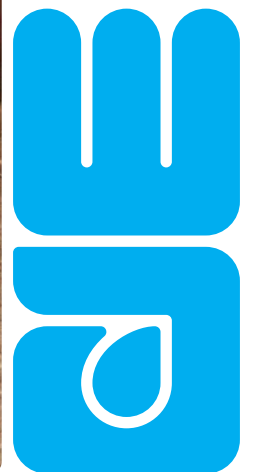**Framework**

Equality, inclusion and rights

WaterAid/Dennis Lupeng

WaterAid/Chileshe Chanda

WaterAid

Together, the documents below set out how we will achieve our vision of everyone, everywhere with clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) by 2030.

Global strategy

Our role and how we work

Quality programme standards and policies

Frameworks and delivery concepts

- **Guidelines**
- **Toolkits**
- **Resources**

The frameworks define our position, approach and programme standards for all our areas of work: a) our cross-cutting principles – human rights, sustainability, equality and inclusion, and partnership; b) our core programme approaches – systems strengthening and empowerment, WASH in other sectors, and hygiene behaviour change; c) our thematic/geographic work – water, sanitation, hygiene, and urban WASH. The frameworks point to accompanying guidelines, toolkits and resources to provide more detail on how to apply the frameworks in practice.

Our frameworks are developed through internal and external collaboration to ensure our position, approach and standards are based on experience and best practice, making our work more effective. They are periodically updated as our learning, and that of the wider sector, evolves.

Our frameworks have been developed and approved through the Global Programmes Executive. The programme standards from all the frameworks are collated into the *Quality programme standards*.[1]

Equality, inclusion and rights framework

Position

Water and sanitation are human rights and, with hygiene, are basic requirements for daily survival and for people to live healthy, dignified lives. Our ambition is to improve access to, involvement in and provision of clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene for everyone, everywhere – especially those living in poverty or facing marginalisation.

We prioritise working with the people who are most impacted by poor WASH outcomes or services. These include people living in poverty, women, girls and gender minorities,[i] people experiencing poor health, persons with disabilities, older people and other excluded or underrepresented groups relevant to contexts, such as indigenous populations.

We understand that WASH experiences are likely to be impacted by existing political, social and economic inequalities.[ii] We are committed to working in partnership with the rights organisations and groups representing those most likely to be excluded from WASH to co-design the solutions.

WASH can be a powerful enabler for people to unlock access to other human rights – such as their rights to education, dignified and productive livelihoods and decent healthcare. As such, WASH can be a platform to transform broader unequal power relationships, reduce inequalities and empower people.[2] Over the past decade, we have deepened our understanding and practical skills across the Federation to address inequalities within WASH and work towards universal access for all.

Equality, inclusion and rights

At WaterAid, we seek to tackle inequalities in access, resource distribution and decision-making in WASH. We use research, partnerships and programming to understand the underlying causes of inequalities in experiences of and access to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene – between and within countries, communities and households.

To do this, we work with governments, service providers, community-based groups and other actors to build and strengthen WASH systems that deliver functioning and sustainable WASH services that are responsive, affordable and accessible for all.

We work with users, helping them to understand and advocate for their rights and remove the barriers that stand in their way. We demonstrate gender-responsive, disability and age-inclusive designs (universal design[iii]), undertake contextual inequalities, and political and systems analysis to guide our actions.

All of our work is backed up by quality and sustainability standards.

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i.   See the glossary on page 15 for the definition of 'gender minorities'.

ii. For example, it is well accepted that poverty can be a cause of disability because people who are poor may not have adequate nutrition, healthcare, clean water and sanitation or safe housing, which can result in injury or health complications. Equally, disability contributes to poverty on an individual, family and community level, making it harder to afford or access the required WASH services, housing, education or healthcare. See CBM for more information. Available at: cbmuk.org.uk/policy-practice/disability-development/ (accessed 7 Dec 2020).

iii. See the glossary on page 15 for the definition of 'universal design'.

Rationale

While significant progress has been made towards improving access to WASH in the countries where we work, vast inequalities in the accessibility, availability, affordability, acceptability and quality of WASH services still remain. Huge disparities continue to exist between the richest and poorest communities.[3] 8 out of 10 people continue to live without access to improved drinking water and 72% of those lacking basic sanitation are living in rural locations.[4]

Research has consistently shown that the burden of collecting water from sources located off-premises still falls primarily on women and girls, exacerbating their WASH-related inequalities.[5]

◖ Grace Nabenga Lufu, 31, talking to masons who are making the final touches on a newly installed water tank reservoir that will supply Kakora Dispensary with constant water all the time, Kakora Dispensary, Nyanghwale District, Tanzania, June 2018.

