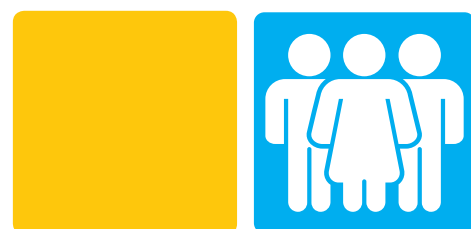


Reducing inequalities through universal and equitable access to WASH: links between SDG 10 and SDG 6

Sustainable Development Goal 10, to reduce inequalities within and among countries, represents one of the most challenging aspects of the 2030 Agenda. It requires transformative action on economic, social, political and environmental factors, globally and nationally. Reaching everyone, everywhere with water and sanitation by 2030 – as part of the universal, fully funded provision of services in fulfillment of human rights – means tackling inequalities across lines of geography, gender, ethnicity, and so on, and ensuring that level of income no longer determines access.

Water and sanitation are intrinsically entwined with dynamics of poverty and inequality, both within and among countries. Access to WASH must be secured for remote and marginalised populations, especially people facing discrimination against their gender, ethnicity, disability, caste, religion and so on. Redirecting public resources towards service provision requires attention to global economic and financial systems, and how they enable or restrict countries from funding their WASH sectors and national development plans.

Sustainable Development Goal



WaterAid/ Ernest Randriarimalala

Mickson Jakalasi drawing water from a disability-friendly borehole, Simulemba Health Centre, Kasungu, Malawi.



Snapshot on WASH and inequalities

- **Disaggregation of data reveals stark inequalities within countries on the basis of income quintile, rural/urban location and gender.** Where countries make advances in access to WASH, it is often the most rural areas and the lowest wealth quintiles that are left behind. For example, although Angola has relatively high coverage of basic drinking water compared to other sub-Saharan African countries, there is a 40 percentage point gap between urban and rural areas, and a 65 percentage point gap between the richest and poorest quintiles.¹
- **In Pakistan, for example, inequalities in access to basic hygiene run along wealth quintiles** – the richest quintile has 94% coverage and the poorest 16%. This trend is mirrored between regions within Pakistan, where coverage of basic hygiene ranges from 20% to 89%.¹

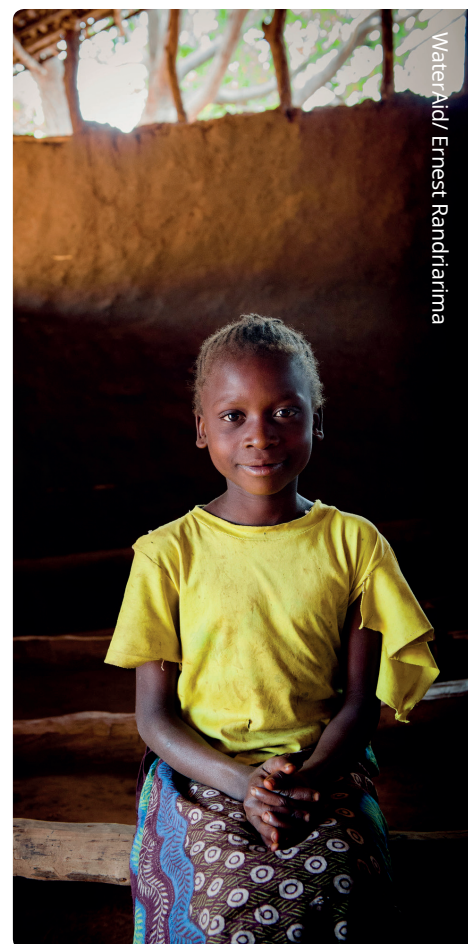
Country case studies

South Africa

In 1994, South African citizens succeeded in overturning apartheid, and in adopting a rights-based constitution that required the Government to allocate resources towards the progressive realisation of economic, social and cultural rights.³ Although South Africa has seen important progress in improving access to public services, systemic inequality – and the legacy of apartheid – remains ingrained in the country's economic and social structures and manifested through disparities in healthcare, education and WASH.

South Africa's recent policy of fiscal austerity further widens the gap between rich and poor, putting the most marginalised at risk. Along with systemic inefficiencies and misuse of funds, cuts in public expenditure and imposition of regressive taxation curtail access to public services and most harshly impact on people living in poverty. Reduced budgets for school infrastructure have dangerous repercussions for WASH facilities, evidenced by the widely publicised deaths of children falling into broken school pit latrines.³

Instead of moving in the opposite direction of global commitments to the SDGs, the Government must increase financing towards public services to redress gaps in power and voice⁴ and provide healthcare, education, clean water and decent sanitation for all South Africans.



Dina's school in Mozambique has no water and just one toilet. Five to ten children are off school sick each week – during the rainy season this is much higher.

Ethiopia

To deliver on its priority of ensuring access to safe WASH for all, the Ethiopian Government created the ONE WASH Coordination office, encompassing four ministries and WASH actors within the country. ONE WASH formed the Equity and Inclusion Taskforce in 2017, including the Government, WaterAid Ethiopia and other NGOs, disabled peoples' organisations and academic organisations.

