



# Female-Friendly Public and Community Toilets:

a discussion about why we need them and how to design them

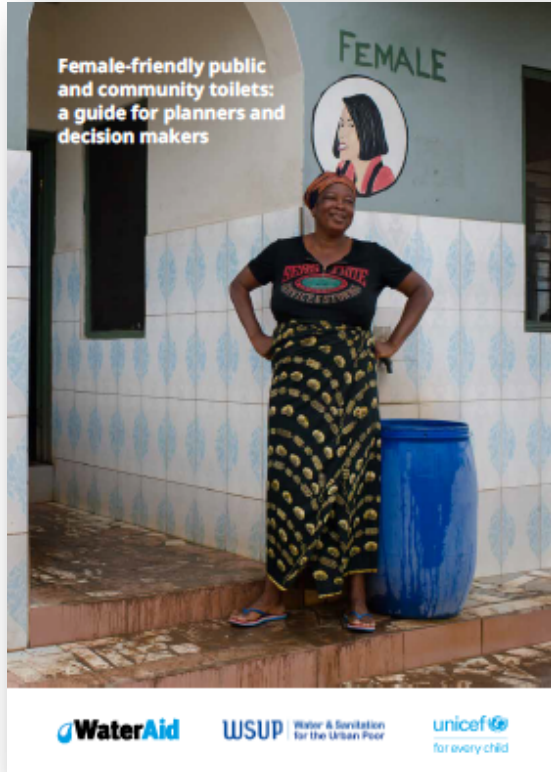
© WaterAid / Ahmed Jallanzo

 **WaterAid**

**WSUP** | Water & Sanitation  
for the Urban Poor

**unicef**   
for every child

# The guide



- **Why** focus on female-friendly public and community toilets?
- **What** does a female-friendly public and community toilet look like?
- **How** to achieve scale? City-wide planning and local implementation

[washmatters.wateraid.org/female-friendly-toilets](https://washmatters.wateraid.org/female-friendly-toilets)



# Table of contents

- The guide:
  - Why?
  - What?
  - How?
- Female-friendly toilets: case studies from Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
- Implementing the guide: experience from programmes.
- Questions, reflections and discussion.

## Presenters

Priya Nath: *Equality, Inclusion and Rights Advisor, WaterAid, UK*

Olutayo Bankole-Bolawole: *East Africa Regional Director, WaterAid, Uganda*

Lizette Burgers: *Senior Advisor WASH, UNICEF, USA*

Sam Drabble: *Head of Research and Learning, WSUP, UK*

**Why focus on female-friendly public  
and community toilets?**





Where does she **pee** – at night?

Where does she **defecate** – at night?

Where can she change her  
**sanitary pads**?



# Why do we need community and public toilets?

## Community toilets

- Low-income, high-density settlements.
- Challenging context for household sanitation.

Shared facilities may be the only/best option in the short term.

Universal use of private toilets accessible on premises remains the ultimate goal.

## Public toilets

- Near public spaces.
- Public transit.
- Parks.
- Markets.

Always essential to enable people to move freely throughout the day.



# “Paying special attention to the needs of women and girls“ (SDG 6.2)

## **Biology and physiology**

- Women cannot urinate as easily as man can – more space, privacy and time needed.
- Even more so when managing menstruation.
- Urinary incontinence affects women more often than men.
- Pregnancy can increase the need for women to use the toilet as the bladder is compressed.

## **Social and cultural roles, responsibilities and restrictions**

- Different social expectation, taboos and stigmas.
- At greater risk of sexual violence and harassment.
- *Still* the main caregiver for children, sick, people with disabilities and older people.

Watch the animation here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCtJVNdckWA>



**What does a female-friendly public  
or community toilet look like?**



Safe and  
private

Meet  
menstrual  
hygiene  
requirements

Accessible to  
all users

Affordable  
and available  
when needed

Well-maintain  
and managed

Meet  
requirements  
of caregivers  
and parents

# Safe and private

- Separate entrance for female toilet section.
- Safe location.
- Good lighting.
- Trained female and male care takers.
- Robust cubicles.
- Designed for privacy.
- Clear signage.





# Menstrual hygiene management and other hygiene requirements

- Access to water and soap.
- Access to menstrual products.
- Disposal of menstrual products.
- Hooks and shelf.
- Mirrors.
- Washing/bathing units.



# Accessible to all users

- Reasonable distance.
- Accessible cubicles.
- Accessible path.



# Affordable and available when needed

- Affordability.
- Open when needed.
- Enough cubicles (more for female users)



# Well-maintained and managed

- Cleanliness.
- Well-maintained.
- Solid waste management.
- Faecal and liquid waste management.
- Adequately managed.

# Meet the requirements of caregivers and parents

- Baby changing station.
- Family-friendly cubicle.

