid in Timor-Leste and World Vision in PNG. Plan in Malawi has partnered with a local NGO, Girls Empowerment, to support menstrual hygiene management in schools.

Some projects use special events such as International Women's Day (World Vision in Sri Lanka), and Menstrual Hygiene Management Day (WaterAid Mozambique) to further promote gender in WASH issues. WaterAid in Timor-Leste has formed and continue to support a Women in WASH group to raise the profile of women in the sector.

Finally, a number of projects have done research, or are conducting studies, to understand the specific needs of women and girls in WASH, in order to inform their projects or the sector more broadly. In Bhutan,



SNV has undertaken formative research into the roles of rural women in sanitation and hygiene, which has fed into the development of government WASH strategies. WaterAid in Mozambique has conducted research into menstrual hygiene management, and in PNG has researched perceptions, beliefs and practices around WASH to better inform their project approaches. Along with its strategic partner International WaterCentre, Live & Learn has undertaken gender analyses in the four Pacific countries in which their projects are being implemented to better understand how to incorporate gender considerations into the community-based sanitation enterprises. Lastly, Plan in Indonesia and Vietnam are undertaking research through the Fund's Innovation and Impact Grants to test a Gender and WASH Monitoring Tool<sup>2</sup> they have developed to better monitor progress towards gender targets, and explore gender relations between men and women.

## Improving Access to WASH Facilities and Services for Women and Girls

The lack of appropriate and adequate sanitation facilities in schools is widely acknowledged to be a major barrier to girls' attendance, with obvious ramifications for future life. As noted above, many of the Fund's projects are working in schools to improve gender outcomes for girls through awareness raising or training. However, the efficacy of these initiatives is undermined by a lack of facilities and so a substantial proportion of the projects include specific deliverables to address this barrier. Live & Learn's school components include separate girl's sanitation facilities in schools, as do World Vision's projects in PNG, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. Along with awareness raising efforts around menstrual hygiene management, a number of projects are also providing specific menstrual hygiene facilities in girls' toilet blocks, including ARC in Bangladesh and WaterAid in PNG and Timor-Leste. In Timor-Leste, WaterAid has also provided an incinerator at a school to assist with



Many Fund projects are working in schools to improve gender outcomes for girls. *Photo: Fotofusion Photography, Fiji*

<sup>2</sup><http://www.cswashfund.org/shared-resources/grantee-materials/gender-and-wash-monitoring-tool-gwmt>



A 'disability friendly' tippy-tap, Zimbabwe. Photo: David Brazier

the safe disposal of menstrual pads, etc.

Improving access to improved WASH services is not only about building infrastructure. It also involves ensuring women and girls are exposed to hygiene behaviour change approaches, and a number of Fund projects have approaches that specifically target women and girls. For example, ARC in Bangladesh and WaterAid in Timor-Leste have both developed specific communication materials for menstrual hygiene management to use with girls in schools. Plan Malawi uses dialogue circles<sup>3</sup> with mothers' groups as a way of promoting improved hygiene awareness. In Myanmar, SCA uses a technique called 'Peer Mothers',

where women, nominated by the community to receive training from SCA, train their peers in health promotion. ARC in Nepal work through female community health volunteers to ensure messages reach other women, and in Pakistan, Plan also work with female community-based motivators who are able to reach women inside their homes.

Lastly, several CSOs are working with micro-finance institutions to make loans or credit for WASH investments available to vulnerable households. Whilst this overlaps with social inclusion, and is discussed in the next section, widows and female-headed households fall clearly into this category and so potentially benefit from these initiatives.

## Social Inclusion

The Fund places a strong emphasis on ensuring marginalised groups are actively included in Fund activities, and benefit from the investments. Defining who is marginalised is complex and it is not possible in this note to fully explore this, however within the Fund, projects are seeking to support people with disabilities, poor households, vulnerable households (female or child-headed, widows, people living with HIV/AIDs), ethnic minorities and those living very remotely from urban centres. There are clear overlaps between efforts to promote gender equality and those to ensure marginalised or vulnerable households are not excluded. This section focusses on how Fund projects are specifically targeting people with disabilities and poor or vulnerable households.

## Disability

People with disabilities include those who have episodic or long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory **impairments** which in interaction with various **barriers** may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others<sup>4</sup>. The majority of initiatives in the Fund targeting people with disabilities aim to remove **barriers** to

<sup>3</sup>Dialogue circles involve extension workers and natural leaders bringing together a broad cross-section of community members for informal discussion on a wide range of program-related issues.

<sup>4</sup>As defined in the [Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program](#)



accessing WASH facilities and services. It is important to note, however, that attitudes to people with disabilities, including stigmatization, often exist as barriers in themselves, preventing the more physical barriers from being addressed. This is often contextual, and a number of Fund projects specifically aim to address how people with disabilities are perceived in their own cultures and settings in order to raise their profile and visibility, and thus increasing their acceptance in mainstream society.

An effective way of doing this is to partner with an organisation that has a disability focus (referred to as a Disabled Persons Organisation or DPO). Two of the Australian-based CSOs, World Vision and WaterAid, have formed strategic partnerships with CBM Australia to support disability inclusion in their portfolios. CBM Australia has provided training, resources and awareness raising techniques to the project teams to great effect. For example, in World Vision's projects in Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, CBM Australia facilitated a process whereby people with disabilities were employed as part of the baseline data collection processes for the projects, which has had a profound effect in terms of raising the profile of people with disabilities in the respective communities (see Box 1). The Gwanda City Council, with which they work, has taken these efforts to heart and is now installing accessible features in all of its buildings.