WaterAid/James Kiyimba

To accelerate progress, there is a need to:

1. Assess and respond to the context-specific realities of marginalisation and exclusion.

WASH experiences are informed by a myriad of contextual circumstances covering wealth, gender, age, disability status, race, religion, indigenous identity, geographical location, livelihood, lifestyle factors or political affiliation.

Current measurements do not adequately or consistently capture these factors, contributing to the challenges that policymakers and service providers have in designing or directing services with inclusivity in mind. For example, small groups within a population, such as ethnic minorities and indigenous communities, are not always reflected in disaggregated national statistics,[4] while sex-disaggregated data in WASH remains repeatedly called for, but is still limited.[6] Any one of these identities or factors can impact on the opportunities people have, and when a number of these overlap, it can considerably increase or decrease their ability to meet WASH requirements and the nature of the barriers they face.

It is essential to analyse the nature of barriers and the context-specific realities based on the individual, group, and geographical identities and factors of these with each other. The barriers could be physical, societal or institutional in nature, so this type of analysis ensures that policies, regulations and services can be designed appropriately, rather than assuming that a one-size-fits all solution meets everyone's requirements.

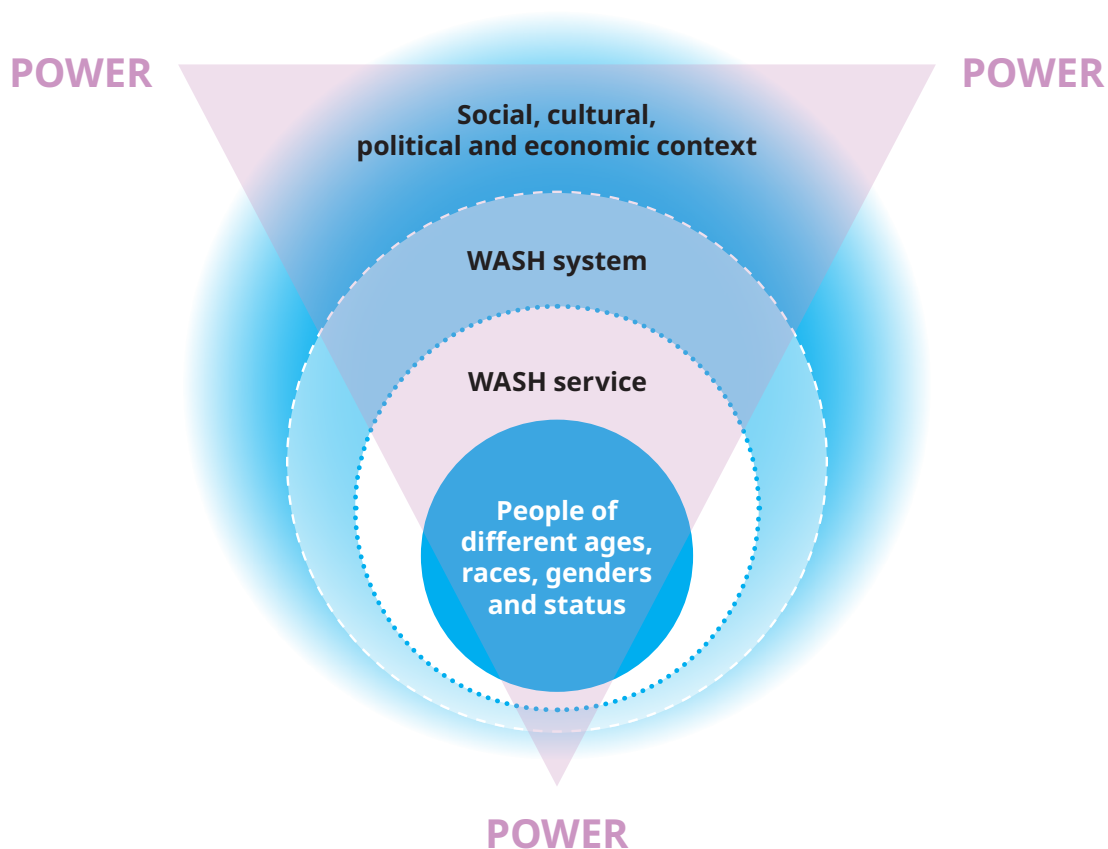## 2. Assess marginalisation and exclusion in and around WASH systems.

WASH programmes and realities are not isolated entities. Our work exists within, and is impacted by, wider complex social, political, cultural, economic, environmental, institutional and technical factors. The interplay between these different factors and interactions between different actors in and beyond the WASH system, define the barriers that stand in the way of WASH inclusion, sustainability and scalability.[7] The diagram below captures how marginalisation analysis intersects with the WASH system.

