

# RWSN Equality, Non-discrimination and Inclusion Group: A synthesis of experiences and lessons discussed, 2015

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## Abstract/Summary

In 2015 the Rural Water Supply Network’s Equality, Non-discrimination and Inclusion theme led e-discussions and webinars on Reducing Inequalities in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). This covered *practical approaches to improve participation of everyone; inclusive infrastructure designs and information, guidance and support* that exist on these. Disability, gender, menstrual hygiene management, rights to water and sanitation and school WASH were covered, with experiences shared from West, East and Southern Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Central America. E-discussion participants were encouraged to primarily focus on rural water supply, with sanitation and hygiene being considered when relevant. This report synthesises the online discussions, captures practical tools, draws on relevant content from the webinars and highlights experiences and lessons learnt. It is not an extensive literature review, but does draw lightly on existing literature beyond what was discussed during the e-discussions.

## Introduction

During October and November, 2015 the Rural Water Supply Network’s Equality, Non-discrimination and Inclusion (ENDI) theme enjoyed lively e-discussions and two webinars on Reducing Inequalities in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). These covered *practical approaches to improve participation of everyone; inclusive infrastructure designs* and the *information, guidance and support* that exist on these. Two webinars on Reducing Inequalities in WASH were held. Presentations focused on disability, gender, menstrual hygiene management, rights to water and sanitation and school WASH in Mali, Niger, Tanzania, Nepal, Ghana, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. During the e-discussions participants shared experiences of working in Uganda, Vietnam, Mali, Zambia, Nepal, Chad, Timor Leste, Tanzania, Niger, Honduras and Pakistan. Throughout the e-discussions and webinars the primary scope was rural water supply, but sanitation and hygiene were considered when relevant.

This report is a summary of the synthesis of experiences and lessons discussed in the RWSN ENDI Group during the e-discussions and webinars (Wilbur et al, 2016). This report is not an extensive literature review, but does draw on existing literature beyond what was discussed during the e-discussions. When done, this is clearly referenced in the text.

### ***Defining ‘inequalities’***

Before the e-discussions and webinars, members of the ENDI theme defined ‘inequalities’ by drawing on the Equality Checklist in Table 1 (Satterthwaite et al, 2012). The Equality Checklist is a useful tool which allows for a more nuanced understanding about which groups and individuals may face inequalities. The inequalities captured in the Checklist are not exhaustive and could be added to. The Checklist authors did not intend for each inequality to be addressed in every target and indicator. Instead, it helps actors to assess the most relevant areas where discrimination and inequalities are present in the given context.

Table 1 Equality Checklist (Satterthwaite et al, 2012)

When examined as a whole, do the goals, targets and indicators:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Prioritize basic access and focus on progressive realization toward safe and sustainable WASH for all, while reducing inequalities?</li><li>■ Address spatial inequalities, such as those experienced by communities in remote and inaccessible rural areas and slum-dwellers in (peri-) urban areas?</li><li>■ Focus on inequalities, shining the light on the poorest of the poor?</li><li>■ Address group-related inequalities that vary across countries, such as those based on ethnicity, race, nationality, language, religion, and caste?</li><li>■ Attend to the impacts of individual-related inequalities that are relevant in every country of the globe, such as those based on sex/gender, age, disability, and health conditions imposing access constraints- experience both inside and outside the household? Do they address menstrual hygiene management?</li></ul>

## Description of the Case Study; main results and lessons learnt

### Practical approaches to improve participation of everyone

#### *Roles and responsibilities (insights from Uganda)*

During the first week, the group discussed the roles and responsibilities of the national and local governments, NGOs and communities in reducing inequalities in WASH. Participants recognised that NGOs and local governments implementing WASH programmes are aware that specific groups and individuals are marginalised and socially excluded in the areas they work. NGOs and local governments understand that these people need physical and financial support to access WASH services, but they argue that the community are best placed to identify and assist these people.

Examples shared from **Uganda** showed that rural community members and particularly extended family members can be well placed to identify, and support people who are disadvantaged. For instance, the Church of Uganda - TEDDO (CoU-TEDDO) explained that following consultations in a rural village, members of the community and the extended family contributed the household rainwater harvesting jar construction materials for a disabled man who could not afford it himself. These consultations were part of the wider CoU-TEDDO WASH programme aimed at improving the active participation of disabled, older and chronically ill people. CoU-TEDDO found that their approach successfully challenged stigma and discrimination against disabled people. However, it was too reliant on volunteers in the community to support households with a vulnerable person to construct their household WASH facilities. This approach worked well for the first two years, but volunteers are now expecting the households they support to pay them for their services<sup>1</sup>.

