

# Translating disability inclusive WASH policies into practice: lessons learned from Cambodia

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#WaWF23



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# WASH and disability in Cambodia

- Nearly one third of the population do not have access to basic water and sanitation, and 26% lack basic hygiene
- 2.1% of Cambodia's population >5 years have a disability
- Barriers to WASH for people with disabilities: inaccessible infrastructure, distance to facilities and affordability



Sarah Gelbard / Emory University

# Our study – research questions

1. How do Cambodia's national WASH policy and guidance incorporate disability?
2. To what extent are these commitments to disability inclusion implemented by sub-national government officials and service providers?
3. How does this implementation impact the WASH experiences of people with disabilities and their caregivers?



WaterAid/Sokmeng You

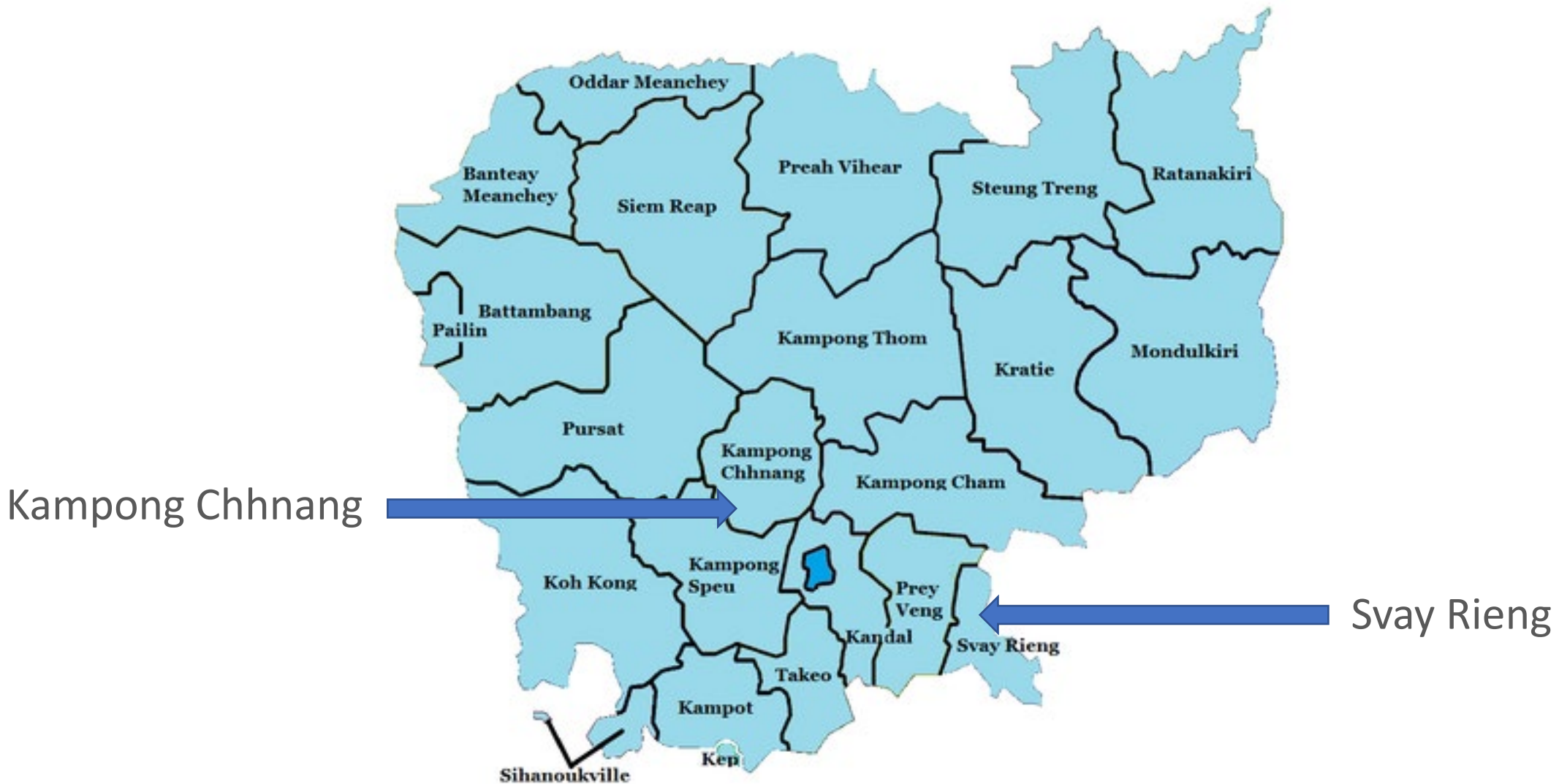
# Policy analysis



WaterAid/Sokmeng You

- The government of Cambodia shows commitment to disability rights
- Commitment to disability inclusion within WASH, but few references clearly articulate activities to achieve these

# Qualitative cross-sectional study in Svay Rieng and Kampong Chhnang



# Materials and methods

## Study population

- 7 government officials
- 10 service providers
- 16 women and men with disabilities (>18 years)
- 4 caregivers

## Data collection methods

- In-depth interviews conducted remotely via online videoconferencing or telephone

**“To be honest, on the provincial level, it is very rare to meet [people with disabilities]. There were never people with disabilities attending conferences or meetings.”**

***(Province government official)***

**“We work without salary, and we just raise the problems. It is too difficult [. . . .], too much headache. We do not even have the money for gas and people look down on us too. It is hopeless.”**

***(Sub-national Organisation of Persons with Disabilities staff member)***



**“The reason [I don’t take him out of the house] is it is difficult to do so [. . . . .] How can he go out when he cannot walk and sit? And I cannot carry him.”**

