

User-friendly WASH in healthcare facilities

The Sustainable Development Goals call to achieve access to safe water and sanitation for all by 2030. To achieve this goal there must be an increased focus on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in healthcare facilities (HCFs) which is people-centred, and user-friendly. User-friendly WASH is inclusive and accessible to people of diverse genders, age, sex, class, abilities and ethnicity. It supports their equal participation and access to services.



What is 'user-friendly' WASH in healthcare facilities?

Users of healthcare facilities are more likely to be experiencing illness, pain, limited mobility, be heavily pregnant or have just given birth – and therefore are more likely to have specific WASH needs. A people-centred approach to WASH encompasses physical accessibility as well as socio-cultural acceptability, provided through the security, privacy, independence and dignity afforded by the designs. It is about ensuring that facilities and services are user-friendly and meets the needs of those who use them most – including women, children and people with limited mobility.

Why is user-friendly WASH in healthcare facilities important?

Within healthcare facilities access to safe WASH is vital for protecting human health and dignity, improving the quality of care, for infection prevention and control, safe delivery for mothers and newborns and to improve healthcare seeking behaviour. Inclusive and accessible WASH ensures that all users, including vulnerable groups, have their WASH needs and rights met. This includes a post-surgery patient needing to use the toilet, a mother who wants to bathe her newborn, an elderly patient that is bed-bound and a female staff member.

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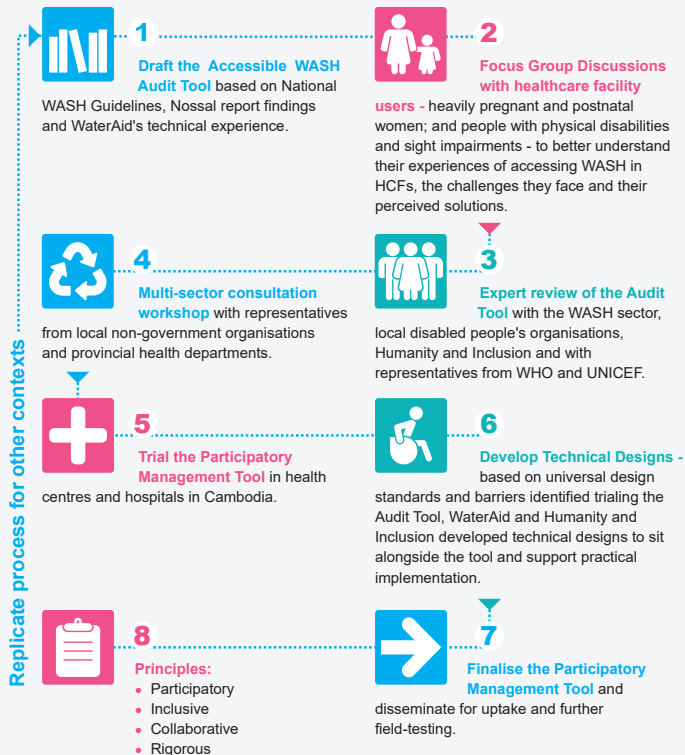


Supporting people centred care: A participatory tool for user-friendly WASH in HCF

Through a scoping exercise with the Nossal Institute, WaterAid identified that in order to drive improvements in user-friendly WASH in healthcare facilities, there needs to be tools and guidelines specific for low and middle-income settings. As no known tools currently exist for this purpose, a participatory, inclusive, collaborative and rigorous process was undertaken, to develop a WASH in healthcare facilities participatory management tool to support progress toward accessible WASH in healthcare facilities in Cambodia.

Supporting people-centred care:

A participatory tool for user-friendly WASH in Healthcare Facilities



What is the participatory tool for user-friendly WASH in healthcare facilities about?

The Participatory Management Tool is categorised into the different WASH elements: bathing; sanitation; products and equipment; caring for young children/infant and hand washing and drinking water. It allows the facilitator to assess the extent to which facilities meet, partially meet, or do not meet criteria for: accessibility, usability, privacy and safety. Importantly, in addition to scoring against each target, the Participatory Management Tool provides the opportunity for user perspectives (client and/or staff) on each of the elements – thereby triangulating observed results with user-experiences, and embedding participatory practices into monitoring.

What can I use the Participatory Management Tool for?

The user-friendly WASH in Healthcare Facilities Participatory Management tool can be used to:

- Examine how user-friendly, inclusive and accessible WASH facilities in healthcare settings are (including health centres and hospitals).
- Gather user perspectives (client and/or staff) on their WASH experiences in an empowering and participatory way.
- Use this information to make changes to WASH infrastructure, management and practices to meet the identified needs.

The Participatory Management Tool can be conducted along with, or be adapted and incorporated into, existing monitoring mechanisms and service assessments. It is designed to complement other quality improvement and adaptive management tools for WASH in healthcare

facilities such as WHO/UNICEF's Water Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool (WASH FIT). Using the Participatory Management Tool alongside or within WASH FIT and similar tools, can evaluate whether quality improvements are inclusive, accessible and meeting the needs for all, and ensure this is validated from users' perspectives and experiences. The long-term view is for user-friendly WASH indicators and targets to be embedded into mainstream quality assurance monitoring tools – to ensure that accessibility principles are universally applied.

Next steps:

The Participatory Management Tool is currently being field-tested in Cambodian healthcare settings. Users of the Tool are encouraged to share their experiences and data, in order to refine the tool and prepare it for scale across Cambodian healthcare facilities. Doing so will gather rich evidence of how WASH within healthcare facilities meets the needs of users, including staff, patients and carers. This evidence can be used to improve accountability to inform policy change, greater cross sectoral collaboration and improvements in inclusive practice. The Tool has also been designed so that with contextualisation and adaptation to meet specific country standards and needs, it can be adopted for use in other low and middle-income contexts globally.

User-friendly WASH in healthcare facilities is vital for protecting human health and dignity, and particularly for addressing the specific and sometimes neglected needs of vulnerable populations. The WHO/UNICEF Global Action plan has a vision to “provide access to all settings by 2030, with a special attention to the needs of women, girls and children”. The Participatory Management Tool is needed to realise this vision, to address the specific needs of diverse users of WASH in healthcare facilities such as menstruating and post-delivery women, older people, infants and people with disabilities, injury or illness. The global SDGs cannot be achieved without an increased focus on accessible WASH in HCFs. The Participatory Management Tool is a practical mechanism to raise the profile of accessible WASH in HCFs and to create an accountability push for improved services. The global focus on increasing WASH availability in HCFs is an important opportunity to ensure services and facilities are also accessible - to promote equitable, universal access that ‘leaves no one behind’.

