



# Strategies for gender equality and disability inclusion in WASH at scale

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Plan International -Australia, Indonesia, Malawi, Pakistan, Vietnam

Acknowledgement –Annika Kearton



# Plan International DFAT Civil Society WASH Fund



Over 1million additional  
people accessing  
handwashing facilities  
with soap



Over 1.25million  
people gained  
access to improved  
latrines



836 ODF  
(open defecation free)  
communities verified



*“A new learning for me was how to include women and people with disability in WASH activities, and how to get more effective results from the participation of women and people with disability in WASH”*

*Woman Community-based Mobiliser, Pakistan*



## *Gender-responsive community-led approaches create an enabling environment for broad participation by men and women in WASH activities*

### *Strategies included:*

- Consistently emphasised the importance of all community members participating in WASH activities to achieve the goal of WASH access for all.
- Gender and Social Inclusion training (and ongoing support) with Change Agents led to strong messaging around the value of men's and women's perspectives and participation in WASH activities
- Practical tools and strategies (e.g. Plan's Gender and WASH Monitoring Tool) enabled Change Agents to move beyond conceptual discussions about the importance of inclusive approaches to WASH.





*Recognising the different barriers faced by women and men (e.g. age, disability, ethnicity, literacy) and multiple identify factors, or “intersectionality”, is key to develop strategies to overcome them*

***Strategies included:***

- Home visits (Vietnam and Indonesia)
- ‘Corner Meetings’ (Pakistan)
- Discussions Circles (Malawi)
- Ethnic translation of WASH information (Pakistan)
- Plan’s Gender and WASH Monitoring Tool (Vietnam and Indonesia)



## Intersectionality (continued)...Some points to note

- Increased opportunities for women to participate actively in community WASH activities and household decision-making processes, however not all women had the same opportunities to participate fully or equally
- Men living with disability experienced *fewer* barriers to participation due to their social standing within the household and community.



## *Twin-track approaches to increasing the WASH knowledge of women and PWD enhanced their confidence and ability to participate in community WASH activities and decision-making processes*

*“My hidden capabilities came in front of committee members. I was never a village organisation member in the past, but when I became a member of this WASH committee, I felt that because of this committee, I can also speak in front of people with full confidence”*

*Male living with disability in Pakistan*



## Mainstreaming strategies included:

- Gender and Social Inclusion Training with Change Agents
- Inviting and encouraging people with disability to attend WASH sensitisation and triggering activities
- Supporting PWD to become WASH Committee members
- Village Savings and Loans (VSL) groups (Malawi)
- Engaging Traditional and Religious leaders to support gender mainstreaming (Indonesia)

## Targeted strategies included:

- Identifying PWD and their WASH needs and preferences
- Sex-disaggregated small-group meetings
- Home visits from female WASH Committee members, health workers, and women's representatives e.g. Women's Union (Vietnam) and Posyandu -female cadres (Indonesia)
- Mobility aids and transport assistance to attend meetings and activities





## Twin-track approaches (continued)

- Final evaluation revealed a strong link between increasing WASH knowledge, confidence and participation (of women and PWD).
- Women and PWD reported that they were more likely to participate in community WASH meetings and activities if directly invited to attend by a village leader, committee member, health or outreach worker.



## *Opportunities for WASH Programs to align or integrate with other gender and economic empowerment initiatives should be explored for greater impact on strategic gender equality outcomes*

- Progress towards gender equality is complex, non-linear, and influenced by a range of social, economic and political forces
- Gender-inclusive WASH projects that integrate or operate in partnership with other gender, livelihood and empowerment initiatives can reinforce messages about gender equality

E.g. In Indonesia, men and women reported experiencing significant changes in genders roles and decision-making related to WASH were concentrated in villages where there was mutual reinforcement of other NGOs also actively promoting inclusion.





# Deeper dive into GESI, Indonesia

*Importance of creating a GESI enabling environment including for women to actively participate in WASH*

## ***Strategies included:***

- Formative research/studies on gender and disability
- Identifying PWD and understanding their perspectives
- Training and coaching in basic gender and social inclusion concepts for Change Agents
- FGDs with communities and PWD about STBM
- Support from traditional and religious leaders
- Identify champions (Posyandu or PKK -candres)
- Regulations
- Formally recognising and promoting women's and PWD's contributions
- Inclusive WASH training for entrepreneurs