People are at the centre of our analysis and to achieve our mission, we pay specific attention to those who are systematically excluded or underserved. To achieve 100% WASH coverage, services must be functional, sustainable and responsive to all and their requirements.

There is a need to research, co-design and model **inclusive and sustainable WASH services**, decision-making structures and processes. WASH actors must be supported in identifying and responding to the environmental, institutional and societal barriers that contribute to WASH inequalities, as well as the financial and capacity challenges in the sector.

Ingrained power imbalances, social barriers and marginalisation filter into everything. Therefore, we need to support and challenge the relationships, rules, power and financing structures that make up the wider **WASH system** and determines the environment in which it is shaped and delivered.

All of this is influenced by **overriding societal values, norms and behaviours**. Understanding these factors and working with the right partners to assess and react to negative norms and behaviours is vital in our pursuit of sustainability, applicability and WASH inclusivity for all.

POWER · POWER · POWER

Social, cultural, political and economic context

WASH system

WASH service

People of different ages, races, genders and status

Strategic fit

We believe that political will and leadership, the development of strong WASH systems, the integration of WASH into other sectors and fundamental changes of behaviour are needed in order to deliver sustainable and transformative WASH outcomes for all. As set out in *Our global strategy 2015–2022*,[8] tackling inequalities in WASH is one of our strategic aims. It interacts closely with the other global aims as set out below:

Strong systems

It is only when the WASH system is strong and the users are empowered to claim their rights to WASH, that inclusive and empowering WASH services will be prioritised, demanded and delivered.

Hygiene

We advocate inclusive and accessible hygiene behaviour change programmes and facilities. We seek to avoid reinforcing negative social norms and stereotypes.

Integration

We must work with other sectors to accelerate change by integrating WASH into areas such as health, climate resilience work and education. The close connections and interdependences between Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 on WASH, SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 10 on tackling inequalities and SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions are also well established and help drive our approach and advocacy.[9,10]

◖ Mickson, drawing water from a disability-inclusive borehole, Simulemba Health Centre, Kasungu, Malawi, July 2018.

WaterAid/Dennis Lupenga

WaterAid/Tapas Paul

◖ Husne Ara Begum participating in group counselling sessions, set up through intervention by Efforts for Rural Advancement, bringing awareness of various aspects of personal hygiene in Sunamganj Tahirpur, Bangladesh.

Approach

Principles

Three fundamental principles guide what we do and how we do it:

1. Respect for and delivery of human rights for all.
2. Focus on strengthening systems to be sustainable and deliver WASH justice for all.
3. Working inside and outside WaterAid to achieve sustained solutions to inequality, rather than short-term 'fixes'.

Principle 1: Respect for and delivery of human rights of all

What we do: We uphold and support the human rights to water and sanitation – which guarantees access to WASH for everyone, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity or other social, cultural, economic, political or geographical identity or status. We use a human rights-based approach, which seeks to embed non-discrimination, accountability, access to information and meaningful participation in WASH processes and outcomes. We do this in contrast to a 'needs-based approach' which relies on charity and 'goodwill' alone. Talking openly about human rights can sometimes be difficult, so we will work in ways that respect the principles of human rights, even if we are not able to use the specific language that correlates with it.

In 2010, the United Nations (UN) and Human Rights Council (UN, 2010) mandated that:

The human right to water entitles everyone without discrimination to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use.

The human right to sanitation entitles everyone without discrimination to physical and affordable access to sanitation, in all spheres of life, which is safe, hygienic, secure, socially and culturally acceptable, which provides for privacy and ensures dignity.

How we do it: We work with the duty bearers, rights holders, service providers and service users to ensure WASH rights are realised in a way that makes them:

- **Available** when needed, of sufficient quantity (water) and with a sufficient number of facilities (sanitation and hygiene) to meet personal and domestic needs.

- **Accessible** to everyone within, and in the immediate vicinity of, households, health and educational institutions, public institutions, public places and workplaces.

- Of a **quality** that means it is 'safe'[iv] for consumption or use with no significant threat to human health and the facilities are hygienic and safe to use.

- **Affordable** for all, so the if any fee is charged, it does not compromise the recipient's ability to pay for other essential necessities guaranteed in the bill of human rights, such as food, housing and healthcare.

