

**Gender and Social Inclusion Review of Progress
of Water for Women Fund and Covid-19
Response**

Final Report

March 2021

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Acronyms

CBM	Organisation providing support to WfW on disability
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DFAT	Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade
DPO	Disabled People's Organizations
EOPOs	End of Program Outcomes
FC	Fund Coordinator
FPG	Fund Partnership Group
GBV	Gender based violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GHD	Company contracted as fund coordinator
GSI	Gender and Social Inclusion
ISF-UTS	The Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology, Sydney
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
K&L	Knowledge and Learning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
PWD	People with disabilities
RHO	Rights Holder Organisation
RO	Research Organisation
SAT	Self Assessment Tool
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGM	Sexual and Gender Minorities
SNV	SNV Netherlands Research Organisation
SWA	Sanitation and Water for All
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WfW	Water for Women
WHO	World Health Organisation
WRO	Women's Rights Organisation

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Water for Women (WfW) GESI mid-term review complements the recent Independent Review of the Fund completed in August 2020. The purpose is to: i) Assess progress towards the achievement of end-of-program outcomes; ii) Identify and capture learning from implementation; iii) Better understand gaps, challenges and opportunities; and iv) Identify adjustments/improvements as necessary based on these findings for the remainder of the Fund. Travel restrictions meant that field visits were not possible hence the review is based on extensive review of the project documents and information collected from CSO partners, interviews with key contributors, written responses from several CSO partners, and input from a virtual roundtable discussion of the findings.

Overall the review shared the positive impression of the programs Independent Review with regard to progress against End of Program Outcomes (EOPOs). The strong initial focus on GESI has been maintained by DFAT, the Fund Coordinator (FC), and the implementing partners.

Findings

The findings on progress, lessons learned, gaps and challenges have been organised around the four EOPOs with an additional section that covers the COVID-19 responses of the CSO partners.

EOPO 1 Strengthened national and subnational WASH sector systems with greater emphasis on gender, social inclusion, safely managed WASH and water security

CSO partners have made organisational changes as a result of involvement in WfW including changes in internal policy frameworks to encourage greater diversity and inclusion within their own organisations. There are a number of challenges to promoting the inclusion of GESI in government and private sector WASH systems but CSO partners have managed to find entry points and there have been some wins despite the challenges. This is easier when some policies are already in place and relationships have been built.

Building capacity of Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) to engage with government on WASH has been effective, especially in raising awareness of the WASH-related issues facing people with disabilities. It has also helped the DPOs to understand the importance of WASH services and facilities for people with disabilities. More work needs to be done to understand the longer-term significance and impacts of including WASH as a priority for DPOs, beyond WfW.

Formal state-sponsored women's organisation have been strategically selected as partners in some countries given their ability to engage with government even though they sometimes promote traditional gender norms. In other countries promoting engagement in WASH decision-making has been an entry point for building women's leadership and engaging more with progressive feminist organisations.

Evidence and data on prevalence of disability and showing gender related difference time use and access to facilities has been important for raising the awareness and realisation among government staff.

EOPO 2: Increased equitable, universal access to and use of sustainable WASH services, particularly for marginalised communities and community members

The inclusion agenda is strongly aligned to the values and priorities of the CSO partners making them effective partners for WfW in this respect. Baseline assessments that identified a wide range of social issues, and clear plans for inclusion developed from these at the outset have helped keep the momentum up and made monitoring easier. GESI skills within the FC and CSO partners have been supplemented by specialist skills on disability and Sexual and Gender Minorities (SGM) from other organisations giving a high level of overall GESI capacity in the WfW community. CSO partners have needed to balance the broad inclusion agenda with activities that focus on specific groups such as ethnic minorities, lower caste people, and SGM. Working on SGM issues has been confronting for some CSO partners but they have welcomed the opportunity to move towards this.

The awareness of the importance of disability inclusion is strong however, the numbers of beneficiaries with disabilities is still low and does not reflect the strong interest and apparent skills. These numbers will hopefully increase as the capacity is deepened down to the community, and Washington questions are adapted to projects to better capture participation of people with disabilities. Awareness of the special needs of women with disabilities and other intersectional issues seems high among CSO partners and they are training rights holder organisations (RHOs) in these issues. Focus on Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) has been strong and gained traction.

Apart from RHOs, CSO partners have found important support among other stakeholders such as teachers, health workers, church groups and religious organisations.

EOPO 3 Strengthened gender equality and social inclusion in households, communities and institutions

There is some evidence that WfW partners and activities have all moved up the continuum presented in the Towards Transformation strategy since the inception of the program. Transformation stories illustrate the broad range of ways that transformation is interpreted and promoted across the program, for example: transformation within their own organisations, among their staff, within communities, among people - including women - with disabilities. There are examples of inclusion of highly marginalised individuals and groups from SGM or lower caste communities, and stories of changes in the status and acceptance of a DPO. Several stories illustrated efforts to promote women's leadership and one of women's entrepreneurship.

With regard to gender equality the most progress is seen in promoting access to WASH service and facilities, and women's participation in decision-making – including beyond the WfW projects. Good progress has also been made in reducing negative impacts especially any increased potential for violence through the Do No Harm strategies. There is less consistent progress on women's economic empowerment although there are examples of empowering women in the WASH supply chains and supporting livelihoods of vulnerable groups. Challenging gender norms has also been a challenge given the potential to leverage women's traditional norms as wives and mothers with household and family responsibilities, to contribute to WASH outcomes. The tension between leveraging and challenging norms is nuanced and not well understood. A clearer framework for understanding gender norms and strategies for changing norms would be helpful.

Activities around disability tend to focus on inclusion rather than transformation and on changing the perceptions and understanding of society. There is more work to be done to understand better what transformation strategies should aim for with respect to the lives of people with disabilities.