Other participants highlighted that relying on family and community members to identify and support people who are vulnerable to exclusion and discrimination could further entrench existing power inequalities. People who are socially excluded may be invisible within the household and the community; unwilling to engage after years or a life time of exclusion, so relying on them to ‘speak up’ or on others to prioritise assistance for them carries significant risks.

<sup>1</sup> A short video of Francis Ediau (CoU-TEDDO) explaining the approach can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4lUwSfUIzQ>

*Affordability and Social Tariffs (insights from Vietnam)*

In Vietnam experiences of private rural water enterprises, shared by the Institute for Sustainable Futures<sup>2</sup>, showed how poverty is a barrier to accessing piped water in rural settings. Almost 70% of poor people without a connection said that it was as a result of the connection fee not being affordable.

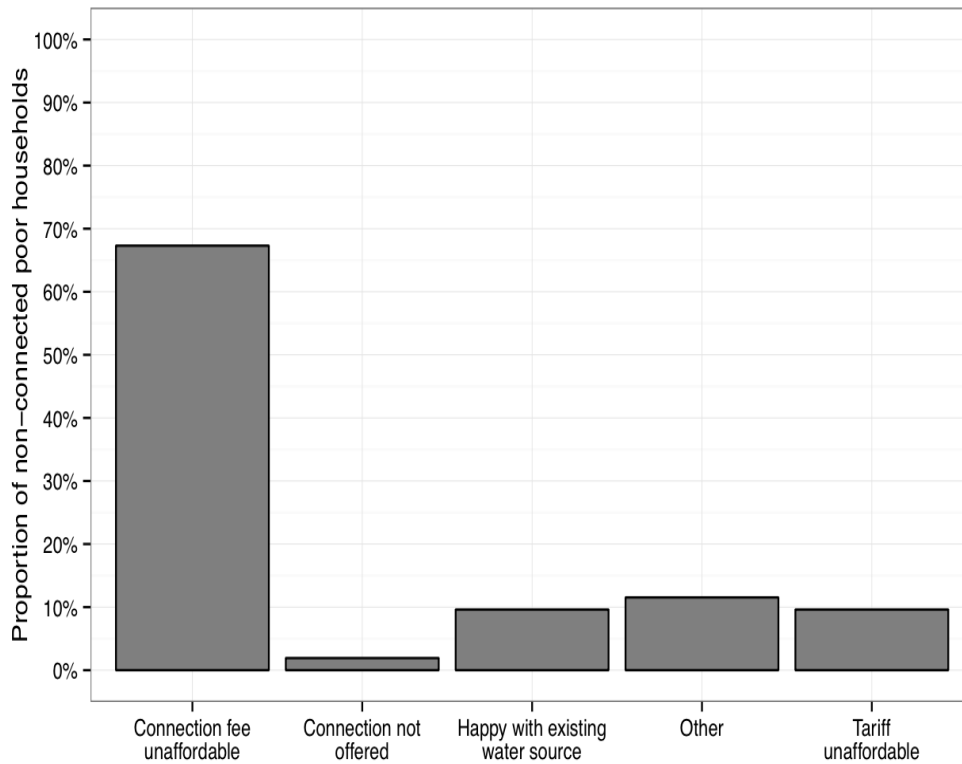


Figure 1. Reasons for non-connection for poor households (Grant, 2015)

E-discussants shared that even where legislation and policies on tariff setting exist, these may not contain provisions for a social tariff<sup>3</sup>, or explicitly state how the tariff should be calculated, or who is eligible. Tariff setting should be approached very carefully and with the participation of key stakeholders from outside the community. It should involve the local government, as the state is often responsible for covering the operation and maintenance costs. Ideally the process is transparent; done through existing governance and regulatory structures where they exist and sanctioned by the appropriate authority.

Participants felt that determining user contributions or tariff structures should not only be made on ability or willingness to pay, but also the life-cycle costs of the service. If the life-cycle costs of the service are not incorporated, the service will decrease. This invariably impacts people who are marginalised or excluded first and more severely. One participant shared the ‘At What Cost’ tool, which is currently under development by Water for People (see Box 1).

**Box 1 At What Cost?**

*At What Cost*, an educational tool for ensuring finance is available to extend services to those unserved and meet the life cycle costs of the existing systems. It was developed and is applied by Water for People. *At What Cost* supports communities to understand the implications of different tariff scenarios, including the introduction of social tariffs. This process is facilitated by representatives from the District or Municipal government and is supported by Water for People staff. The tool and the outputs of the community dialogue link with the District financial model, through a separate set of tools, which is then used for strategic planning and budgeting. Though not prescriptive about how a social tariff is established, this tool provides a promising process that can be replicated.