## **Desirable and context-specific:**

- Laundry
- Breastfeeding station

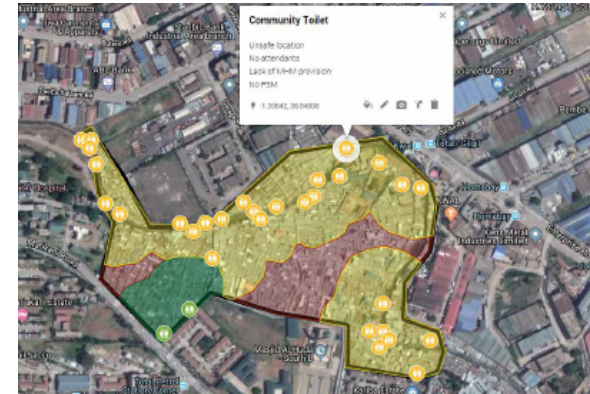


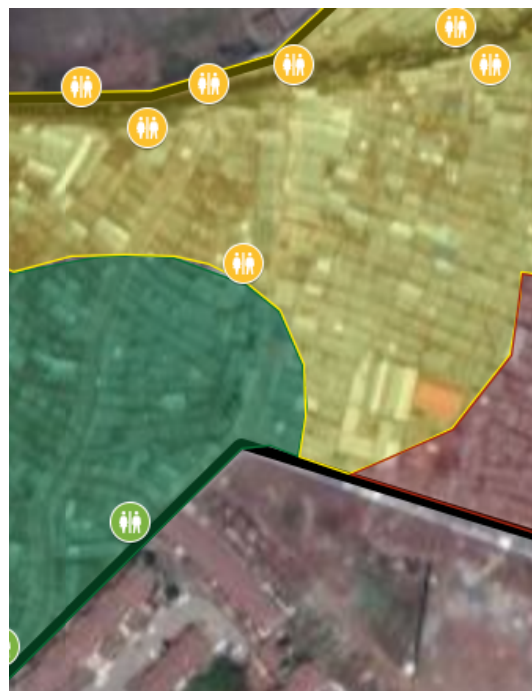
**How to achieve scale?**

**City-wide planning and local  
implementation**

# City-wide assessment

- **How many** community and public toilets does the city have?
- **Where** are they located?
- **To what extent** do existing facilities meet **female-friendly** requirements?
- Which **areas** are **lacking** public and community toilets?
- What needs to be done?





| Colour code | Zones  | Strategies suggested  |
|-------------|--|---|
| Red         | Zones with no access to community toilets or with defunct community toilets. | <p>Provide new female-friendly and accessible community toilets or fully renovate defunct ones.</p> <p>Prioritise these zones, starting with settlements with least household sanitation coverage and worst indicators for nutrition and for gender-based violence.</p> |
| Amber       | Zones served by community toilets that are not female-friendly.              | <p>Upgrade and expand toilets, addressing the female-friendly features that are missing.</p>  |
| Green       | Zones served by female-friendly community toilets.                           | <p>Monitor whether toilets are and remain female-friendly. Apply any necessary corrective action.</p>   |

# Local implementation

- Participatory processes to understand the experiences and perspectives of existing and potential toilet users.
- Inform:
  - Exact location of toilets
  - Opening times
  - Tariffs
  - O&M arrangements
  - Priority female-friendly features, etc.



# Key principles

The city-wide assessment and implementation processes need to be:

- **Gender sensitive**, gathering the perspectives and ensuring meaningful participation of women and girls and any disadvantaged groups throughout.
- Be **realistic**, rooted in an understanding of the institutional, regulatory and financial frameworks and limitations.
- Not a standalone process.



# **Examples from Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia**

# Case study: Visakhapatnam

- **Citywide sanitation mapping** exercise generated data on prevalence/functionality of PTs/CTs.
- Of 262 blocks, only 6 in good condition.
- Upgrading these facilities identified as **crucial component of citywide activities** to eliminate OD.
- 198 toilet blocks upgraded through **gender-sensitive retrofitting plans**.



# Case study: Maputo

- Model for **high-quality shared sanitation** developed in partnership with the Municipality.
- Women adopted a central role in the planning and management process:
  - **Needs-based** location/site planning.
  - **Women-centred** infrastructure design clinics.
  - Women **leadership roles** within Communal sanitation block management committees.



# Case study: Dhaka

- 25 public toilets built in Dhaka (WaterAid in partnership with city corporation)
- Inclusive considerations:
  - Female toilet attendants
  - Menstrual products
  - Security measures
  - Breastfeeding space
  - Poor inclusive fee structure
- 8 Million uses by Dec 2018 (1 Million female)
- Expanded to Chattogram, Sylhet and Khulna.

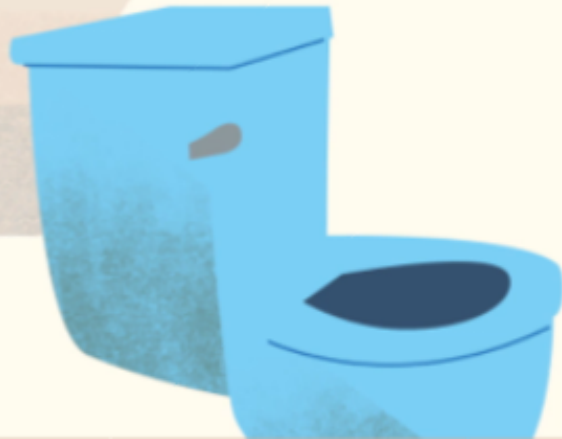


# Reflections from Uganda and Nepal

Olutayo Bankole-Bolawole: East Africa Regional Director, WaterAid, Uganda



# Questions, reflections and discussion





# Resources

- **Animation** with subtitles in French, Spanish and Portuguese:  
<https://youtu.be/wCtJVNdcKWA>
- **Full guide** in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese:  
[washmatters.wateraid.org/female-friendly-toilets](https://washmatters.wateraid.org/female-friendly-toilets)
- **4-page summary** in French, Spanish, Portuguese, English - (Hindi version coming soon)
- This **webinar** will be available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/susanavid eos/videos>



# Thank you!

**Full guide** in Spanish, French, English, Portuguese:  
[washmatters.wateraid.org/female-friendly-toilets](https://washmatters.wateraid.org/female-friendly-toilets)