EOPO 4 Strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in sustainable gender and inclusive WASH by other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), national and international WASH sector actors

The focus on generating knowledge and sharing learning is a core element of the WfW program and the GESI focus is central to this. The strong focus on creating new knowledge and evidence, and capturing and sharing it, puts WfW in a strong position to influence WASH strategies, policies and implementation well beyond the program itself.

The research agenda is strong and innovative, especially around gender equality in WASH. In some countries the Research Organisations (ROs) are working closely in partnership with the CSO partners that are implementing projects there. The partnership seems to work better in some places than others but where it works well it is valuable and adds credibility to the outputs.

The Learning Agenda provides a solid framework to capture the various project GESI activities taking place across different countries. The range of activities taking place in different context is substantial. Communities of practice, and use of various media and formats to capture and share experience helps to keep it coherent and accessible. This is increasingly important as the amount of material expands. CSO partners are making considerable efforts to capture learning through instruments such as stories of transformation, postcards from the field and learning notes. Future systematic analysis of these will provide valuable learning.

The restrictions on movement and need to communicate remotely due to the pandemic, has pushed the development of communication technology to create an opportunity to take learning forums and activities to a wider audience. Field staff that may previously have had less access to seminars and workshops can now join and participate.

Contact between the CSO organisations, research organisations, and especially the DFAT team in Canberra, with each of the posts has been good in most cases. Sharing information with DFAT posts can be a challenge for regional programs but steps have been taken to ensure there is good engagement with most posts.

Assessment of COVID responses

CSO partners acted quickly to ensure the safety of their staff and the continuation of their programs. The programs were pivoted to respond to the pandemic for example by increasing the emphasis on hygiene. The partners have supported government responses and helped to identify the most vulnerable and those bearing disproportionate impacts. Reduced mobility added additional challenges to accessing services, especially for women and men with disabilities, and lockdowns increased the potential for violence. Marginalised groups lost fragile sources of income and CSO partners helped them find alternative sources.

Guidance notes have been prepared at the FC level and several CSO partner organisations have developed their own guidance notes. The notes include Do No Harm guidance as well as guidance on ensuring inclusion, empowerment and transformation in the context of social distancing and lockdowns. The crisis also highlighted the key role of women in influencing hygiene behaviours at home and opened the risk of reinforcing gender norms. Some partners took steps to ensure that communication and information messages did not

reinforce norms, several also included referral information to help victims of violence. The needs of people with disabilities seem to be well addressed in the additional programming.

Conclusions and recommendations

Factors contributing to success

Overall the GESI approaches in the program can be considered a success. Among the factors contributing to this are: the consistent expectations of DFAT; alignment with partner organisations values and principles; the investment in specialist skills and resources; clear strategies and action plans; and a strong research and learning agenda framed around GESI in WASH. Several contributors also noted the number of women in leadership positions throughout the program that were also committed to GESI and mentioned this as a contributory factor.

Recommendations

Sustainability and scalability

In the long term the impact of the WfW GESI approach needs to be sustainable and scalable. Three aspects in particular have the potential for scaling up beyond WfW: integrating specific actions in other DFAT-funded investments and policy dialogue with government; identifying the most effective ways for RHOs to engage with WASH; and more effectively influencing gender and social norms within communities. These and other recommendations are discussed below.

Working with other DFAT programs

A consistent approach across DFAT funded programs is needed to reinforce messages, especially with government on GESI in WASH systems strengthening. Good efforts have been made to involve post and share information with them. Establishing a community of practice within DFAT on GESI in WASH might be one way to ensure that all DFAT funded WASH programs are sending consistent messages.

There may also be opportunities within countries to link with other DFAT funded programs. In different countries there are projects such as those addressing gender-based violence, or challenging gender norms through working with religious organisations and programs. Sharing experiences, contacts and tools with these programs could be really useful for the CSO partners. DFAT funded programs that are working on strengthening local governance also hold knowledge and understanding of the entry points for women to influence resources allocation and decision-making relating to WASH.

Working with RHOs

Working with RHOs has opened a range of opportunities and yielded some lessons. More work needs to be done to refine this as an effective strategy for inclusion. Questions that could be explored are around how to influence the traditional women's organisations to take a more inclusive approach and to engage with more feminist oriented women's organisations; the impact of their engagement in WASH activities on the normal operating focus and mandates of DPO; the impact of the involvement of DPOs on the inclusion of people with disabilities at the community level; how sustainable is the impact and involvement in WASH in the absence of a CSO project; and how inclusive is the DPO approach to marginalised people with disabilities such as those from SGM or ethnic minority communities, old people and women.

Social and gender norms

More tools and guidance is needed to help identify and address specific gender norms that could be influenced in activities. Strategies could include things like amplifying positive deviance and identifying and working with reference groups. It might be possible to adapt these strategies to also focus more specifically on negative social norms that impact on people, especially women with disabilities.

Transformation and empowerment of people with disabilities

Language around transformation and empowerment are commonly used with regard to gender equality, and women, but are less commonly used with regard to people with disabilities where the focus is more on rights and inclusion. The strength of the transformation strategy and focus in WfW, and the partnership that exists with CBM, puts it in a good position to push forward the barriers to develop a framework along the lines of the WASH-GEM framework for working more strategically on this.

Managing knowledge

A huge amount of evidence and knowledge has already been collected and more will come through in the remaining years of the project. The Learning Agenda has put some structure and organisation into managing this so that it can be widely disseminated. It is a valuable trove that can be mined and analysed to draw out common themes and lessons. This may well be in the learning or MEL plans.

1 Introduction

1.1 Water for Women Fund

The \$110.6 million (2018-2022) Water for Women Fund (the Fund) is managed by Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) as part of the aid program. GHD Australia Pty Ltd is contracted as the Fund Coordinator (FC). The Fund will improve access to safe and affordable water and improve sanitation and hygiene practices for an estimated 2.9 million people in the Indo-Pacific region. Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) are a core focus. Under the Fund, 9 civil society organisations are delivering 18 projects across 15 countries in the Indo-Pacific. The Fund includes \$10 million for WASH research selected through a competitive grants process and is supporting 5 research organisations to deliver 11 research projects.