- **Acceptable** to the people using it, regardless of culture or other identities. This will require gender-specific facilities, including facilities for menstrual hygiene management, constructed in a way that ensures privacy, safety and dignity.[11]

Principle 2: Focus on strengthening the systems to be sustainable and deliver WASH justice for all

What we do: The WASH system is made up of the institutions, authorities, policies, processes, resources, finances, decision makers, current users and the people without access. It is the behaviours and interactions between these factors and actors that can support or hinder sustainable and inclusive WASH delivery.[7] In our support to strengthen WASH systems, we prioritise a people-centred and rights-based approach – advocating for equality and inclusion of all as a fundamental part of this.

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iv. 'Safe' water refers to water that is free from all elements that constitute a threat to health.

How we do it:

- Work with governments, service providers and other stakeholders to tackle WASH injustices. We do this by highlighting and challenging the obstacles, discriminations or imbalances of power and privilege in structures, processes or attitudes.

- Support and advocate for more diversity within those engaged in WASH leadership, technical positions and decision-making roles.

- Raise political and financial commitments to tackling WASH injustice; and prioritise investment and progress for those who are excluded.

- Model and promote policies, tools and training for all WASH actors on how to standardise and replicate inclusive WASH facilities and empowering WASH practices.

- Strengthen the monitoring and data collection of WASH inequalities; and the accountability mechanisms that enable people to hold service providers and governments to account for WASH delivery.

- Ensure all actors, including WaterAid staff and partners, have the confidence and tools to support the human right to WASH.

Principle 3: Work inside and outside WaterAid to achieve sustained solutions to inequalities rather than short term 'fixes'

WaterAid joins global efforts to achieve sustained, universal access to WASH by 2030. This scale of transformation cannot happen without making equality, inclusion and rights everyone's business. It needs support at a personal and professional level and change at an organisational and programme level.

What we do: We commit to working in ways that encourages systemic and structural changes, rather than 'quick fix' solutions. This requires tackling the root causes of WASH inequalities and systems failures, not just the symptoms in isolation. It also requires prioritising the knowledge and expertise of those closest to the locations of WASH injustices, in order to support the right solutions.

How we do it:

- **Understand and assess the underlying factors that drive exclusion and marginalisation** in WASH, including but not limited to, analysis of political economy, social and gender issues, contexts and environmental domains.

- **Invest in understanding and addressing** internal biases, perpetuations of patriarchy, racial, colonial, geographical and economic injustices in our organisation, sector and societies. These directly impact on our ability to help deliver WASH justice.

- Explicitly **commit to the principle of 'do no harm'**[v] by better understanding and mitigating the risk for any person or group impacted by our work. This includes, but is not limited to, addressing safeguarding and security issues in the sector, and interactions with gender-based or family violence related to or impacting WASH participation, decision-making or access.

- **Work in partnership with organisations and groups** that represent those marginalised or excluded in WASH. This includes, but is not limited to, women's and disabled persons organisations, youth, religious and ethnic minority groups, informal settlement and indigenous peoples' organisations. We work with them to understand the structural barriers and to design interventions that address the root causes of inequalities, such as attitudes, taboos, stigma, racism and patriarchy, as well as the technical challenges related to spatial factors.

- **Integrate our commitment to equality, inclusion and rights across the spectrum of our work** – covering our programmes, communications, fundraising and business functions within country programmes, right through to our partners' and members' work.

v.   See the glossary on page 14 for the definition of 'do no harm'.

The journey

We are committed on this journey to accessible, sustainable, universal access to WASH and recognise that there are no one-size-fits-all or 'quick fix' solutions. We will promote a step-change to bring us closer to this goal.

The process summarised below sets out the progressive steps and shifts required to move us towards achieving this. These steps have been adapted for our organisation and aim to support practical actions.[vi]

It is important to note that:

- While reducing inequalities can be difficult to quantify, these phases offer a common language and practical guide for thinking and responding.

- The journey is not always linear and may involve being at different points simultaneously.

- There must be **contextual adaptability and flexibility** in applying this.

- The phases can be overlayed onto several work areas across WaterAid.

What a journey towards transformation looks like in practice

From strategy and fundraising, human resources to programming and project teams, this step change process provides a practical framing to guide how we can address the WASH-related resource, knowledge and power imbalances.

The table on page 11 provides an illustrative example of what a journey towards delivering more empowering or transformative outcomes might look like across different workstreams. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a 'sample' to help visualise how the phases can be applied. The phases can help:

- Build insights into where we are now, what we are achieving and how we are working.

- Build ambition of where we want to get to and what steps we need to take to get there.

Harmful →	**Inclusive** →	**Empowering** →	**Transformative**
Our accountability We avoid causing harm by continually analysing, learning and redirecting all our efforts.	**Our minimum standard** We always deliver and advocate for inclusive WASH which is participatory and accessible.	**Our approach** We strive to deepen outcomes; tackle unequal relations in WASH; foster meaningful partnerships and drive internal transformative change.	**Our long-game** We strive to transform power imbalances that stand in the way of equality, committing to long-term and deep action.

