

Practical guidance to address gender equality while strengthening water, sanitation and hygiene systems



Strengthen the system



Acknowledgements

WaterAid Australia sought the gender and WASH expertise of Heather Brown Consulting and Katie Nicholls to develop this framework in late 2017. It is intended to capture our current thinking and approach and be a guide to moving from inclusive approaches to transforming gender, utilising WASH governance and sector strengthening as a platform. Thank you to key WaterAid staff for their input and review. This framework will be updated, as our practice on gender-transformative WASH improves with time.

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Purpose

WaterAid collaborates with governments and civil society organisations to tackle the barriers to sustainable water sanitation and hygiene services. WaterAid focuses on 8 critical components or 'building blocks' which need to be strong to bring about sustainable WASH services. We use participatory processes to assess, design interventions and strengthen WASH sector systems.

Why integrate gender equality into WASH sector strengthening?

If we don't take explicit and deliberate steps to address gender inequality, we will reinforce it in our work. Imagine if every sector reinforced gender inequality: health, education, WASH. Women would never be empowered.

Sector strengthening approaches are an opportunity to look at gender equality within these participatory processes because:

1. Usually the majority of people working in water, sanitation and hygiene-related government departments are men.
2. The goal of gender equality can only be achieved if men show leadership and take deliberate steps to promote and support women's inclusion in WASH activities, programs and organisations
3. WASH services impact women and men differently
4. Assessment of building blocks and resulting interventions will ignore gender issues unless we embed practical steps

Steps can be taken within sector strengthening approaches to ensure that WASH programming empowers women and girls and transforms gender relations.

About this guidance

This guidance note helps to provide practical steps on how we can use sector strengthening tools to empower women and shift harmful gender norms, while achieving more sustainable WASH services.

This guidance note supports WaterAid teams and partners to consider and integrate gender equality strategies across each of the 8 building blocks. It leverages sector strengthening as an opportunity for WaterAid and partners to empower women and address gender inequality issues.

This guidance must be designed to be used alongside WaterAid's full gender equality guidance and the Equity and Inclusion Framework.

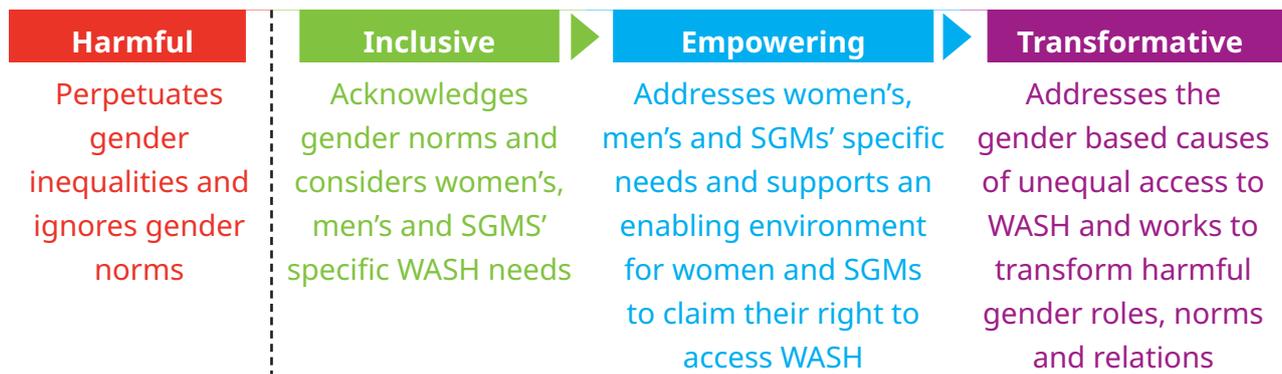
The gender equality guidance explains and applies a series of 'gender levels' to design or assess gender outcomes in WASH. It aims to support teams and partners to move toward gender transformative approaches. It applies "levels" of gender equality as: harmful, inclusive, empowering and transformative, similar to other programming areas.

Integrating gender equality into WaterAid's sector strengthening approach

WaterAid uses sector analysis to inform our sector strengthening approaches, and assess it against 8 building blocks. Gender considerations can also be analysed within this process, to inform program design.

Please note that a deeper gender analysis must feed into this guidance, to first understand how sector actors such as government address gender inequality. This will help to better understand what is achievable at the policy and sector level. Please see WaterAid's full gender equality guidance on how to do a gender analysis; how to map out where to address gender inequality and how to work with other organisations focused on gender transformation.