### ***Sector planning (insights from Mali)***

WaterAid shared how they engage with authorities during the development of the sectoral plans for more equitable resource allocation in **Mali**. WaterAid developed poverty profiles for the geographic areas they work in and fed these into the government's sector development plans. WaterAid also involved authorities in inclusive WASH implementation activities to raise awareness about the barriers different people face when accessing and using WASH services. Though this process was positive, the use of Sector Development Plans by municipalities and other stakeholders have been very limited. Local authorities have not committed to providing services to the poorest and most marginalised people. Service providers cited the additional cost of accessible and inclusive water and sanitation technologies as the barrier.

### ***WASH for more inclusive societies (insights from Uganda and Zambia)***

The additional cost of working in inclusive ways and constructing inclusive infrastructure designs is often cited by practitioners, policy and decision makers as a barrier to delivering this at scale. WaterAid's research in **Uganda** and **Zambia** measured the additional time staff took to ensure community mobilization activities were inclusive. They found that most tasks did not need extra staff and that inclusive activities did not take a lot of additional time (Wapling, 2014). With experience the time required may reduce and become the norm. World Vision's findings from a desk review supported this (World Vision, 2014). Their review recommendations include:

1. Identify and engage potential donors to cover the relatively minor additional cost to make all WASH projects inclusive
2. Develop guidelines to ensure that disability inclusion is included in funding proposals
3. Ensure grant acquisition teams are aware and accountable for including allowable cost allocations for disability inclusion from donors

However, discussions on costs perpetuate the perception that inclusion is optional. To realise SDG 6, *Ensure access to water and sanitation for all*, WASH services must have inclusion at its core. Otherwise marginalised groups or individuals will continue to be 'left behind'. There is no two ways about it. The debate must be widened from money or how much time should be spent on making activities inclusive, to seeing that access to water and sanitation for everyone can lead to more inclusive societies, where discrimination and stigmatization are addressed for all aspects of an individual's life.

### ***Human rights (insights from Nepal)***

The Government of **Nepal** has ratified the International Right to Water and Sanitation and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They also have gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) policies, strategies and action plans at national level. But these are not implemented by the local government. The webinar presented by the Finnish consulting company, FCG International demonstrated how they implemented the GESI Strategy and the human rights based approach through action research in rural Nepal<sup>4</sup>. FCG International found that people living with a disability (including the older people) and menstruating women faced the biggest barriers in progressively realising their rights to water and sanitation. Their intervention aimed to address these. Early indications of trends show an improved understanding by community members of the importance of everyone realising the rights to water and sanitation, including menstruating women and disadvantaged castes. Changing deeply held traditional beliefs is a long process but more positive attitudes towards Dalit caste members are emerging.

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<sup>4</sup> Webinars are available here: <https://vimeo.com/144622070>

### *Striving for gender equality*

#### ***Gendered roles in WASH programmes (insights from Chad)***

In **Chad**, Concern Worldwide promoted quotas of women on the rural water point management committee and their appointment into key positions. Women's roles within these committees were generally assigned along existing gender norms: women were committee treasurers<sup>5</sup> and 'hygiénistes', which include cleaning duties and men were handpump mechanics. Men were involved in household hygiene and water management, which led to men taking on a greater role in this area and an increased awareness of hygiene practices. Activities carried out by men included providing money for soap and constructing tippy taps. Women continued to be responsible for all the cleaning and hygiene activities in the household. Overall, women's unpaid labour appeared to have increased through this process.

Traditional gender roles were not challenged as programme staff did not feel it was problematic. Having more women on the WASH management committee was a good first step as their voices were heard for the first time, but Concern Worldwide recognised that it must be seen as a step on a longer journey towards active participation, ownership and control.

#### ***Exploring the unintended consequences (insights from Mozambique)***

Research shared from the University of Denver highlighted how women met at a traditional rural water source in **Mozambique** to collect water, socialize, bathe and get away from conflicts at home (Van Houweling, 2014). They had a high degree of control over this space and could restrict the presence of men. With a communal water point installed and without their meaningful participation in its design and siting, women lost this space and control. Instead of using the protected water point they continued to use the traditional water source as it was more socially valuable to them.