A number of the other projects have partnered with local DPOs who provide support and training to project teams at the local level. Plan in Malawi have partnered with the Mulanje Association for Persons with Disabilities and are together conducting formative research into people with disabilities and access to WASH services, with the aim of producing a WASH and Disability kit. SNV in Bhutan has also been conducting formative research into the impacts of disability on sanitation and hygiene in partnership with three local DPOs. In addition to their partnership with CBM, WaterAid have formed partnerships with local CBOs in Mozambique and PNG. In Mozambique they are partnering with ADEMO<sup>5</sup> to prepare disability communication materials and run awareness-raising

### Box 1: David's Story

David is living in Cowdray Park in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, and is in a wheelchair. Through his association with a DPO, FODPZ, he was selected to take part in the baseline data collection in World Vision's project locations. Each day the WVZ vehicle came to his house to collect him and dropped him off again in the evening. He felt good to be part of the process and noticed that people in his neighbourhood started to take more notice of him and treat him with more respect.

*"They think I am an important man now, they value my opinion", he said, adding "they also think I must be rich now that I travel around in such a car!"*

workshops with their key change agents and partner staff, and are also looking to advocate for disability legislation at the national level. In PNG WaterAid is working with two DPOs, the East Sepik Disabled People's Organisation and Callan Services, to mainstream disability in their project. World Vision in PNG also partner with Callan Services to support their project in the Western Province.

Most of the projects in the Fund are working to ensure that any infrastructure constructed (mostly toilets and other sanitation facilities) is inclusive. For example, iDE in Cambodia has partnered with Engineers Without Borders to design an accessible latrine shelter that was just going to market at the time of writing. ARC in Lesotho has modified latrine designs for people with disabilities, as do IRC in Pakistan and World Vision's projects in Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. Several, including Plan Indonesia, Thrive Vietnam and WaterAid Mozambique, specifically provide training to masons or entrepreneurs to incorporate accessible features into their toilet designs.

<sup>5</sup>Associação dos Deficientes Moçambicanos – or Association of Disabled Mozambicans



Finally, where projects are working to improve access to sanitation in schools, ensuring that facilities are inclusive is a common approach. In Timor-Leste WaterAid has conducted an accessibility audit in their target schools, and World Vision in Zimbabwe has installed accessibility features, including ramps, outward opening doors and grab rails in existing facilities in schools in their target communities.

## Poverty

By definition Australia's aid program aims to assist poor people living in poor countries within Australia's sphere of influence. However, within poor communities there is normally a wealth stratification such that some households have greater access to resources than others. Within Fund activities, specific efforts are being made to reach these 'poorest of the poor' households. As a general rule, households with other vulnerabilities as described above also normally fit into the poorest group in any community and so using poverty as a criterion for targeting vulnerable households will generally include most other vulnerabilities as well.

In some countries where the Fund is operating, governments define and identify poor households, thereby allowing easy targeting by projects. In Cambodia, for example, iDE and Thrive use the government's classifications to target households for additional support. iDE is partnering with micro-finance institutions to make loans available to poor households and through the Fund's Innovation and Impact Grants are investigating the efficacy of smart subsidies for sanitation to reach the poorest households. Thrive is providing a type of smart subsidy in the form of outputs based aid payments to poor households who invest in improved sanitation or water supply connections. Similarly, in Vietnam, both organisations are working with the Vietnam Bank for Social Policies to facilitate loans to poor households for purchasing toilets, and Thrive also promotes the outputs based aid approach.

Where government identification of the poor does not exist, projects find other ways to identify vulnerable households, and often use communities themselves to identify the poorest members. SNV in Nepal is facilitating a process with village and ward-level committees to identify the most vulnerable households and provide them with financial assistance from within the community.

Welthungerhilfe in Zimbabwe facilitate Internal Savings and Loans Schemes (ISALs) as a mechanism for the poor to access loans to purchase toilets—a technique also used by Live & Learn in Kavieng in PNG. In Live & Learn's other projects in the Pacific, the community-based sanitation enterprise model aims to allow cross-subsidisation of latrines within communities to facilitate access by the poor.

In other locations the projects themselves provide subsidies or financing to vulnerable households. ARC in Lesotho are fully subsidising VIP latrines in vulnerable households including those that are child-headed or affected by HIV/AIDs. In Bangladesh, Habitat for Humanity provides loans to poor households to purchase latrines.

Finally, Plan in Vietnam is targeting ethnic minority communities in remote and difficult to reach locations, and so in this case, the whole project is focussed on the most vulnerable.

## Conclusion

The examples of gender and social inclusion initiatives presented in this note are just a snapshot of what is being done across the Fund by the CSOs. Further information about specific approaches or activities can be obtained from the CSOs themselves, or from strategic partners such as IWDA or CBM<sup>6</sup>. Throughout the second half of the Fund implementation period, the MERP and the Knowledge and Learning Manager will be undertaking further monitoring visits to projects and will continue to monitor closely the work being done to support gender equality and inclusiveness in WASH.

<sup>6</sup>For example, CBM have prepared a report entitled "Conducting disability inclusive baseline assessments for Community-level WASH Projects" summarising some of the work they have been involved in with Fund CSOs ([www.cbm.org.au](http://www.cbm.org.au)).



## About the Fund

The Civil Society Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Fund is a **\$103 million** investment by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade that is supporting **13 Civil Society Organisations** to implement **29 WASH projects** in **19 countries** throughout Africa, Asia and the Pacific over four years to 2018.

The overarching goal of the Fund is to improve public health by increasing access to safe water and sanitation. The objective is to enhance the health and quality of life of the poor and vulnerable by improving sustainable access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

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