Equality, inclusion and rights

Inclusive: We commit to inclusion

WaterAid is committed to ensuring that WASH services are gender-sensitive, inclusive and meet the needs of everyone at each stage of life.

We strive to ensure WASH facilities in public and institutional settings are designed for universal access and commit to reaching under-served people so that their requirements are understood, budgeted for and ultimately met. Internally, we commit to organisational approaches that bring diverse perspectives and are accountable to staff at all levels.

In striving to be inclusive, we must pay attention to diversity of experiences and perspectives amongst any one 'group'. For example, where we involve people with mobility impairments, it is also necessary to understand the barriers experienced by people with intellectual impairments, mental health conditions, and visual and hearing impairments, rather than assuming all disabilities are the same.[13]

Empowering: We strive to empower

We want to move towards delivering empowering outcomes for people, groups and places. To do this, our work will support those who experience marginalisation and discrimination to build their voice, participation and access to information.

It requires the breaking down of power dynamics, and the social, institutional and environmental barriers that prevent some people from having a voice or being involved in WASH decision-making.

It requires focusing on tackling biased processes or negative attitudes and stereotypes, impacting on WASH actions and experiences. It involves addressing information gaps in WASH decision-making and prioritisation.

This includes empowerment of duty bearers to respond to WASH needs and users to realise their rights often requires increased capacity, time or confidence on both sides, and the right partnership.

Transformative: Our vision to help transform outcomes

Transformative change contributes to a world where the root causes of unequal WASH, including unequal power relations, unfair resourcing, inadequate involvement of certain groups or individuals or limited leadership opportunities, are actively being overturned. Transformative programming involves challenging harmful roles, relationships and norms in and beyond WASH, whilst creating sustainable and positive change that cannot easily be undone.

It often requires us to 'undo' what we already know and change our mindsets, not just actions, so that real equality is lasting and meaningful. It includes equality in paid WASH workforces to the sharing of unpaid WASH work within households. It tackles, internally and externally, those parts of the system that systematically discriminate – based on wealth, sex, colour, ethnic origin, location or other factors.

Harmful: We commit to 'do no harm'

There is no such thing as 'neutral' in development work – we are either reinforcing existing inequalities and power structures or working to overcome them. Therefore, WaterAid never intends to deliver harmful approaches. We commit to analysing risks, assessing how and where our actions will be felt and identifying any unintended consequences. For example, we recognise that empowering marginalised women and people involves challenging established norms and power structures, which brings risks, especially in the context of pervasive violence against women, girls and gender minorities, political or religious tensions or stigma toward certain groups. To 'do no harm', WaterAid will:

- Analyse, document and respond to risks, including safeguarding dimension.[12]
- Understand and apply the 'do no harm' principles in design and implementation, and through safety and security checks.
- Build questions about harm or unintended consequences into monitoring, evaluation and learning protocols.
- Reflect and re-design based on emerging risks and feedback loops.

Examples of a transformative practice journey

Harmful To avoid harm, we will:	Area of work	Inclusive (Always do) In our work, we will see:	Empowering (Aim to do) In our work, we want to see:	Transformative (Ambition) In our work, we will strive for:
Avoid talking on behalf of others or making assumptions about what groups require. Fair and reasonable payment for expertise.	**Partnerships with rights or representative groups**	Rights-groups are **consulted** for key initiatives; a contractual relationship, but with limited scope.	Rights groups are **partners; involved in co-design**; WaterAid remunerates fairly, supports organisational development and participation in decision-making spaces.	Rights group partnerships that are long-term, centred around **allyship** and their rights agenda. It is a two-way relationship that lasts beyond funded projects.
Involve or consult user groups – particularly at risk or marginalised users – before constructing or planning activities or facilities.	**WASH technology or infrastructure**	WASH technology and infrastructure is **gender-sensitive, accessible and meets the needs of everyone** at each stage of life.	WASH technology and infrastructure design process is **partly or fully co-designed** with users or rights groups. The end-user's voice is heard and guides the design requirements.	WASH standards incorporate **universal design principles as non-negotiable**. Disability-inclusive and gender-responsive design principles are institutionalised and supported via resourcing and regulation. Diverse users lead and shape design and siting.
Analyse and document risks related to inequalities and power. Understand the **'do no harm' principles** related to WASH and development work. Safeguarding, complaints and **feedback systems** in place.	**People: skills, attitudes and diversity**	There is reflection across some functions on internal bias or attitudes. **Acknowledge** race, power, sexism, and exclusions based on disability, age, location and education attainment in our recruitment and team dynamics.	WaterAid teams have active **plans for tackling and responding to bias**, racist or sexist attitudes. Teams have good understanding about bias and how it relates to their own roles and their teams. WaterAid **talks and acts on overcoming colonial narratives** and empowering experts closer to where we work. Diversity in decision-making and a balance of power in WaterAid.	**All** people at WaterAid act to overcome bias attitudes and imbalances in decision-making power and privilege. Colonial narratives are **dismantled**, and alternative narratives supported. Decision-making is shifted closer to the communities we serve and is more responsive to indigenous and context-specific leadership and solutions. Diversity is reflected in all areas of WaterAid and all levels of management and decision-making.
We work from a human rights lens, acknowledging the role of duty bearers and rights holders.	**Working with governments: Regional, national, sub-national; influencing WASH strategy policies and standards**	We **raise** decision makers' **awareness of WASH rights and obligation**. We influence **inclusive and accessible WASH policies**. We influence **financing for inclusive and participatory WASH work**.	We **shift** decision makers, attitudes and actions. We support development of rights-based and context responsive WASH policies, regulations and procedures to **overcome barriers**. We **influence financing** for WASH work that tackles stigma, taboo or discriminations.	**Attitudes and actions of decision makers ensure equality and justice for all.** We influence WASH policy spaces to be a **platform to transform power**. **Sustainable/long-term financing models.**