The goal of the Fund is **improved health, gender equality and well-being of Asian and Pacific communities through inclusive, sustainable WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)**.

The Fund has four End of Program Outcomes (EOPOs) outcomes:

- Strengthened national and subnational WASH sector systems with greater emphasis on gender, social inclusion, safely managed WASH and water security.
- Increased equitable, universal access to and use of sustainable WASH services, particularly for marginalised communities and community members.
- Strengthened gender equality and social inclusion in households, communities and institutions.
- Strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in sustainable gender and inclusive WASH by other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), national and international WASH sector actors.

Intermediate outcomes, which are expected to contribute to the above Fund outcomes are:

- Increased capacity and agency of governments, private sector, community-based organisations and communities, in planning, investing and delivering sustainable, inclusive WASH services
- Greater integration of gender and socially inclusive approaches by governments, private sector, community-based organisations and communities
- Documentation and sharing of gender and socially inclusive evidence and effective practices with other CSOs, national and international sector actors

WASH is recognised as having a critical role in addressing poverty and economic and human development and that gendered approaches to WASH programming contribute to more effective and sustainable WASH outcomes. The Fund is innovative and progressive in that it takes this further and approaches WASH as an entry point to improving gender equality and women's well-being, voice and leadership and economic empowerment. The Fund also has a strong learning approach implemented through the recent Knowledge and Learning (K&L) plan.

In April 2020, the Fund pivoted quickly to respond to COVID-19 by providing approval to utilise up to \$100,000 of existing funding for each project to direct to COVID-19 responses. In May 2020, the Minister for Foreign Affairs approved additional COVID-19 funding of \$3.3 million to the Fund for COVID-19 response and recovery. These additional funds were disbursed by the end of the 2019-20 financial year. The FC has negotiated with CSOs and ROs, the work to be done over the next 6 months, using these additional funds.

1.2 GESI Strategy

In 2018 a five-year strategy for Gender and Social Inclusion (GSI) in WfW, **Towards Transformation**, was prepared. The vision of the strategy was that *“collective work of the Fund leads and inspires the global WASH sector to adopt evidence-based socially transformative practice to contribute to eliminating inequalities and achieving sustainable positive change for all”*. The strategy introduced the Toward Transformation in WASH Continuum (TTWC) which acknowledges the different starting points of organisations and systems, and it presented a set of guiding principles:

- Principle 1: Hold ourselves accountable
- Principle 2: Do No Harm and address violence
- Principle 3: Understand and challenge power and privilege
- Principle 4: Address inevitable resistance and backlash
- Principle 5: Think and act holistically
- Principle 6: Place the right people at the centre
- Principle 7: Push the boundaries of transformative practice

The strategy articulates three Goals and presents strategies through which each of the key stakeholders (CSOs, ROs, FC, and DFAT) will contribute to achieving these. The goals are:

- Goal 1: Catalyse and support change towards inclusive and transformative WASH
- Goal 2: Generate and communicate knowledge, learning and evidence
- Goal 3: Help to push the boundaries of socially transformative practice in WASH.

Steps were taken to ensure that results on the journey towards transformation could be recognised and measured including development of a GSI tool for reviewing project and research designs, and a self assessment tool (SAT) for CSOs (and adapted for ROs) to use. A number of Fund –level evaluation questions have been identified in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework along with indicators and quantitative and qualitative methods for tracking progress against these. The strategy is notable for the clear description of the roles and expectations for each of the key stakeholder groups.

2 Methodology

2.1 Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the WfW GESI mid-term review is to:

- Assess progress towards the achievement of end-of-program outcomes;
- Identify and capture learning from implementation;
- Better understand gaps, challenges and opportunities; and
- Identify adjustments/improvements as necessary based on these findings for the remainder of the Fund.

The GESI mid-term review also identifies opportunities to strengthen communication of results and achievements under the Fund and better understand the Fund's COVID-19 responses including the effectiveness of GESI interventions in COVID-19 pivots and responses. The Terms of Reference for the review is included in Annex A. A list of key questions was agreed on and this is mapped against the projects outcomes in Annex B.

The mid-term review complements the recent Independent Review completed in August 2020. One of the recommendations from this review was the need for a more in-depth review to capture learning from GESI initiatives (mainstreamed and targeted) across the Fund to date.

2.2 Evaluation Scope and Methods

Early on given the time limitations the decision was made to focus on five countries in particular while taking other countries and general findings into account as appropriate. Annex C. describes how the five countries, Nepal, Vietnam, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu, were selected. The following information sources were used in the evaluation:

Document review

A substantial number of documents have been produced including design documents, strategies and frameworks for implementation, progress reports, the independent review, and many others. A list of the documents provided that contributed to the review is provided in Annex D. In addition, the program has a website and the WaterforWomen Hub that provides a very rich source of information.

Individual or group key informant interviews

Most interviews took place during November and December 2020. Several interviews were held with the FC team, these were group interviews for the sake of time and efficiency. Two interviews were held with researchers at the following institutions:

- The Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology, Sydney (IFS-UTS) selected because of their long history of researching gender equality and water supply and sanitation links, and the range of countries they are implementing research activities in under WfW.
- International Water Management Institute (IWMI), since they are undertaking research in South Asia (Nepal) and may have less of a history in looking at the transformative linkages between water supply and gender equality.

Five interviews were held with CSO partner organisations working in the five countries selected for more in depth review, and two interviews were held with DFAT branches. Additional interviews were added in March with two RHOs: a disabled peoples organisation,

and a women's organisation representative, and also with the independent reviewer and a representative from CBM. The list of interviewees is included Annex E. In writing this report efforts have been made to keep findings at a general level and not to use examples or comments that could be attributed to specific projects or people.