Steps towards transformational gender change



Harmful

Harmful programs perpetuate gender inequalities and ignore gender norms. Harmful practice **reinforces harmful gender norms**, do not consider women's inclusion or can lead to an increase in marginalisation. Empowering women involves challenging established cultural norms and power structures. When this is in a context of high rates of violence against women and girls the result can be an increase in violence. At the policy level, harmful can be where policies do not adequately address the linkages between gender equity and access to water.

Inclusive

The process of inclusion is not just about improving access to services, but also supporting women to engage in wider processes to ensure that their rights and needs are recognised. For example, in planning and managing service delivery, in decision-making, and in holding duty bearers to account through citizens' action. One issue with inclusion is it focuses on including women as individuals taking leadership positions, but does not fully consider gender relations, such as how women relate to men at the household and community level and the enabling environment.

Empowering

Empowering women is the next step to transformational change once there is a strong foundation of inclusion. For women to be empowered, we need to effectively challenge the gender norms that prevent active participation in community decision-making, education and income earning. Empowering programming is focused on attitudinal change and is achieved through women having the confidence to claim their rights to WASH and service providers responding with increased access to WASH that is responsive to the specific needs of women. The key to empowerment is working with women to support them to claim their rights. Service providers, including men who hold those positions, are starting to accept women's leadership roles and are more responsive and accountable.

Transformative

Transformational change is a long-term outcome and involves changing (transforming) gender norms to promote and support gender equality. Transformative programming addresses gender norms showing there is respect for women and support of them as leaders; and an understanding of gender norms, roles and relations. Organisations focused on women's rights would be legitimate WASH partners. Gender budgeting as a long-term, measurable institutional commitment to supporting the implementation of gender policies is pursued by the WASH sector. Women's leadership and women in technical positions (services providers) is normal and male peers are supportive and proactive in their career

Practical steps

Step 3: Mapping outcomes to create participatory action plans

Step 2: Conducting a deeper analysis of gender across each building block.

Step 1: See the 'big picture': Framing Gender Equality as an additional building block

This sector strengthening guide provides a three-step process to better understand if/how government or sector actors are addressing gender inequality issues in relation to the building blocks across the WASH sector. Doing this analysis can help to identify programming actions.

Step 1: See the 'big picture': Framing Gender Equality as an additional building block

Using a similar approach to the other 8 building blocks, make a 'big picture' assessment of where current efforts on gender sit.

This involves using a set of guiding, exploratory questions.

As a project team or alongside partners, these questions can be used as a guide to make a broad assessment of whether the WASH sector is harmful, inclusive, empowering, transformative when it comes to gender equality.

Step 2: Conducting a deeper analysis of gender across each building block.

The second step is to do a deeper analysis of whether gender considerations have been addressed within each block, and to what extent.

This involves mainstreaming gender across each building block: It provides a checklist for each level of change that describes the key components we want to see in a program supporting gender inclusion (for example) and what you would not see in the same program.

Step 3: Mapping outcomes to create participatory action plans

The third step is to use the analysis and mapping of levels of gender equality across each building block to inform action plans. Action plans will be most effective if developed together with government counterparts and other actors, as we would with action plans to strengthen each sector building blocks. As a group, stakeholders can discuss, agree and document:

- Which of the 8 building blocks we will focus their gender efforts on;
- Possible strategies and activities to implement to address the challenges related to gender that were identified across the selected building blocks. This might include working with representatives of the target community (leaders, local experts, women) so we can hear their ideas and decide which strategies and activities are most likely to succeed.
- Partners to support our success and share ideas: Identify partners and change agents who can share ideas and offer advice based on their experience. They might be different from previous partners, such as organisations that promote women's leadership, or organisations that support women entrepreneurs or respond to violence against women.
- Action plans, by mapping the outcomes we want to see and how we will reach them. Use participatory methods to set some clear outcomes for the sector strengthening work.

Action plans and outcomes related to gender equality can be integrated into sector strengthening action plans.

Step 1: 'Big Picture': What would a gender equality Building Block look like?