vii. For more information on WaterAid's Quality Programme Risk Critical Standard and universal design principles, refer to the *Quality programme standards*[1] publication.

Quality programme standards

The core commitments are to be read in conjunction with our programmatic approach and the *Quality programme standards*[1,viii] as below:

Risk critical standards

R5   We must ensure **WASH services are gender-sensitive and inclusive and meet the needs of everyone at each stage of life**. Facilities in public institutions must be designed for universal access.

Minimum quality standards

M1.2   We will influence and help develop **national policies and systemic changes** to promote sustainable and **inclusive WASH services**.

M1.9   Service-delivery projects **must be gender-sensitive, inclusive and meet the needs of everyone at each stage of life**. All facilities in public institutions such as schools and healthcare facilities must be designed for universal access.

M2.1   We will **empower citizens, strengthen their voices and increase their participation** in development of WASH policy and services. We will increase their ability to hold duty-bearers to account.

M2.2   We will encourage and support the **active and meaningful participation of people** who are marginalised and excluded.

M2.3   We will promote **women's rights and gender equality** in our programmes.

M4.3   We will promote **gender-differentiated and inclusive sanitation facilities** in institutions such as schools and healthcare facilities, and in public toilets.

M6.4   We will support service providers to develop **context-specific, gender-sensitive and inclusive approaches** to serve the urban poor.

Full quality standards: strategy level

S2.1   We aim to **empower communities and civil society organisations** to claim their rights to water and sanitation, with a specific focus on reaching the most marginalised, excluded and vulnerable people. We ensure governments and service providers are held to account.

S2.2   We will recognise that **with rights come responsibilities**. We will ensure communities are able to manage their own services where appropriate, and to practise good hygiene behaviours.

S2.3   We will use a **gender lens** in all stages of our work to ensure women and girls are empowered by and benefit from it.

S2.4   We will work with other stakeholders to **share knowledge and promote equality and non discrimination** in fulfilling the human rights to water and sanitation, aiming to influence governments and other stakeholders in development and other sectors to invest in reducing inequalities across all sectors.

S6.4   Our vision is to see **WASH integrated in city and town development plans for inclusive**, affordable, sustainable and well-managed water and sanitation **services for all**, which promote sustainable hygiene behaviour change, by 2030.

S7.4   We will continually **analyse the barriers marginalised people and groups face to accessing WASH services**, including physical, institutional and attitudinal barriers, and will analyse power and rights. We will address these barriers through our programmatic approach.

S7.5   We will analyse the **gender aspects** of all areas of our work.

viii. While each thematic area of our work has its own set of standards, you will need to take a holistic approach, meeting all relevant standards in your programme work. See *Quality programme standards*[1] for the full list.

Full standards: programme level

PG1.10 **Acceptability.** Services, in particular sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion activities, must be culturally acceptable. This will often require **gender-specific facilities that ensure privacy and dignity**.

PG2.1 We will seek to **strengthen citizens' voices and their participation** in policy design, and in implementation and monitoring of services. We will aim to increase their ability to hold duty-bearers to account for realising their rights to water and sanitation.

PG2.2 We will **support communities to fulfil their responsibilities** to help to manage services and to practise good hygiene behaviours.

PG2.3 We will encourage the **active and meaningful participation of marginalised and excluded people** throughout the programme cycle. We will advocate with them, not for them.