Written questions

Written questions were sent to the CSOs that were not selected for in depth interviews so that all partners had the opportunity to provide input to the evaluation. Examples of progress, and discussion of the challenges were especially appreciated.

Virtual GESI Roundtable

A virtual roundtable with key stakeholders was held in February following completion of the interviews and preparation of draft final report. The findings and recommendations of the report were presented to stakeholders and participants discussed the following questions in breakout groups:

- How can we be more effective at shifting harmful gender and social norms through hygiene promotion? How to engage men and boys to change their behaviour? Empowering PWD and increasing access and use of WASH services?
- What have we learned about supporting traditional women's organisations with whom we work to be more pro-active in gender equality and transforming gender norms?
- Where are the opportunities for working with more progressive women's organisations, and what changes do we hope to see as a result?
- Where are the opportunities to coordinate with other DFAT funded programs to reinforce GESI messages and share tools and knowledge (GESI in WASH systems strengthening, GBV, challenging gender and social norms etc)?
- Sharing the Funds K&L on transformative GESI in WASH: What's coming out of the Fund that we think can have the most influence on the global WASH community? How can these opportunities be strengthened?

Feedback was collected from participants using Mentimeter surveys, Murals, and write-ups from breakout group discussions. Following the roundtable, several participants also sent in written comments. This input has been taken into account in the final report.

Overall the report was well received and reactions were collected in the word cloud below. Other information collected at the roundtable is included in Annex F.



2.3 GESI, GEDSI, GSI

Increasingly GESI has been used in recent years to bring together the analysis and actions to promote gender equality with the analysis and actions to promote inclusion of marginalised groups. Marginalised groups can include women, but also include other groups in society that are discriminated against and/or lack voice and access. For example, people with disabilities, ethnic or religious minorities, or SGM communities.

Increasingly, as the prevalence of disability is recognised, organisations such as DFAT, that have a specific focus on disability, are using the term GEDSI (Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion). However, the WfW Towards Transformation: Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy deliberately chooses to use gender and social inclusion (GSI), recognising that substantive gender equality is an outcome of the transformative practice.

DFAT used GESI in the design documents for WfW, and GESI is also used in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this review. Hence, while recognising the nuance in the meaning of the different terms and that the Fund uses GSI, this report will use GESI.

2.4 Limitations

Access

Normally for a review like this there would be an expectation of field visits in one or more countries. However, this was not possible given the travel restrictions introduced around the world as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic. The information collected is therefore entirely second hand information collected from interviews and documents.

Scope

Early on, the scope of investigation was narrowed to five countries as the time frame for the review was short. During the interviews with people working in these five countries, reference was often made to other countries outside of this, especially when the key contributor organisations and individuals were working in more than one country. Project

reports used generally covered all of the countries increasing the scope. More time was allocated for the review that meant more country specific documentation could be included from countries outside the initial five. Stories of transformation and postcards from the field were especially useful in adding context and describing project impacts in other countries. While an effort has been made to gain as broad a view as possible, the report should be read with the caveat that it does not capture the full extent of the rich and valuable work happening across the program. Also, given the huge range of activities at the community level and the differences in local context, and inability to visit and meet with communities and beneficiaries first hand, little attempt is made to generalise findings on progress, impacts, or implementation processes at the community level. The review largely focuses on the progress made and challenges faced at the FC, the RO and CSO partner level, and to some extent, the RHOs.

Key Ethical Considerations

Key ethical considerations relate to (i) consent, (ii) cultural appropriateness and (iii) feedback of findings.

- The review sought verbal consent and ensured key informants and local partners consulted were adequately informed of the purpose of the review, its potential outcomes and consequences, and type of information sought from them.
- Engagement at local level was to be undertaken in a gender responsive, culturally sensitive manner.
- Findings of the review will be fed back to informants through a virtual roundtable and other means.

2.5 Organisation of the report

Following the introduction and this section on methodology, the next section, Section 3, documents the findings of the review. The findings addressed are organised around the four EOPOs and look at the progress, and the lessons learned, gaps and challenges for each of these.

The final section, Section 4, draws out some of the factors that have contributed to the overall success of the program's GESI focus, and identifies some of the opportunities for adjustments/improvements for the remainder of the Fund, as well as some broader recommendations for DFAT programming.

3 Findings: Progress, lessons, gaps and challenges

The positive findings of the recent Independent Review of Progress of WfW (completed in August 2020) regarding overall progress of the fund and activity implementation, are taken as the starting assumption for the purpose of this report. The GESI review looks at the impact of the strong design emphasis on gender and social inclusion within this context. This section on the findings of the GESI review is organised around the four EOPOs and looks at the progress, lessons learned, gaps and challenges against each of these.

A key overall finding is that the strong focus on GESI in WfW has influenced organisations and empowered change makers, to successfully move forward the theory and practice of GESI in WASH, with some significant achievements. The changes made and progress so far are mostly positive, and are indications of the potential for achieving the overall ambition of the Fund's five-year gender and social inclusion strategy.

3.1 EOPO 1 Strengthened national and subnational WASH sector systems with greater emphasis on gender, social inclusion, safely managed WASH and water security

In WfW, the work under this outcome is framed and reported around the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Building blocks of: sector policy strategy, institutional arrangements, sector financing, planning, monitoring and review, and capacity development. The latter however is considered fundamental across all outcomes and not specifically reported on under EOPO1. These are considered in the following paragraphs with respect to the GESI influence on systems within partner organisations themselves, as well as the government's WASH systems within the countries. The starting point is different in each country depending on whether there are national or local strategies in place, what the mandates and priorities of each level of government are with respect to WASH, and the role of the private sector and donors.

The strong emphasis on GESI has had an impact at an institutional level on CSO partner organisations involved. In some cases the CSOs partners were already at the forefront of inclusive development, and they have contributed to developing the tools and approaches developed for WfW. Even these CSO partners say that WfW has been an opportunity for them to take a more purposeful approach. They talked about challenging unconscious bias and internalising changes into organisational values.