Gender States	Harmful	Inclusive	Empowerment	Transformative
Gender	Interventions are reinforcing gender stereotypes in WASH activities and / or putting women & girls at risk through lack of consultations with women & girls and lack of understanding on country context of gender equality	Women are physically represented in decision-making activities and sex and age disaggregated data (SAAD) is a requirement for programmatic interventions for all Institutional Arrangements	Women are actively involved in decision-making activities, and sex and age disaggregated data (SAAD) is a requirement for all institutional arrangements including analysis	Women are in leadership positions involving decision-making responsibilities for WASH services.
Key Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have women been consulted at any stage of the program cycle? 2. Is the country context of gender equality understood? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are women physically in the room during meetings? 2. Do service providers, government structures understand SAAD and support it through its tools and targets? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are women actively listened to during meetings? 2. Are they actively participating during meetings? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you see women in leadership positions? 2. Are male decision-makers supporting women to reach these positions?

Questions to help how sector actors and government understand / apply gender to sector strengthening:

Questions	Answers
1. What sector policies and / or strategies are in place? Is there a WASH policy or strategy that includes targets for gender inclusion or equality?	Has your programme design incorporated these existing targets where available and appropriate and/ or intends to support the development of a policy or strategy that fills the gaps?
2. Are government structures supporting sex and age disaggregated data (SAAD)? Are they using this SAAD for monitoring and budgeting?	Are your monitoring and accountability processes / mechanisms for this programme gathering new or using existing SAAD and applying them to your budgeting and implementation planning?
3. Are women represented in ministries and WASH providers?	Are women, women's groups and other representatives present in sector consultations, your programme stakeholder mapping, partnership and communication strategies etc.?
4. Are women represented in the appropriate ministry? (Ministry responsible for WASH activities); Are gender ministries (where present) included in cross government / cross ministry coordination on WASH?	
5. Are there women's rights organisations active? Are they involved in WASH advocacy or programming?	Are you partnering with women's rights organisations locally/nationally? Are they aware of, involved in your programme planning and advocacy?
6. What is the relationship between women's rights organisations and government structures?	What is the relationship between women's rights (and disability rights organisations) and the WASH sector and WASH actors including us?
7. How many different services are women's rights groups representing? (Education, health, equality etc.)	

Step 2: Conducting a deeper analysis of gender equality across each of the 8 building block

The second step is to undertake a deeper analysis of whether gender considerations have been addressed within each block, and to what extent.

This involves mainstreaming gender across each building block: It provides a checklist for change that describes the key components we want to see in a program supporting each level of gender equality (for example gender inclusion) and what you would not see in the same programme.

Below is a template that can be used in partner and stakeholder workshops.

Facilitating a deeper discussion:

In small groups, use the definitions of harmful, inclusive, empowering and transformative above to plot what 'level' the sector (or government) is currently at in terms of addressing gender across each sector building block.

Facilitate a discussion on why this is the situation, using questions and examples set out in this guide.

Next, facilitate a discussion on what 'level' of gender equality the group is aiming for through its sector strengthening work. Groups can agree on what is realistically achievable in the programme, and how these outcomes could be achieved.

This discussion can be used to form the basis of action plans with multiple stakeholders.

Both discussions can be recorded and used as a baseline or monitoring tool throughout the programme. Remember the discussion the tools draw out is important, and it may be useful to record key discussion points.

ENDI	Harmful	Inclusive	Empowerment	Transformative
Coordination				
Strategic Planning				
Financing				
Institutional Arrangements				
Accountability				
Service Delivery				
Monitoring				
Environment				

Sector Strengthening: Inclusion

Women are physically represented in decision-making activities and sex and age disaggregated data (SAAD) is a requirement for programmatic interventions for all Institutional Arrangements

Building Blocks	Gender Inclusion
Coordination	Limited coordination of agencies, women's rights organisations or knowledge of agencies and their capacity for gender (equality, inclusion, empowerment, transformation).
Strategic Planning	No gender analysis plan. General planning is inclusive of women & girls physically, but not from the perspective of donors, rather than through consultations with women and girls
Financing	Funding is supporting gender activities (equality, inclusion, empowerment, transformation), but no specific allocation of funds and no tracking of how funds are spent
Institutional Arrangements	<p>Women are represented physically in Institutional Arrangements. No specific targets, therefore not necessarily represented 50/50. However, no consideration for specific needs of women to become more involved in Institutional Arrangements have factored.</p> <p>(E.g. no support structure from government structures or policies for assisting women in becoming more involved in Institutional Arrangements – childcare support, access etc.)</p>
Accountability	Women and their representative groups have limited participation in feedback and accountability mechanisms. They are present but are not supported give specific feedback to improve service delivery. Accountability mechanisms have limited considerations for women's participation.
Service Delivery	Project interventions are physically considering the needs of women and girls, but without coordination with women and girls prior to interventions and without providing post implementation support specific to women and girls
Monitoring	Sex & age disaggregated data (SAAD) in targets, but not followed with supporting and appropriate monitoring tools or SAAD analysis
Environmental	Water resource protection and management policies do not consider the needs of women and girls. Women are represented in coordinated management, monitoring and resilience planning but are not active/ listened to.