PG2.4 We will promote **women's rights and gender equality** in our programmes.

PG2.5 We will put in place robust measures to **reduce any risks to children** that may arise in the programme, in line with WaterAid's child safeguarding procedures.

PG4.2 We will encourage provision of **inclusive and sustainable sanitation in institutions and public places**, working cross-sector and through government systems.

PG4.6 We will **innovate throughout our work**, exploring promising approaches and technologies, ways to empower communities to demand sanitation, and opportunities for strategic partnerships. **We will ensure our innovations are equitable and inclusive.**

PG6.1 We will take a **city/town-wide approach** to improving access to safe WASH in urban areas, taking into account all associated development issues, (such as land tenure) so urban authorities can plan, deliver and monitor inclusive, affordable and sustainable WASH services for all by 2030.

PG6.2 Our guiding principles for urban programmes are to ensure that **city/town-wide services that are inclusive for all**.

PG6.3 Our vision is for **urban authorities to be able to plan, deliver and monitor inclusive**, affordable and sustainable WASH services for all by 2030.

PG7.1 We will work with national and local governments to **identify and analyse inequalities in access, to ensure investments are targeted to address individual-related inequalities** that are relevant in every country, such as those based on sex, gender, age, **disability** and health conditions, imposing access constraints to sanitation in the household and beyond (for example, in schools, public toilets and workplaces).

Full standards: project level

PJ1.7 We will ensure **WASH services are gender-sensitive and inclusive and meet the needs of everyone** at each stage of life. All facilities in public institutions should be designed for universal access.

PJ2.1 We will work with members of rural communities and residents of poor and informal urban settlements to **ensure their voices are heard** by those designing, implementing or monitoring new services, to make sure their needs are addressed.

PJ2.2 We will support communities to **hold to account** those who are responsible for ensuring access to WASH.

PJ3.2 We will promote **inclusive group handwashing facilities** with soap and water in schools, and handwashing facilities with appropriate cleaning agents **in healthcare facilities**.

PJ3.6 We will use **accessible**, fit-for-context, socially appropriate and user-friendly **hygiene promotion tools**, materials, methods, activities and products. **All hygiene hardware options will be inclusive.**

PJ4.1 We will promote **gender-differentiated and inclusive sanitation facilities** in institutions such as schools and healthcare facilities.

PJ6.2 We will support water utilities and municipal authorities to develop approaches that are **inclusive, affordable and flexible for poor people**.

Glossary

Barriers

We look at barriers that hinder the realisation of WASH rights and seek to eliminate them.[14] These include:

- **Environmental barriers** in the natural or built setting, both in the way things are constructed and how the information is delivered.

- **Institutional barriers** created by laws, policies, cultural traditions and practices, and company policies.

- **Attitudinal barriers** resulting from social norms, cultural beliefs, prejudice, behaviours and language.

Disability

Disability results from the interaction between a person's impairment and the environmental, social and institutional barriers they face.

Discrimination

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction which has the purpose or the effect of stopping or reducing a person's ability to enjoy or exercise their human rights on an equal basis as others.[15]

Do no harm

The 'do no harm' approach is used in many ways to help focus efforts on protecting against, avoiding and mitigating potentially harmful impacts of development interventions, designs or approaches.[16] It is recognised that due to imbalances of power and opportunity in society, which are also reflected in WASH systems, failing to address inequality will inevitably reinforce and reproduce it. A proactive 'do no harm' approach is always required.[17]

Inclusion

Inclusion is both a process (who is included in decision-making, along with how, why and to what effect) and an outcome (how development outcomes – including prosperity, well-being, and public goods and services – are distributed and shared).[18] It means having intentional actions, including the identification and removal of barriers, that hinder full and effective participation and inclusion in society and seeks to redress disadvantages encountered by specific groups.[14]

Empowerment

Empowerment is a process of changing relations of power, achieved by individuals or groups of people, such as women, becoming aware of the systemic status and power imbalances they face, and supporting them to challenge and change this. It includes increased self-confidence and agency, having choice and control over resources.

Equality and equity

Equality is when all people have the same economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights and entitlements. To achieve equality, different groups of people may require different treatment, as different groups of people have different situations according to privilege and disadvantage. While equality is an outcome, **equity** refers to the processes to achieve this outcome, which may require different approaches for different groups, to respond to their different needs, interests, capacities, socio-economic status and circumstances.[14]

Gender norms

Gender norms are a set of dominant beliefs and rules which are determined by a society or social group in relation to the types of roles, interests, behaviours and contributions expected from male, female and other genders. These are grounded in traditions and value systems and can change over time.[19]

Human rights-based approach

A human rights-based approach in WASH seeks to change the relationship between WASH actors and people experiencing vulnerability, poverty or exclusion from one of charity and powerlessness to one of obligation and rights. The use of this approach ensures everyone is fully recognised as being part of any WASH solution.[20]

Impairment

This is the physical, sensory, intellectual and/or mental health issue that a person has been born with or has acquired through injury, accident or another cause.