#### ***Gendered outcomes in WASH programming (insights from Timor Leste)***

In **Timor-Leste**, WaterAid carried out participatory research to assess gendered outcomes of a selection of their rural programmes<sup>6</sup> (Kilsby, 2012). Outcomes related to women's 'practical gender needs'<sup>7</sup> included greater ease of performing duties and that with water closer to home and men taking a greater share in water-related domestic tasks. Changes in women's strategic gender interests<sup>8</sup> included increased diversity of roles for women including gaining higher status roles, increased participation in community life, involvement in decision-making, voice and influence. Recognition of women's rights, improved family relations and greater harmony in the households were also reported.

As a result of this work, WaterAid and the implementing partners integrated practical gender dialogue activities into community mobilisation processes. By applying these tools, the team aimed to implement more gender transformative programmes which aim to address the root causes of gender inequality. Within the household and community the tools:

1. Record how paid and unpaid work is shared between women and men
2. Build a greater appreciation of workload and a consideration about how tasks might be shared more fairly
3. Facilitate a discussion about how women and men will be engaged in the WASH programme

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<sup>5</sup> Adhering to the traditional belief that women are more 'trustworthy' and 'detail oriented'.

<sup>6</sup> This was presented on the Inclusive approaches and designs webinar 2. Recordings are in English: <https://vimeo.com/144622070> and French: <https://vimeo.com/144720747>

<sup>7</sup> Practical gender needs are the needs that women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. Practical needs do not challenge the gender division of labour or women's subordinate position in society.

<sup>8</sup> Strategic interests involve greater decision-making power or control over resources. Addressing strategic gender interests assists women and men to achieve greater equality and to change existing gender roles and stereotypes.

## Box 2 Practical tools for gender transformative programmes

The 24 hour clock: Two facilitators lead women and men in separate groups to discuss the different tasks they commonly carry out in one day. The length of time each task takes to complete and when these are done in the day is recorded. Activities include WASH and non-WASH related tasks. The facilitator brings the groups back together and respectfully leads a discussion to explore the differences between daily life and work of women and men and how tasks could be distributed more fairly and equally. This exercise has been adapted from the 24-hour clock activity (Halcrow et al, 2010).

Who does; who decides is a card sorting activity in which community members identify different ways that women and men are involved in and affected by WASH issues, workload and decision-making. Participants also think about how WASH responsibilities can be distributed in a fairer, more equitable and effective way. The WASH-related categories cover: daily household WASH tasks; family caring; family decision-making and community decision-making. The participations go through two steps of card sorting by firstly laying out cards for *who* does most of each task and then secondly, *changes* people want to see in relation to who does that task. Finally, participants discuss actions for change together (adapted from Halcrow et al, 2010).

### *Raising awareness (initiatives by DFID, DFAT, WaterAid, UNICEF, SNV, Messiah College, Handicap International in Tanzania, Niger and Mali)*

Throughout the e-discussions there was a call for WASH actors to influence donors to prioritise inclusion issues. The tide is turning with the SDGs. In 2014 DFID launched its first Disability Framework (revised and relaunched in 2015) in response to calls from disabled people to be mainstreamed in development (DFID, 2015). The framework includes WASH as a stand-alone work-stream and a call to all its development partners to mainstream disability inclusion. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in Australia, has a strategy for strengthening disability inclusive development in its aid programmes and is seen as a leading donor in disability inclusion (DFAT, 2015).

In **Tanzania**, WaterAid, UNICEF and SNV shared successful experiences of using school WASH initiatives raise awareness of the Government about the need for accessible school WASH services. Their experience led to a commitment to improving school WASH for everyone and the development of a Tanzania’s National School WASH Guidelines (United Republic of Tanzania, 2015) <sup>9</sup>. The organisations are now working with the Government to implement and enforce them.

In Niger and Mali, the Africa WASH & Disability Study shared positive examples of awareness raising and research activities. In **Niger**, in collaboration with the Messiah College they utilised the half-time break of a football match, to host an exposé of the disability inclusive WASH and the various infrastructure modifications and assistive technologies (see photo<sup>10</sup>).



It successfully engaged the audience and raised awareness of disability inclusive WASH. In **Mali** Messiah Collage partnered with Handicap International to conduct a baseline survey on the prevalence rates of disabilities and WASH access. As people with disabilities conducted the survey this challenged the typical view that disabled people are helpless and always dependent on others. It also led to community members

<sup>9</sup> Experiences were presented during the first webinar, which can be watched here: <https://vimeo.com/143141144>

<sup>10</sup> Photo: The Africa WASH & Disability Study & The Collaboratory at Messiah College

with disabilities to speak much more candidly about their WASH situation during interviews. This approach helped to open doors for increased communication and information.

### **Inclusive infrastructure designs (insights from Uganda and Niger)**

WaterAid **Uganda** shared their experience with the CoU-TEDDO in developing accessible designs in rural settings. Their experience demonstrates that the development of accessible low-cost technologies (through local innovations using local materials) is facilitated by equipping communities, and especially disabled persons in the community with the right information.