***(Caregiver of a man with a physical disability)***

**“I never talk to anyone. I just stay at home like a frog in a well.”**

***(Woman with a visual impairment)***

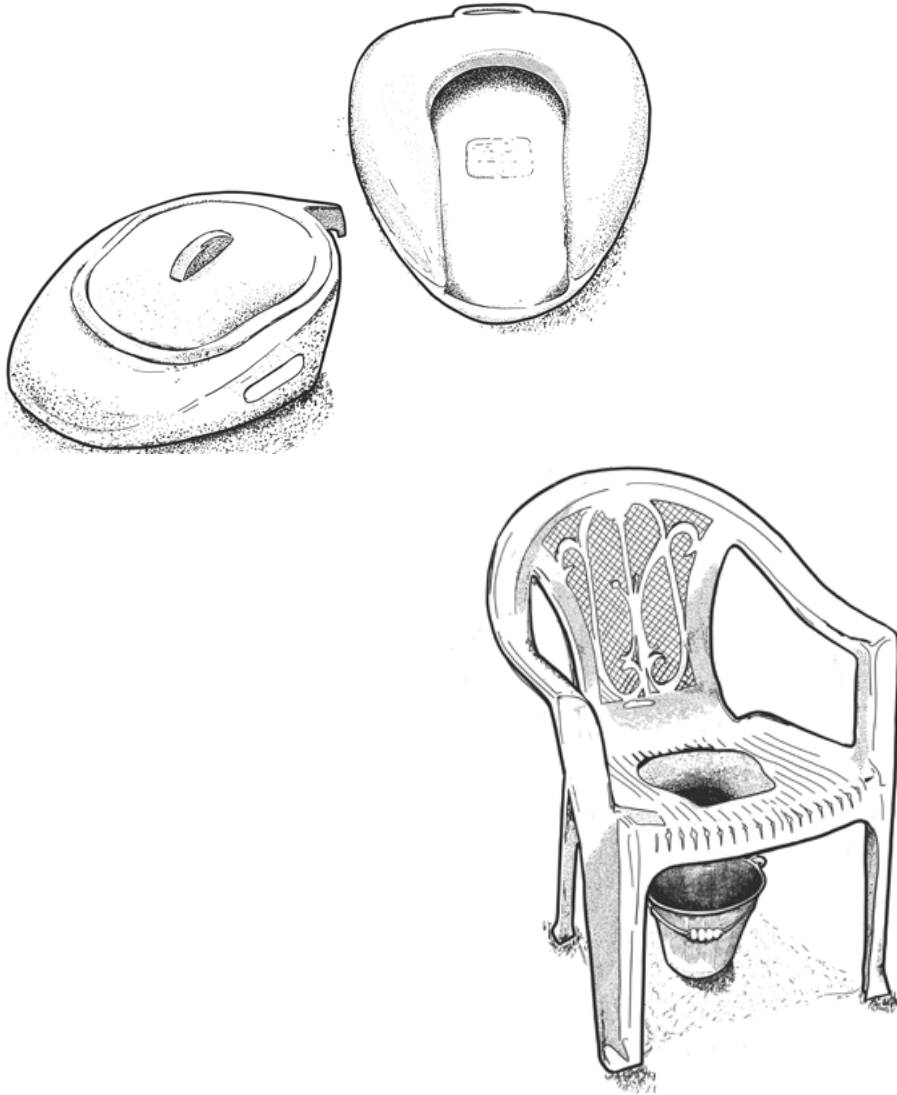
# Inaccessible WASH

- Few people with disabilities could independently and safely access their bathing facilities and toilets
- Most did not know how to make changes or who to talk to
- Families were very poor and could not afford adaptations

**“It is easy, not difficult at all (chuckles). Just hold the bamboo and walk along. I can walk quickly like people who can see. Nothing seems to be an obstacle for me.”**

*(Man with a visual impairment)*

# Caregivers



- Tasks: collecting water, toileting, bathing, laundry
- Most caregivers provided full-time care
- Few had assistive devices (e.g. commodes or bedpans) so regularly came into contact with urine and faeces
- No caregivers had lifting devices

**“I lift her back and forth. She is not a small child. She is almost 20 kg; not small. Other people who just gave birth would not lift her like this, but if I do not do it, no one else would.”**

***(Caregiver of a woman with a physical disability)***

# Recommendations



WaterAid/Sokmeng You

- Support organisations of persons with disabilities to be WASH leaders
- Support people with disabilities to attend meetings
- Do house-to-house visits
- Support provisions for caregivers to improve their safety, health and wellbeing
- Work across disability and WASH to support access to assistive devices