“There was an internal opportunity and WfW helped put a timely emphasis on transformational change”

In other cases, the CSOs were on the cusp of making changes and WfW provided momentum for larger organisational changes including influencing their internal global policies on gender equality and disability inclusion within the organisation. WfW is helping organisations to push forward their own internal boundaries and to “walk the talk” on GESI. CSOs mentioned that other programs implemented by their organisation are adopting WfW GESI approaches or “drawing energy off” their WfW program. Internal sharing of WfW GESI guidelines, research findings, DNH, monitoring tools is influencing other programs especially on disability inclusion.

“When we have a donor that puts GESI front and central it makes it so much easier to get things done”

There are still other CSO partners that are less far along their journey towards more inclusive practices and have gained much from the WfW experience.

CSO partners are finding appropriate entry points for promoting GESI in the WASH systems but it can be challenging and takes time. The CSO partners have adapted their programs to work more closely with the WASH systems in place in the countries they work in. Whatever the status of development of the government's institutional and policy framework, the CSOs have taken steps to help develop it further and to integrate GESI into it.

Despite the challenges of encouraging the integration of GESI into government WASH systems, there have been some wins. In some country contexts this can be painstaking work and it can take time to see results. Small wins are celebrated, for example, getting GESI included in a draft national sanitation and hygiene strategy, an MOU for the CSO to provide GESI training to government staff, getting questions on disability included in the census, and persuading a district government to allocate budget to improve the inclusiveness of a hygiene program.

Many governments have WASH targets and the GESI approach to inclusion can help them meet these. Where there is an alignment of the GESI approach with government priorities (for example on SDGs), and the GESI approach is seen to help meet the targets for leaving no one behind, it provides a conducive environment for encouraging new approaches.

CSO partners have worked effectively with Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) to facilitate their engagement with government on WASH strategy and policy. In most cases this has been a new area of engagement for the DPOs and not necessarily in line with their previous priorities and activities. However, DPOs have come to better understand the significant challenges that people with different disabilities face in accessing WASH services and the impact that this can have on the welfare and self esteem of women and men with disabilities. CSO partners have worked with DPOs to build their capacity to engage with government at different levels on policy and strategies and to improve the inclusiveness of WASH strategy and implementation. Through the involvement of DPOs, governments have increased their awareness and understanding of the needs and challenges facing people with disabilities. Government's seem to have welcomed the involvement of the DPOs and there are cases where this has given the DPOs a level of status and recognition that they did not have before.

In some countries, women's organisations are more established than DPOs, and CSO partners have identified women's organisations to work with that are best able to engage with governments. The tendency has been to work with the more formal and often state recognized or sanctioned women's organisations¹ where these exist. This may have been identified in their initial GESI assessments as a pragmatic way to effectively get women's voice into planning and decision-making regarding WASH i.e. a means to an end. These organisations have recognised authority to "represent" women, and at the village level, they may include midwives and health workers. They are well positioned to engage with government on WASH although they had not necessarily engaged on WASH before. From a political economy perspective this is therefore strategic (see Annex F for further discussion on political economy of gender equality). However, these organisations also tend to be organised on a top down basis and may be guardians of state ideology about women's traditional role as wives and mothers, with primary responsibility in the home.

Collecting evidence, for example through baseline surveys, has been important to encourage reflection and realisation among government staff. When faced with information and evidence, for example on disability prevalence and access, or through individual stories, government staff that previously thought they were doing well have

¹ Examples are the Vietnam and Lao Women's Unions, the Family Welfare Organisations in Indonesia, Commune Council Women's Committee in Cambodia and In PNG.

grown in their understanding of the issues. This has been evidenced, for example where government's initially gave themselves a high score in the Self Assessment tool and then lowered this after discussing the evidence. Collecting data on disability is still seen as a challenge in many countries however the inclusion of the Washington Questions on disability in surveys is starting to provide a more consistent and systematic way to collect data where enumerators are properly trained and the questions are well understood.

Lessons, gaps, and challenges and opportunities

- It is easier to find entry points and make progress in integrating GESI once some level of WASH sector policy and institutional framework is already in place.
- The extent to which CSO partners are in a position to engage with counterparts on GESI in WASH either at national or local level depends on relationships that they have been able to build up, in some cases over many years of working in the same districts or with the same counterparts, and in other cases helped by long working relationships between DFAT and counterpart agencies.
- High turnover of government staff, or elections that bring in newly elected officials can limit the effectiveness of GESI training and capacity building.
- Some governments, especially at local level are understaffed, lack resources, and simply do not have the capacity or staff to deal with what they see as an additional load.
- There may be tensions between international CSOs and government agencies in which case CSOs need to exercise "soft power" by showing achievements rather than advocating for change.
- CSO partners also need to work with several different departments including the agencies responsible for women's empowerment or disability that are not normally involved with WASH but whose support may be necessary to promote GESI. This adds an extra layer of complexity and challenge to an already difficult task, and absorbs time and effort.
- WASH is a new area for many DPOs and may divert them from their previous core mandates. They are also largely dependent on (and their activities influenced by) donor support available at the time, so the sustainability of their involvement in the WASH sector after the project is questionable if funding is not maintained.
- Engaging with the state sponsored women's organisations may be a good strategy for ensuring participation of women in decision-making, but runs the risk of reinforcing traditional gender norms.
- Some CSOs work at a local level through local offices staffed with their own staff that are trained and managed directly by the CSO. In these cases it is easier to prevent dilution of the emphasis on GESI between the CSO management and their staff in the field. Other international CSOs without field offices, have entered into partnerships with different local CSOs for implementation. Establishing a good and balanced relationship between the international CSO and the national CSO can be difficult when most of the power lies with the international CSO that needs to manage the tight time frames, heavy M&E requirements, and complex reporting to the donor. Local partners may be underfunded, under managed, and understaffed and lack staff with the necessary understanding or skills to implement GESI approaches. In these cases, it can be challenging to localise the intent of GESI along with other things that need to be done.