The Taskforce, mandated to jointly promote, advocate for, share and coordinate sustainable and integrated development of equity and inclusion in WASH, launched a series of training modules in 2018. With Open University, WaterAid Ethiopia contributed the 'Count Me In' module: an open-access learning resource that provides training for WASH sector actors in understanding exclusion, including on: people with disabilities; gender equality and women's empowerment in WASH; inclusive WASH facilities; and participation and partnership.⁵ Count Me In has been disseminated to WASH practitioners, donors and organisations throughout Ethiopia, to reduce knowledge gaps and offer concrete guidance on how to promote and secure everyone's rights to water and sanitation.

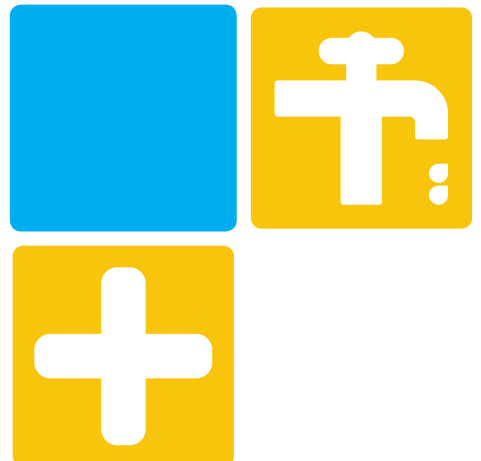
West and Central Africa

In sub-Saharan Africa, 66% of all non-agricultural employment is in the informal sector, in which women are both more involved and less protected. 74% of women's employment is informal, compared to 61% of men's.⁶ In collaboration with UN Women, WSSCC assessed the conditions of women and girls working in markets in Cameroon, Niger and Senegal to understand how lack of access to facilities affects their work, especially during menstruation. The assessment found that, on average, two out of three women do not carry out their normal work during their periods, due to lack of suitable WASH facilities that include water, gender separation, lights, locks, doors and disposal bins. Menstruation was referred to as a "dead time", and had considerable economic impact, deepening existing gender inequalities.⁷

Increasing the number and availability of gender-sensitive toilets in public places – including near markets, transport hubs and other areas frequented by women – can substantially reduce WASH inequalities and enhance women's economic empowerment, especially those who work in the informal sector.



Tarfalech in front of the new accessible toilets at Edget Bihibret Elementary School, Ethiopia.



We recommend:

- **Include indicators/metrics under SDG10 to measure progress towards universal access to public services including WASH**, because evidence shows this is crucial to reducing inequalities. Consider additions to SDG10 monitoring, such as the Palma ratio, to more accurately measure economic inequality.
- **Equitable and inclusive financing for the SDGs**, to address inequalities within and between countries. This should occur through international public assistance in grant form, along with reform of international economic governance and the global tax system. Progressive taxation is crucial to enable governments to raise and spend sufficient domestic revenue to fund essential services that leave no one behind.
- **Prioritise increased capacity and collection of disaggregated data**, along lines of inequalities by group, to understand which groups are disproportionately without access to services including WASH, and to address discrimination and other causes of this exclusion.

References

1. WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (2017). *Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene*. washdata.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/2018-01/JMP-2017-report-final.pdf (accessed 8 May 2019).
2. UN Women (2018). *SDG monitoring report: turning promises into action*. unwomen.org/en/digital-library/sdg-report (accessed 8 May 2019).
3. Center for Economic and Social Rights (2018). *Factsheet: austerity in the midst of inequality threatens human rights in South Africa*. cesr.org/factsheet-austerity-midst-inequality-threatens-human-rights-south-africa (accessed 8 May 2019).
4. WaterAid and Development Finance International (no date). *Releasing the flow: addressing barriers to financial absorption in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector in Africa*. Available at: <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/releasing-the-flow> (accessed 17 May 2019).
5. WaterAid (2017). *Realising the human right to water, sanitation and hygiene: lessons from Southern Africa*. washmatters.wateraid.org/sites/g/files/jkxoof256/files/Realising%20the%20human%20right%20to%20water%20Briefing%20note.pdf (accessed 8 May 2019).
6. The Open University UK/WaterAid (2018). *OpenWASH: Count me in! Inclusive WASH in Ethiopia*. open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=2244 (accessed 8 May 2019).
7. International Labour Organization (2015). *Five facts about informal economy in Africa*. ilo.org/addisababa/whats-new/WCMS_377286/lang--en/index.htm (accessed 8 May 2019).
8. Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (2017). *Water sanitation and hygiene in the informal sector: experiences of active women in West and Central Africa – findings from Cameroon, Niger and Senegal*. Briefing note, CSW61. wsscc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Womens-Access-to-Sanitation-and-Hygiene-in-the-Informal-Sector-Briefing-Note.pdf (accessed 8 May 2019).

Find out more at

washmatters.wateraid.org/sustainable-development-goals
July 2019

WaterAid is an international not-for-profit, determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation. Only by tackling these three essentials in ways that last can people change their lives for good.

End Water Poverty (EWP) is a global civil society coalition, campaigning to end the water and sanitation crisis. Established in 2007, we work in all regions across Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and North America to demand and deliver effective global advocacy resulting in universal access to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

The Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) works to promote social justice through human rights. In a world where poverty and inequality deprive entire communities of dignity, justice and sometimes life, we seek to uphold the universal human rights of every human being.

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) is a membership-based organisation dedicated to improving sanitation and hygiene for the most vulnerable and marginalized people around the world. Established in 1990, WSSCC is hosted by the United Nations Office for Project Services.