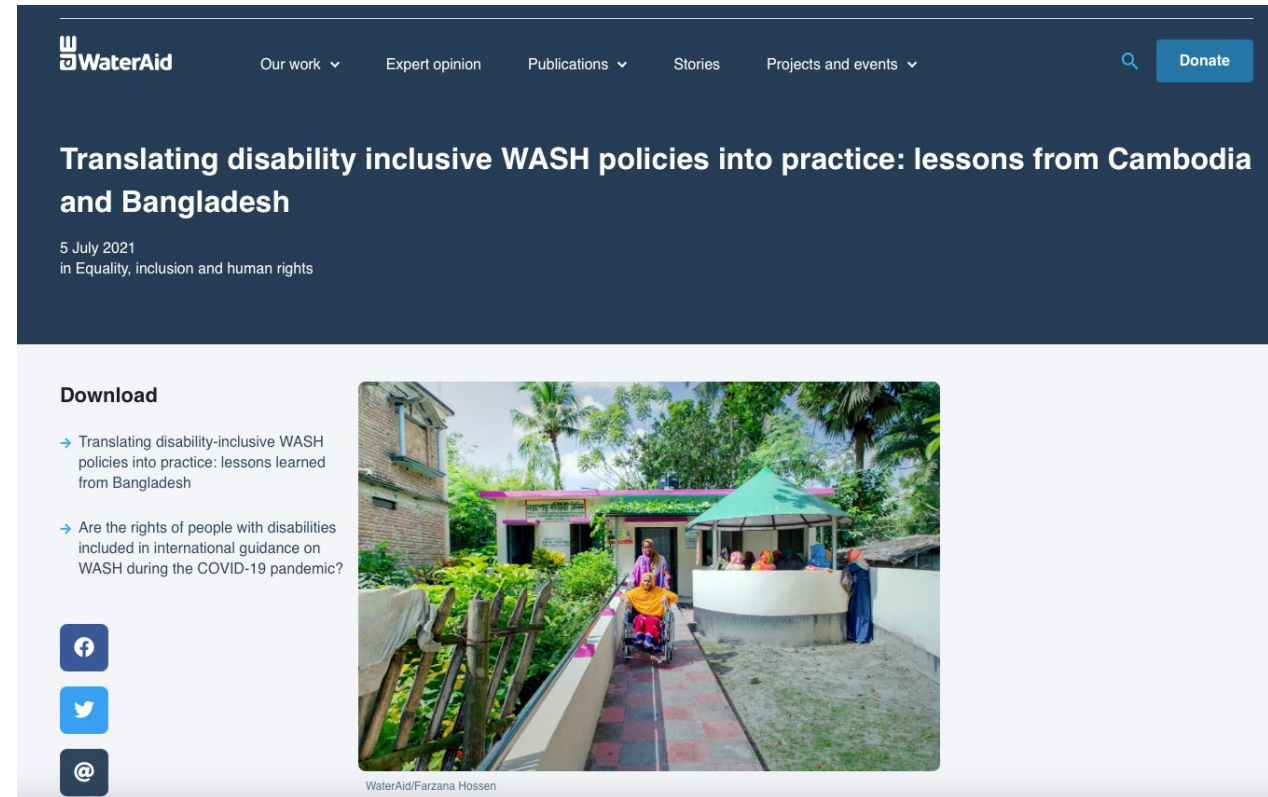
WaterAid/3i

Woman with disabilities washing her walking stick with support from her caregiver

# Study outputs

- Policy Analysis journal article and briefing note
- Qualitative cross-sectional study journal article and briefing note
- Two short films on the study findings
- The Disability-Inclusive WASH Checklist for policymakers and service providers

<https://washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/translating-disability-inclusive-wash-policies-into-practice-lessons-cambodia-bangladesh>



The screenshot shows the WaterAid website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the WaterAid logo, a search icon, and a 'Donate' button. The main content area features the title 'Translating disability inclusive WASH policies into practice: lessons from Cambodia and Bangladesh' with a date of '5 July 2021' and a category of 'in Equality, inclusion and human rights'. Below the title, there is a 'Download' section with two links: '→ Translating disability-inclusive WASH policies into practice: lessons learned from Bangladesh' and '→ Are the rights of people with disabilities included in international guidance on WASH during the COVID-19 pandemic?'. To the left of the image are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Email. The image itself shows a person in a wheelchair on a paved path next to a building, with a caption 'WaterAid/Farzana Hossen' below it.

# Snapshot of the Disability-Inclusive WASH Checklist

| Concept         | Guiding principles   | Suggested activities  | LOW-QUALITY         |                                 | HIGH-QUALITY   |   |
|-----------------|--|---|---------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
|                 |  |   | 1=Concept mentioned | 2=Concept mentioned & explained | 3=Target & actions identified to address the concept | 4=Actions and targets monitored & evaluated |
| Family resource | Program recognizes the value of the family members and caregivers of people with disabilities in addressing WASH needs | Include caregivers of persons with disabilities as a key target population in WASH programs   |                     |                                 |  |   |
|                 |  | Provide accessible guidance to caregivers of people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities to understand personal hygiene practices, such as how to keep assistive devices clean        |                     |                                 |  |   |
|                 |  | Disseminate guidance for caregivers to provide support to persons with disabilities, covering how to make lifting devices, bathing chairs, how to lift correctly, provision of dignified care |                     |                                 |  |   |



# References

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# Thank you for your attention

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