Lessons from World Vision and Messiah College in accessible handpump superstructure design indicated that design consistency can be a concern. Care is needed in the development of appropriate technical standards. Examples of ramp design, especially concerning slope and the required, additional cost of materials for construction, should be given adequate consideration. During the course of project implementation in **West Africa**, it became difficult to maintain such standards across several different regions and countries. For example, the costs associated with appropriate ramp access (notably the cost, length and time needed to construct) were notable deterrents. To overcome this, increased artisan and builder interaction with persons with disabilities in the community was needed. Often, some sort of mutually-satisfactory compromise was needed among the “competing” parties involved.

In **Niger** World Vision noted the importance of providing a pedestal at handpump sites to facilitate the lifting of water receptacles (from floor to head) by those with mobility impairments. These should normally be constructed at a height roughly half the distance from floor to head level. Adaptations to protection walls around the handpump were also necessary. Normally, short, thick concrete walls around handpumps not only protect the handpump from roaming livestock, but also can serve the same purpose as a pedestal. However, due to the need to protect the handpump from blowing sand accumulation, walls were narrowed and heightened, and a pedestal replaced the shorter wall to facilitate the lifting of receptacles to the head for those carrying water.

### **Information, Guidance and Support**

An Annotated Bibliography was shared which captures resources on reducing inequalities in WASH. It is a live document, so materials can be added continuously<sup>11</sup>. A five-minute film from WaterAid and CoU-TEDDO provided an overview of information, guidance and support for inclusive approaches to WASH in Uganda. Two practical inclusive WASH resources were shared:

1. The Compendium of Accessible WASH Technologies: A collection of accessible technology design information, which helps communities to see accessibility options made from locally available materials. Available here: [www.wateraid.org/accessibleWASHtechnologies](http://www.wateraid.org/accessibleWASHtechnologies).
2. A Practical Guide for Inclusive WASH at Household and Community levels in Uganda<sup>12</sup>. This resource provides technical design dimensions for contractors to apply in designing accessible infrastructure.

In the video, CoU-TEDDO explained they have standardised accessible infrastructure design across the **Ugandan** ministry of education and the ministry of water and environment in partnership with WaterAid and the Appropriate Technology Centre (ATC)<sup>13</sup>. They have also produced guidance for applying these standards and are advocating for inclusive WASH to be taken to scale by others. One challenge highlighted by CoU-TEDDO was the high costs of inclusive designs for public WASH services. Another was the limited simple and clear guidance or manuals for promoting inclusive WASH for water user committee members, government health educators and village heads to use.

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<sup>11</sup> The bibliography is currently on the WaterAid website at <http://www.wateraid.org/policy-practice-and-advocacy/equality-and-non-discrimination/resources>.

<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately only a hard copy of this guide can be found

<sup>13</sup> The video can be viewed here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtLO\\_wym6uE&nohtml5=False](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtLO_wym6uE&nohtml5=False)

WaterAid, WEDC, Leonard Cheshire Disability and the LSHTM shared a selection of data collection tools<sup>14</sup>:

- Nine mixed-method data collection tools focus on WASH access and use, disability, ageing, chronic illness, menstrual hygiene management, safety and security.
- Eight process monitoring tools designed to collect data throughout an inclusive WASH programme to assess progress in capacity of implementing staff, levels of participation of different people at the community level, and the effectiveness of inputs and activities. These tools are designed to be administered by WASH implementers and INGO staff.

IR Worldwide shared the *Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action* (Age and Disability Consortium, 2015). These are developed by seven agencies working to promote age and disability inclusive humanitarian assistance<sup>15</sup>. They are also relevant for the development sector and include a section on WASH.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

A vast amount of learning was shared between ENDI theme members during the e-discussions and webinars. Drawing on the Equality Checklist (Table 1), this mainly focused on spatial, individual related inequalities and touched on the progressive realisation toward safe and sustainable WASH for all. No substantive discussion was held on group related inequalities such as ethnicity, tribe, race, nationality, language, religion and caste. This demonstrates limited knowledge, understanding and approaches to addressing these in WASH and is something that the ENDI theme should consider developing.

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<sup>14</sup> These tools and other resources related to ageing, disability, chronic illness and WASH is available at [www.wateraid.org/uk/undoinginequity](http://www.wateraid.org/uk/undoinginequity).

<sup>15</sup> CBM, DisasterReady.org, Handicap International, HelpAge International, IFRC, Oxford Brookes University and RedR UK



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