Intersectional inequalities or intersectional disadvantage

Intersectionality refers to overlapping social identities and the related systems of oppression, domination and/or discrimination. The idea is that multiple identities intersect to create a whole that is different from the component identities. It is a term originally coined by feminist socialist and American civil rights advocate Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989.[21]

Participation

Participation means that people are involved in the social, economic, political and cultural processes that affect their lives. This is recognised as a right. To achieve equality, this must be meaningful, appropriate and provide ownership.[22]

Patriarchy

Where the 'male' and the 'masculine' are privileged over the 'female' and the 'feminine'. Cultural, political, economic and social structures and ideas that directly or indirectly favour men and lead to women or anyone not identified as male/masculine having lower status and being denied equality.

Reasonable accommodation

Necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments, which do not pose a disproportionate or undue burden. This includes adapting processes and/or providing reasonable supports to enable meaningful participation of every person.[14]

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the responsibility that organisations have to ensure their staff, associated representatives and programmes 'do no harm'. Safeguarding people includes, but is not limited to, safeguarding against harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or cyber bullying, discrimination, exploitation or abuse, safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.[12]

Sexual and gender minorities

Gender minorities refers to people whose gender identity or expression does not fit into the cis-normative categories of 'female' or 'male'. **Sexual minorities** refers to people whose sexual orientation is outside the heterosexual norm.

Social exclusion, vulnerability and marginalisation

The Oxford Dictionary defines **marginalisation** as 'treatment of a person, group or concept as insignificant or peripheral'. To be marginalised from mainstream society results in deliberate or inadvertent **exclusion** of various kinds, including power, opportunities, benefits of policies, programmes and services. This, in turn, leads to **vulnerabilities**, including risks to health, security and safety.

Social model of disability

The social model of disability focuses attention not just on attending to individual needs of persons with disabilities or their 'medical diagnosis', but on dealing with the barriers they face, empowering them to claim their rights and hold duty-bearers accountable, and bringing about long-term systemic changes in attitudes, behaviours, policies and laws.[23]

System strengthening

System strengthening means understanding that WASH exists in complex systems with many component parts and within different social, economic, political and environmental contexts.

Universal design

'Universal design' means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.[24]

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How we work and arrange our knowledge

This framework forms part of a body of documents that define how we work and how we arrange our knowledge, as shown below. For WaterAid staff, this framework and related documents can be found on our intranet page, KnowledgeNet, which is structured in the same way.

| Our strategic aims	Sustainable services	Integration	Equality	Hygiene
Who we seek to serve	The poorest and most marginalised people			
What we work on	Water	Sanitation		Hygiene
Cross-cutting principles	Human rights	Sustainability	Equality and inclusion	Partnership
Where we work	Large cities and towns	Small towns and growth centres	Rural and remote districts	Global and regional
How we bring about change	Our role and how we work			
	Systems strengthening and empowerment	WASH in other sectors		Hygiene behaviour change
Project delivery concepts	Outline project delivery concepts			

WaterAid believes that access to WASH is a human right. Our vision for everyone, everywhere to have access to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene is underpinned by a commitment to eliminate inequalities in WASH.

This goal is reliant on tackling the systemic barriers that restrict the people who are most impacted by poor WASH outcomes or services – barriers that are often similar to those faced when accessing other fundamental human rights.

This framework sets out WaterAid's approach to understanding, tackling and eventually contributing to the elimination of those inequalities. It defines our position, scope, principles and approach to support the organisation to drive deeper changes internally and externally for sustainable and transformative WASH outcomes for all.

Front top: Bertha, 23, speaking on behalf of her community, at Joint Parliamentarian Committee meeting with the people of Kapyanga, Kasungu, Malawi, April, 2017.

Front bottom: Roster and her husband Offord, after drawing water from a borehole in Chikuni Village, Monze, Zambia, November, 2016.
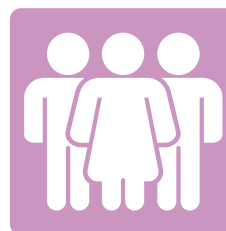
Lilian, 13, student outside the girls toilets at Trans Ekulu River Primary School, Trans Ekulu River Community, Enugu State, Nigeria, October 2018.

WaterAid/Tom Saater

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