3.2 EOPO 2: Increased equitable, universal access to and use of sustainable WASH services, particularly for marginalised communities and community members

The strong emphasis on social inclusion in WfW has been welcomed by CSO partners, most of who have embraced the opportunity to push the frontiers forward to the extent they can given different country contexts. Many of the CSO partners come from a rights-based background and have welcomed the scope and opportunities afforded by WfW to introduce new tools and approaches, work with new partners, and push forward into new areas that are sometimes controversial or confronting.

“WASH is a way of doing inclusion rather than being something that is just integrated into WASH.”

The design of all of the projects was informed by initial baseline assessments that identified a range of issues around gender, disability, and marginalisation. In addition to analysis of the barriers and constraints facing women and people with disabilities in accessing WASH, there seems to be a good identification of other cultural and social issues that lead to marginalisation of other groups such as ethnic minorities, lower castes, and SGM. The baseline assessments gather evidence that can be used in advocacy and to identify priorities for addressing the key issues in projects.

A broad range of issues are identified and are addressed through general strategies for inclusion, as well as more targeted approaches for specific groups. There are several guidance notes and checklists to help implementers ensure inclusion of those that might not otherwise participate in projects. In addition, there is a substantial range of targeted responses to issues identified in the baseline assessments to ensure that no one is left behind. This includes, for example, subsidies for latrines for the poor, a focus on ethnic minority inclusion, specific activities for SGM or people with disabilities. With so many issues raised in the baseline assessments, CSO partners feel the need to narrow down the focus of specific activities to address those that have been prioritised. There is some tension between trying to address everything raised, and developing interventions to address fewer issues more deeply.

The focus on Menstrual Health and Hygiene has gained traction. A recent review of activities found that of all the 9 CSO partners interviewed, had some elements of MHH in their projects. The projects tackled long held stigma and taboos around menstruation and educated communities and teachers about MHH. There was a special focus on schools in many projects as well as focusing on the needs of women throughout the life cycle. While several CSO partners specifically included women with disabilities and their needs in their activities, this was found to not be consistent. On the other hand there were several projects making efforts to include men and boys.

Increasing awareness of the need for disability inclusion in programs has been particularly successful and effective almost across the board. Receiving familiarization sessions and feedback on disability inclusion from the FC (through CBM), and working with the local DPOs has deepened the level of understanding about the needs and rights of people with disabilities with respect to their needs and challenges in accessing WASH facilities and services. CSO partners talked about moving beyond simply looking at physical access, and considering the needs of people with different types of disabilities, and also the needs of carers. The increased understanding has also apparently been seen among many of the government and private sector counterparts.

The inclusion of DPOs as partners has helped to raise issues facing people with disabilities in planning and decision-making so that a wide range of disabilities, as well as the needs

and challenges faced by carers, can be taken into consideration. These organisations have contributed to WfW activity designs and development of tools including Do No Harm protocols. They have been supported and given training to help them engage with governments, community leaders, and other decision-makers and influencers. There are anecdotes regarding how perceptions about people with disabilities have been influenced within communities, and among government and other stakeholders. There is also evidence of the greater recognition and status accorded to DPOs and some individual stories of how people with disabilities have benefited from greater self-respect and confidence. A number of the change stories and postcards from the field tell of the impact of the project on the lives of women with disabilities.

Some CSO partners have also used their engagement to highlight issues of inter-sectionality. Training and capacity building activities for DPOs has included training on gender equality and the special needs and challenges facing women with disabilities. Training for women's organisations has raised awareness of the exclusion issues facing poor women and women with disabilities and helped develop approaches to address this. The extent to which the training will have a longer-term impact on organisational cultures remains to be seen.

Training and improved understanding alone would not have achieved as much without the tools and protocols to turn this into action. Examples are tools to help collect data on marginalised groups such as people with disabilities and SGM, Do No Harm protocols, inclusion guidelines and checklists, M&E indicators, and tools to help RHOs engage with governments on WASH. The FC team including the GESI and MEL teams, the Hub, UTS, CBM and Edge Effect, have all been credited with helping to develop and disseminate tools. In particular the FC created Self Assessment Tool was mentioned as being effective and impactful, especially the workshop held before the pandemic limited ability to travel. The ability for people from different countries and organisations to meet face to face and exchange experiences has been missed.

Working with SGM has been new and sometimes confronting for CSO partners yet it has been generally well received. For most CSOs this is the first time they have been explicit about SGM and to the surprise of some individuals, it is going down well in their organisations. The Edge Effect training started opening eyes to the issues and while some organisations still feel that it is too challenging either for their organisation, or in the country context that they work in, others have embraced it and even employed staff from the SGM community. Do No Harm training and protocols have been very important for CSOs that are including SGM in their work, and there is a high awareness of the need to be cautious and aware of local sensitivities.

CSOs have also found that teachers and health sector workers, and, in some countries, churches and religious institutions, have been important stakeholders in the GESI work. When these groups take up the GESI approaches they can be influential in helping to promote inclusion and change. For example, in some countries, engaging women's church groups in decision-making has been effective, in other places teachers have become strong advocates for building understanding of MHM and hygiene practices.

Lessons, gaps, and challenges and opportunities

- Despite the progress and visibility of inclusion issues in the program, the number of people with disabilities included among beneficiaries is still low and increasing only slowly. A benchmark figure for the percentage of beneficiaries with disabilities would be around 5–12% although the expected prevalence in developing context would be around 15-18%. However, the average percentage of beneficiaries with disabilities that

is reported by CSO partners is still below this at between 1.8 and 4.9%². This seems at odds with the efforts made to improve the inclusion of people with disabilities, the guidelines that have been developed, and the number of stories of impact that have been prepared.