What would we likely see if gender inclusion was being implemented?

- ✓ Women are represented in government structures
- ✓ Women representation in policies (e.g. women & girls specifically targeted in a government policy)
- ✓ Women representation in strategies (e.g. women & girls specifically targeted in a government strategy)
- ✓ Government are implementing SAAD intervention targets
- ✓ WaterAid staff are trained in basic gender equality and women's inclusion
- ✓ Limited participation of partnering service providers and government structures in basic gender equality and inclusion training
- ✓ Women are involved in training for their position in Institutional Arrangements & government structures
- ✓ Some budget allocation for inclusion and gender equality activities

Sector Strengthening: Women's Empowerment

Women are actively involved in decision-making activities, and sex and age disaggregated data (SAAD) is a requirement for all institutional arrangements including analysis

Building Blocks	Gender Empowerment
Coordination	Geographical coordination with Women's Rights groups and services within the district. Knowledge and understanding of partnering service providers' capacity for gender (equality, inclusion, empowerment, transformation)
Strategic Planning	National WASH policies are gender sensitive. Gender analysis plan is in place. Consultations with women & girls are occurring at planning stages.
Financing	Funding is allocated to specific gender activities.
Institutional Arrangements	<p>Women have 50% or above representation at policy level and within government structures. Involvement in decision-making is encouraged, but not equal. Considerations for specific needs of women to become more involved in Institutional Arrangements are factored.</p> <p>(E.g. no support structure from government structures or policies for assisting women in becoming more involved in Institutional Arrangements – childcare support, access etc.)</p>
Accountability	Women and their representative groups participate in feedback and accountability mechanisms. They give specific feedback, have a strong voice, but it is not systemically used to improve service delivery. Accountability mechanisms include considerations for women's greater participation.
Service Delivery	Specific needs of women are addressed through interventions, but lack post implementation support that focuses on asking whether these interventions have achieved their desired outcome of addressing the needs of women
Monitoring	SAAD, appropriate monitoring tools along with support to staff in how to appropriately use them. Gender analysis is completed to a limiting degree
Environmental	Water resource protection and management policies include gender considerations. Women and their representative groups are supported to participate in monitoring and responding to plans.

What would we likely see if gender empowerment was being implemented?

- ✓ Women are represented in government structures of 50% or more
- ✓ Women are represented in policies (e.g. women & girls specifically targeted in a government policy)
- ✓ Women are represented in strategies (e.g. women & girls specifically targeted in a government strategy)
- ✓ Government are implementing SAAD intervention targets
- ✓ Gender analysis plan
- ✓ Women and girls are considered at every stage of the program cycle: problem identification; program planning (including appropriate target setting); implementation; monitoring and evaluation and appropriate budgeting
- ✓ Women are involved at every stage of the program cycle and at every level (policy to community)
- ✓ Appropriate indicators used to measure impacts of WASH programming specifically for women & girls
- ✓ Staff trained on GBV and referral pathways
- ✓ Targets for partnering service providers and government employees to participate in GBV training
- ✓ Male-targeted training on gender equality

Sector Strengthening: Gender Transformation

Women are in leadership positions involving decision-making responsibilities for WASH services.

