



Integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in WASH and IWRM: A Practitioner Cheatsheet

This cheatsheet is designed to support water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and integrated water resource management (IWRM) practitioners in integrating gender equality and social inclusion outcomes (GESI) within the US Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs).

Why integrate gender equality and social inclusion into WASH and IWRM activities?

<p>1 Welfare</p>	<p>WASH and IWRM are both important to the full enjoyment of life for all. Global mandates including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Dublin Principles, and the recognition of the human right to water and sanitation highlight the importance of WASH/IWRM for the full enjoyment and wellbeing of life and the alleviation of poverty cycles.</p>
<p>2 Efficiency</p>	<p>GESI integration can lead to improved WASH/IWRM outcomes. The active engagement and agency of women, girls, and the socially marginalized has been shown to lead to improved efficiency, sustainability, and effectiveness of WASH and IWRM systems.</p>
<p>3 Equity</p>	<p>WASH and IWRM improvements are often not equitable. Women, girls, and the socially marginalized are often the last to benefit from improvements in WASH and IWRM.</p> <p>Not everyone has the same needs. Women, girls, and the socially marginalized often have unique WASH challenges and WASH practices are often seeped in traditional norms and stigma.</p>
<p>4 Empowerment</p>	<p>Improvements in WASH/IWRM can empower the marginalized. Strengthened WASH and IWRM practices often require the empowerment of marginalized voices within the home, workplace, community, and society.</p>
<p>5 Transformative Equality¹</p>	<p>Improvements in WASH/IWRM can transform inequalities. In many traditions, women and girls are responsible for household management of water, sanitation, and hygiene. Yet, men are responsible for the community management and governance of water, sanitation, and hygiene. As such, improvements in IWRM/WASH can 'ripple out' to positively transform social structures and systems.</p>

¹ Learn more about gender-transformative WASH (video 1 minute).

Activities that focus only on the first three reasons can be at risk of *using* women, girls, and the socially marginalized to improve WASH/IWRM. A more transformative approach *partners with* women, girls, and the socially marginalized to foster equality and improve WASH/IWRM in parallel.

This cheatsheet provides an overview of integrating gender equality and social inclusion into WASH, including the why and the how. Practitioners may also want to review [USAID’s Technical Brief](#) Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in WASH.

How can we integrate gender equality and social inclusion into WASH and IWRM?

There are three key ways to integrate gender equality and social inclusion within WASH and IWRM activities. All three approaches are valid, and purposeful consideration is important to select the most appropriate approach. Transformative change takes longer, is difficult to monitor, and has higher risks of potential harm. However, GESI-sensitive approaches may not lead to sustainable social changes and communities are at risk of backsliding. As WASH/IWRM teams may be less likely to have GESI expertise, emerging best practice advocates for coordination with Gender, Youth and Social Dynamics (GYSD) leads and pursuing partnerships with gender equality organizations.

Type	Definition	IWRM example	WASH example
GESI-sensitive	Sensitive activities acknowledge the social and gender power dynamics, yet work within existing social structures and often leverage traditional gender roles. [equity and efficiency focused]	Supporting policies for gender quotas on watershed or IWRM committees in rural communities.	Engaging existing women leaders in Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) activities to increase reach and engagement of marginalized community members.
GESI-responsive	Responsive activities consider the social and gender power dynamics which perpetuate traditional roles and responsibilities, yet do not actively aim to address structural inequalities. [empowerment focused]	Engaging women leaders in the siting of Multiple Use Systems (MUS) water points, but not actively aiming to change the social structures which consistently leave them out of such decisions.	Empowering women and other marginalized groups to participate in sanitation entrepreneurship, but not actively addressing the structural barriers.
GESI-transformative	Transformative activities consider and address social and gender power dynamics which perpetuate structural inequalities. They purposefully aim to strengthen WASH/IWRM outcomes and GESI outcomes simultaneously. This often includes both gender-specific and integrated activities. [transformative equality focused]	Partnering with women to transform decision-making practices in water governance committees through gender-specific women’s empowerment coaching and integrated group training.	Engaging men in the promotion of handwashing aiming to address perceptions that only mothers are responsible for household hygiene.

How can we monitor and evaluate gender equality and social inclusion within WASH and IWRM?

<p>Within organizations</p>	<p>Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool. This self-assessment tool is designed to support organizations to look internally and identify strengths and weaknesses in understanding and applying an inclusive approach.</p>
<p>For community members and change agents</p>	<p>The water, sanitation and hygiene - gender equality measure (WASH-GEM) is a five-domain quantitative measure designed to explore gender equality changes for women and men both related to WASH and in broader life beyond WASH.</p> <p>The qualKit is an online toolbox to support practitioners exploring qualitative changes in gender equality and social inclusion in WASH programs. Several approaches have been used by RFSAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micronarratives are a collection of short stories written or described by participants. The stories are analyzed as a set to understand the range of experiences. RFSAs have used micronarratives to explore: 1) gender dynamics within water committees and youth clubs; 2) school girls' experiences of menstruation; and 3) impacts on menstrual health. • Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) is an interactive visual focus group approach using activities such as card sorts, community maps, participation ladders, and timelines. RFSAs have used PRA to: 1) investigate gender dynamics within water committees, 2) collaboratively identify areas to strengthen women's leadership and communication; and 3) identify different perspectives between women and men about improved sanitation. • Photovoice is a participatory photography activity in which a group of participants create and describe photos related to a particular topic or theme. As each participant observes different aspects, the set of photos reveal a fuller image of the situation. RFSAs have used PRA to: 1) document a range of different experiences for program staff, change agents, and beneficiaries, and 2) describe how men and women are accessing services differently.

ABOUT PRO-WASH

Practices, Research and Operations in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene is an initiative funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and led by Save the Children. PRO-WASH aims to provide support to implementing partners in order to strengthen the quality of WASH interventions through capacity strengthening, knowledge sharing, and applied WASH research opportunities.

prowash@savechildren.org

www.fsnnetwork.org/PRO-WASH