- The numbers of people with disabilities may improve over time as implementation practices for inclusion become more routinely used at the community level, and also when the consistent use of the Washington Questions help to improve the accuracy of data collected. However the questions need to be adapted to be applicable in different project contexts and enumerators need to be well trained.
- The low numbers of people with disabilities among the beneficiaries gives limited opportunity to undertake more research that could better inform the project about the impacts of inclusion strategies on people with different disabilities, the intersectionality between disability and gender, age, ethnicity, or other factors that might add to their marginalisation and disadvantage.
- CSOs partners are aware of capacity issues among their RHO partners who often lack staff and resources to engage to the extent that they would like them too. While there seems to be consensus on the usefulness of the engagement and the amount that both RHOs and the projects benefit from it, there are questions over the sustainability of their involvement in WASH. Moreover, more work could be done to identify the relationship between involvement of DPOs in WASH programs, and inclusion of people with disabilities among beneficiaries at the community level.

3.3 EOPO 3 Strengthened gender equality and social inclusion in households, communities and institutions

There is some evidence that WfW partners and activities have all moved up the continuum presented in the Towards Transformation strategy since the inception of the program.

The training, tools, and experience sharing provided have all contributed to this. The continuum recognises that partners had different starting points. Regardless of their starting point, most activities are now clustered around the “gender responsive/accommodating” part of the continuum, with some appearing to be moving further towards being transformative.

Transformative results can be seen at a CSO organisation and individual staff level, and with regard to raising the issues of people with disabilities. This is especially noticeable with respect to the understanding of CSO staff and organisations, and changed policies and responses to, people with disabilities and SGM. Individual CSO staff talked about the transformative impact of training and the need to start by internalising the understanding within oneself. At the organisational level there are examples of steps being taken to create the right workplace culture, policies, and facilities, in order to safely employ transgender staff and staff with disabilities. By having more diversity among their staff they feel they are better placed to reach and work with marginalised communities.

Transformation stories illustrate the broad range of ways that transformation is interpreted and promoted across the program. The stories of transformation written up by CSO partners cover examples of transformation within their own organisations, among their staff, within communities, among people - including women - with disabilities. There are examples of inclusion of highly marginalised individuals, and groups from SGM or lower caste communities, and stories of changes in the status and acceptance of a DPO. Several

² Figures provided by CBM

stories illustrate efforts to promote women's leadership and one of women's entrepreneurship. A general impression is of the different approaches and tools that CSOs are using – some developed by their own organisations – and of the way that the CSOs adapt to work within the different cultural and institutional constraints in each situation.

Efforts to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment takes place across several different dimensions³ with more progress in some areas than others. The WASH-GEM measure developed by IFS-UTS and being piloted with three CSO partners measures changes in gender outcomes across 18 themes in five domains. This will give very valuable understanding of the different impacts and gaps in WASH program's impact on gender equality at the household level. More broadly, gender equality activities tend to cluster around the following: i) access to WASH services and facilities, ii) participation and agency in decision-making, iii) economic empowerment, iv) gender norms, v) Do No Harm, and vi) the special issues facing women with disabilities. With respect to the first of these, access to WASH services and facilities, the focus on inclusion has helped to ensure that just over 50% of reported beneficiaries of all the projects are women⁴.

Progress has also been made in including women in decision-making although this is nuanced when working with traditional women's organisations. By working with the more formal and traditional women's organisations in several countries, some CSO partners have chosen organisations that are often the accepted face of women's participation in decision-making. This is a strategic choice in terms of the women's organisations ability to influence WASH systems as they already engage with governments and are run by women often recognized as leaders. The leaders of these organisations can be powerful, elite, and well connected to male leadership, although this is not always the case. The risk is that they are top down driven, not inclusive of marginalised women such as the poorest and women with disabilities, and may promote traditional gender norms and roles. Where these risks have been identified, CSO partners have included training on gender equality, inclusion, and disability and in some cases, the use of the program's GESI tools. The extent to which this has influenced the wider mandates, programs, and overall gender philosophy of these organisations is not known. CSOs were generally not attempting to also engage with the more feminist women's organisation to counteract this and as alternative potential influencers of government WASH systems.

However, in at least two cases, WASH has been recognised as a tangible focus for developing women's leadership skills to enter into more general governance and decision-making. In one, a women's organisation was specifically chosen because it is a network for developing women leaders to take on more formal leadership roles in councils and parliaments. The focus on WASH gave a very tangible agenda on which these women could engage with local governance and decision-making bodies, and also where relevant, to incorporate into their own election campaigns an issue that would appeal to a broader constituency. In another, WASH was the entry point for challenging norms that prevented women being involved in community decision-making. Gradually women-only WASH committees were established that gave a platform to demonstrate how women could contribute in their communities with the hope that this would open opportunities for their participation in other committees. These cases demonstrate the potential for WASH to be

³ For example, the Sustainable Development goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality has targets for: ending discrimination; eliminating violence and harmful practices against women and girls; recognizing unpaid care and domestic work and promoting shared responsibility in the household and family; ensuring full participation in decision-making, political, economic and public life; and ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health.

⁴ Water for Women, Mid-Year Report September 2020

an entry point that could have transformational impact on the political participation of women which is a key gender gap in most countries.

There is also good progress in a number of countries to address risks of violence against women as part of a wider Do No Harm approach. A couple of CSOs have led in this space, and the support provided by the FC in understanding what this means, how to incorporate it, and how to monitor it have been much appreciated and sometimes taken up in CSOs other work beyond WfW projects. There is greater awareness of how power imbalances, and changes in power dynamics, can create situations in which the risk of violence can increase, and CSOs are taking steps to address this. In some cases the strategies are quite proactive, for example by developing gender based violence (GBV) referral pathways, in other cases they are limited to ensuring privacy of vulnerable populations. CSO partners are aware of the importance of messaging and emphasising positive norms such as “harmonious communities”. Do No Harm strategies extend to other marginalised and excluded individuals and groups such as SGM and ethnic minorities. There are some cases of Do No Harm awareness resulting in risk aversion, rather than risk mitigation. However, in general the Do No Harm training and protocols appear to have given CSOs confidence to push barriers where they might not otherwise have done so.

