

Policy position on equity and inclusion

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By Directors Team

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WaterAid policy position on equity and inclusion

WaterAid believes that access to safe water, improved hygiene and sanitation (WASH) is a human right. These essential services underpin human development and transform lives, enabling people to overcome poverty. We believe that poverty, marginalisation, and social exclusion are inextricably linked. This means WaterAid will address exclusion from WASH as it relates to power dynamics and control of resources within the family, the community and at institutional levels (locally, nationally and internationally).

WaterAid has adopted equity and inclusion as a core principle, intrinsic to a rights-based approach, to ensure we address issues of marginalisation and exclusion in order to realise our vision of a world where everyone has access to safe water and sanitation.

The needs-based approach emphasises the need to change people's situation of deprivation or lack of access to services, viewing people as 'recipients' or 'beneficiaries', thus implying that they are passive. The rights-based approach is a transformational development process in which people drive their own development. Moving to a rights-based approach implies focusing on the relationship between state and civil society.

Mainstreaming equity and inclusion recognises that rights are universal and special measures need to be taken to protect, promote and fulfil the rights of the poorest, the marginalised and those who are particularly vulnerable to diseases associated with lack of access to WASH. It means ensuring that the principles of equity and inclusion are incorporated in all areas of organisational policy, strategy and action.

WaterAid's framework: *Equity and inclusion: A rights based approach* (2010) sets out the minimum standards that WaterAid expects to meet in its four strategic aims at the global, regional and national levels. Country specific analysis undertaken by country programmes will best contextualise these minimum standards to maximise WaterAid's effectiveness.

This commitment represents a long term one, understanding that some change will be immediate and some will be incremental. The process of building up our own and our partners' capacity to address exclusion issues in WASH programmes will be an ongoing requirement. We will ensure our organisational culture is inclusive, developing the awareness, sensitivity and skills of staff and partners to issues of equity and inclusion. We will build on our own experience and that of others who work with marginalised people.

Please refer to *Equity and inclusion: A rights based approach*.

Standards in addressing equity and inclusion in WaterAid's strategic aims

Aim 1	Aim 2	Aim 3	Aim 4
Equity and inclusion is understood by everyone in WaterAid. Standards and guidelines are communicated to all staff and partners in an accessible format.	WaterAid's country strategic plans address the analysis of poverty, vulnerability and exclusion from WASH in deciding where and how to work.	WaterAid influences development actors using evidence-based research and evaluations of how exclusion from WASH impacts on development outcomes.	WaterAid produces global and national organisational policies on diversity including gender, disability, HIV/AIDS, sexuality, child protection and other aspects of vulnerability, exclusion and discrimination, where appropriate.
Active and continuous enquiry into who is excluded from WASH and the causes of exclusion/discrimination (e.g. political, economic, social, cultural).	Awareness and focus on equitable and inclusive WASH through WaterAid's relationships with international agencies, donors, national governments, alliances and networks.	WaterAid engages in partnerships and networks to share with, learn from, and influence other development actors to promote equity and inclusion in access to WASH.	Equity and inclusion is understood by all WaterAid staff and included in all training and inductions, taking care that it is addressed in a pragmatic and realistic way relevant to the focus of the training.
Involvement of those marginalised and excluded people is always actively sought in WaterAid and partners' programme design, plans, budget, implementation and monitoring.	WaterAid influences sector actors' capacities to be more responsive and accountable to the needs and rights of the poor who are marginalised and excluded from services.	All WaterAid work demonstrates how integration of WASH in other sectors contributes to more equitable and inclusive development processes and outcomes.	The workforce demographics are analysed and used to inform recruitment policy and processes. Unjustifiable barriers to employment are identified and removed. Commitment to equity, inclusion and rights is demonstrated in recruitment and induction of new staff.
Our ability to diversify our approaches to meet different needs is demonstrated.	WaterAid Influences sector performance monitoring and reporting policies and practices to incorporate equity and inclusion.		WaterAid's guidelines on accessibility and representation of excluded and marginalised people are applied to all internal and external communications channels and products.
Knowledge and evidence on equity and inclusion in WASH is gathered and disseminated through research, monitoring, evaluation and documentation.			Leadership behaviours, person and job specifications, performance management and personal development plans reflect a commitment and accountability to equity and

			inclusion.
			Learning about equity and inclusion is actively disseminated throughout WaterAid and with partners.
			Accessibility audits for offices are carried out.