# Some GESI Achievements, Indonesia

- All five districts governments have developed and resourced policies, program and activities to promote gender and inclusion.
- Women comprise more than 50% of STBM teams at village level (all five districts)
- Women's participation has been strengthened through the role of the Posyandu (health cadres)
- Sanitation entrepreneurs (18 of 27) have hardware options suitable for different accessibility needs. As a result, all identified PWD within the project area use toilets that have been modified for their individual needs.
- A number of villages in three Districts have allocated their development funds to assist PWD with access to improved sanitation facilities



# Some deeper challenges, Indonesia

- Inclusion of PwD is still considered for compassion rather than a right based initiative.
- Both women and men felt that women have less ability and opportunity to actively participate in public meetings.
- Engaging women's groups and representatives whilst created opportunities for women, these groups tended to focus on traditional domains of women's roles.
- Mobilization of traditional leaders in promoting GESI is still limited.
- The Government's monitoring system, including the newly launched Local Health Monitoring System (SIKDA) in NTT Province, does not include gender and inclusion indicators.



# Key Take Away Messages of GESI WASH at scale

- Be conscious about WASH approaches to be GESI-responsive
- Think “intersectionality”
- Twin-track approaches
- Align or integrate with other gender and empowerment initiatives





Thank you

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Terima Kasih

Cảm ơn bạn

Zikomo Kwambiri

**Disability-Inclusive WASH:**  
Findings from the final evaluation  
of Plan's Civil Society WASH  
Fund Program (Indonesia,  
Vietnam, Pakistan and Malawi)

January 2018



An aid initiative implemented by Plan International on behalf of the Australian Government.

**Introduction**

Plan International recognises that access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is a basic human right and is critical for the survival, development and wellbeing of all men, women and children. People with disability are particularly affected by inadequate access to clean water and safe sanitation and in many contexts are excluded from decision-making processes, activities and opportunities to influence WASH improvements. People with disability have specific needs for, and valuable perspectives on, the accessibility of WASH services and their active participation in WASH activities and decision-making processes is critical to the development of WASH services that are accessible to all. Ensuring the accessibility and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all and contributing to social inclusion outcomes are recognised priorities under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG Goal 6). Disability-responsive WASH programs are critical to achieving these targets.

**Background**

Over four years (FY2014-18), Plan International Australia has been supporting Plan Country Offices in Indonesia, Vietnam, Pakistan and Malawi to implement large-scale WASH projects under the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Civil Society WASH Fund (CS WASH Fund). Plan's CS WASH Fund Program has focused on disadvantaged rural communities, promoting strong gender equity and social inclusion components. Plan has worked with governments at multiple levels to support and

**Snapshot of Evaluation Findings**

1. Identification of and early engagement with people with disability is a critical first step to enable their participation in WASH planning and implementation, and to improve accessibility and usage of WASH facilities.
2. Twin-track approaches to increase WASH knowledge of people with disability enhances their confidence and participation in community WASH decision-making processes.
3. Understanding how sex, disability and identity factors impact the experiences of people with disability is critical to identifying strategies for social inclusion.
4. Creating specific opportunities for people with disability on their own terms, and their active participation in WASH activities, is critical to achieving these targets.
5. Identifying and addressing the specific challenges and self-determination to inclusive WASH services.

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Plan International recognises that access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is a basic human right and is critical for the survival, development and wellbeing of all men, women and children. Women and girls are particularly affected by inadequate access to clean water and safe sanitation, and in many contexts spend large parts of the day managing decision-making processes, activities and opportunities to influence WASH improvements. People with disability are particularly excluded from sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, and contributing to gender equality outcomes is a recognised priority under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG Goal 6). Gender-inclusive and responsive WASH Programs are critical to achieving these global targets.

**Snapshot of Evaluation Findings**

1. Gender-responsive community-led sanitation approaches create an enabling environment for the participation of men and women in WASH activities.
2. A twin-track approach to increasing women's knowledge of WASH enhances their confidence and ability to participate in community WASH activities.
3. Working with women's groups creates opportunities for women to become involved in WASH activities at the community level.
4. Recognising the different barriers faced by women and men due to age, ethnicity, poverty, "intersectionality", is key to develop strategies to overcome them.
5. Creating new roles and opportunities for women and men is important to avoid reinforcing traditional divisions of labour.
6. Opportunities for WASH Programs to align or integrate with other gender and economic empowerment initiatives should be explored for greater impact on strategic gender quality outcomes.

**Finding 1: Gender-responsive community-led sanitation approaches create an enabling environment for the participation of men and women in WASH activities.**  
Plan supported government actors and local Change Agents to strengthen the implementation of national sanitation policies and community-led approaches to total



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