Building Blocks	Gender Transformation
Coordination	Full coordination with women's rights groups and / or services. Knowledge and understanding of partnering service providers' capacity for gender (equality, inclusion, empowerment, transformation) and plans are in place to support partnering service providers' in maintaining and / or achieving desired gender transformation
Strategic Planning	National WASH policies are gender sensitive & plans to sustain gender equality and inclusion. Gender analysis in place, with appropriate and supportive follow up
Financing	Funding is allocated to gender activities. Including supporting training activities for staff
Institutional Arrangements	Women have equal representation in Institutional Arrangements and equal participation in decision-making. Support is provided to women their roles in Institutional Arrangements
Accountability	Women and their representative groups have equal participation to men in feedback and accountability mechanisms. Their feedback is systemically used by duty-bearers to improve service delivery. Accountability mechanisms support women's greater participation.
Service Delivery	Specific needs of women are addressed in implementation and post implementation support
Monitoring	SAAD, appropriate monitoring tools along with support to staff in how to appropriately use them. Gender analysis along with appropriate follow up and clear, workable objectives
Environmental	Water resource protection and management policies address gender considerations. Women and their representative groups are decision-makers and leaders in monitoring and responding to plans.

What would we likely see if gender transformation was being implemented?

- ✓ Women in leadership positions in government structures
- ✓ Full support for women's involvement in government structures, including attitudinal responses and views from male and female peers in private and public sectors
- ✓ Strong coordination with Women-focused organisations. This would be from the community level grass-root organisations, to policy-influencing groups.
- ✓ Strong coordination with Women-focused organisations that focus on a variety of women's issues. E.g. GBV, gender equality & empowerment, women in WASH, women supporting livelihoods etc.

Sector Strengthening: Harmful Gender Programming

Interventions are reinforcing gender stereotypes in WASH activities and / or putting women & girls at risk through lack of consultations and lack of understanding on country context of gender equality.

Building Blocks	Harmful Gender Programming
Coordination	Lack of coordination with women's groups and lack of knowledge of service providers and government structures capacity for gender (equality, inclusion, empowerment, transformation)
Strategic Planning	Lon-term development plans do not include gender inclusion targets. No consultations involving women representatives prior to implementation. No gender analysis plan
Financing	No funding is provided to support targeted women's activities or inclusion activities
Institutional Arrangements	Lack of collaboration with gender and protection cluster to identify WASH needs for women and girls
Accountability	No accountability mechanisms exist between service authorities/ providers and women's groups. There is no mutual accountability between government and women's groups.
Service Delivery	Service providers and policies reinforce harmful gender norms such as focusing hygiene programs on women as the mother
Monitoring	Limited to no SAAD
Environmental	Water resource protection or management policies do not address gender. Women have no understanding of threats to water resources and are excluded from planning and monitoring.

What would we likely see if harmful gender programming was being implemented?

- × No women represented in government structures
- × No women represented in WASH service providers
- × Women are not consulted in community WASH interventions
- × Increased workload, stresses and pressures for women and girls
- × Increased distances for women to access WASH services
- × No government policies supporting women & girls' rights
- × No government strategies supporting women & girls' rights
- × No gender focus or indicators in government WASH policies

Step 3: Action Planning

Planning for action is a vital step for stakeholders to turn their own identification and prioritisation of challenges to gender, social, and power norms into practical actions. It is also essential in order to achieve a step change from inclusive to transformative WASH sector systems. Multiple issues may have surfaced during the mapping of issues against sector building blocks and now participants can choose how they want to take action.

Facilitators help stakeholders move through the planning process by understanding whether actions will influence change, who will participate in the actions, the barriers to implementing actions and the barriers to the changes that the sector actors seek.

The most effective approach to action planning on gender equality is to integrate it into broader action plans for sector strengthening.

Key discussion points to consider when facilitating action planning discussion with stakeholders during sector strengthening workshop:

- What will be the guiding strategy: advocacy and campaign or a mix of several actions?
- Which stakeholders should be approached? Who from the group of stakeholders will lead the process?
- What are the immediate, short-term, and long-term activities
- What capacity strengthening and support is needed?
- Include practical information such as where the planned activities will occur?
- Keep the dialogue focused on the key issues participants have identified in the analysis

Consider risks

Every sector strengthening approach should have the goal of 'do no harm'. As a group, take time to think through any possible risks to women in any of the activities that you have planned.

Facilitate a discussion about:

- What are the risks to the safety of women, or girls? What can be done about those risks?
- What are the risks to women doing a lot of work on top of what they already do? Is there a way to work with men to share some of their work at home?
- What are the risks to women or girls who may experience violence in the home? Is there a way to engage them without increasing the risk they will experience violence?

Once the risk has been identified discuss what can be done to lower these risks and whether you need to add in some activities or actions that will reduce risks for women and girls. For example, there may be issues that can be prevented by having a policy in place or by taking extra time to engage community leaders in discussions and education around gender equality.

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