Some – but not all - CSO projects also promote women’s entrepreneurship and economic empowerment through WASH supply chains and private sector involvement. There are also a few cases of CSO partners working with SGM to help empower them economically. However, other organisations felt that they would move towards this over time, but needed to establish their projects and build confidence and relationships with partners and communities first. Some interesting research is also being undertaken on women’s employment in the WASH sector that has the potential to result in interventions that could have far reaching impacts.

Some- but not all – CSO partners understood the tension between leveraging gender norms to achieve WASH outcomes and challenging these to improve equality. The long history of women and WASH was largely built on an instrumentalist approach. This approach took the view (and was built on evidence) that because women traditionally had responsibility for the household, and for health and hygiene within it, then their involvement would help to achieve WASH outcomes and make results more sustainable. Leveraging women’s traditional roles to achieve WASH outcomes is an approach still seen in many countries and programs. This did- and still does – make a convincing argument for women’s participation in WASH planning and decision-making, it does not take account of the unequal distribution of paid work, opportunity, and power, and runs the risk of reinforcing roles of women as wives and mothers, potentially increasing their workloads and burden of responsibility, and limiting their opportunities for greater equality in other spheres. The piloting of the WASH-GEM tool, and other assessment tools are designed to identify and build awareness around the impact of gender norms in the lives of men and women in relation to WASH. Some CSO partners also take care not to promote gender stereotypes in their messaging. One strategy employed by several CSOs where gender norms are constraints on women’s leadership and participation is to place women on their staff in key positions where they can be seen to be leading and managing teams that include men. In this way they demonstrate what women can do and achieve, alternative roles for women.

Efforts are being made to include men in gender transformative activities. There is a broad recognition of the challenge of ingrained male centric leadership, and patriarchal attitudes that are major barriers to gender equality. These attitudes are prevalent in all countries to some degree, but in some countries it is more obvious and intransigent to the point where there is an almost total absence of women in political decision-making at any level including

at the village/community level. In other countries steady progress resulting from consistent efforts by government and internal advocates – often supported by donors – can be seen. Involving men is essential to both facilitate acceptance and progress in the broader community, and as a way to mitigate risks of backlash. Some CSOs are making efforts to involve men in their gender transformative activities, for example in the MHH training and GESI training for male government staff. A good knowledge and understanding of the local culture and political economy of gender equality⁵ is essential in order not to inadvertently reinforce power imbalances by involving men.

WfW has also helped open dialogue and design activities to address taboo and stigma around subjects such as Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) and incontinence. The reduction of stigma and increase in understanding around menstruation is a game changer for adolescent girls in particular, in building their confidence and removing barriers to their participation in school and other activities, and can be considered as transformative.

Collecting the information to monitor and measure transformation impacts has been a challenge and taken time to evolve. Stories of transformation, collection of data on adolescent girls, including indicators on menstrual hygiene access (as requested by DFAT) is all starting to contribute to this. A number of other indicators have been introduced by the FC to monitor GESI. At the Fund level this includes budgets for work with RHOs, number of staff with GESI skills, and capacity building. At the project level the IFS/UTS GEM measuring tool is starting to help some CSOs in countries where they are developing this through their research.

Lessons, gaps, and challenges and opportunities

- Several interviewees noted that it was “easier” to work on inclusion of people with disabilities than on gender equality. As one informant noted, when disability is explained – especially by someone who has a disability - people tend to see and understand it as something that (generally) affects others and they can more easily empathise with it. However, everybody conforms to gender norms to some degree, and it is much harder for an individual to recognise and challenge something that is so internal to their own lives and behaviours.
- Another contributing factor to this perception, is that global conversations on gender equality have used the concepts of transforming gender norms and roles for several years. However, the global discourse around disability tends to focus more on rights and inclusion than it does on transformation – or even on empowerment - of people with disabilities. Whereas transforming gender norms requires change by individual men and women themselves as well as changes in the expectations of others, transforming norms around disability tends to focus on changing the perceptions and expectations of other individuals and society. The expectations of transformation therefore seem to be different, and arguably higher around gender.
- The concept of changing gender and social norms within WfW is still quite loosely defined and is clearer in relation to norms that drive stigma and exclusion, than it is to the kind of internalised norms that constrain equality of power and opportunity. To some extent the different local context, and the wide range of WfW activities, mean that the social norms with negative consequences or influence, will be different in each place or project. That said, a clearer theoretical framework for identifying negative social norms and addressing them would be useful and could lead to more targeted approaches.

⁵ See Annex F for a brief summary of how political economy influences gender equality progress

- Tension around leveraging or challenging gender norms is often exacerbated by women themselves. At an individual level in the more traditional communities, conforming to gender norms placed on them by their community can be important for many women's own confidence and self esteem as well as their own safety. Or as one interviewee put it:

“Women find power and safety within their gender roles”

3.4 EOPO 4 Strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in sustainable gender and inclusive WASH by other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), national and international WASH sector actors

The focus on generating knowledge and sharing learning is a core element of the WfW program and the GESI focus is central to this. The strong focus on creating new knowledge and evidence, and capturing and sharing it, puts WfW in a strong position to influence WASH strategies, policies and implementation well beyond the program itself. There are already efforts to share information on global platforms such as at the Stockholm World Water Week (2019 and 2021), and at the Water and WASH Futures 2021: WASH and the COVID-19 Pandemic. This can be further exploited as more results come in. It puts WfW on the cutting edge of knowledge on gender, inclusion, and WASH.

There is a strong and innovative research agenda, especially around gender equality in WASH. The GESI research being undertaken builds on years of previous research and knowledge around gender and WASH, and takes it deeper, with some themes that look at gender power dynamics and transformations. In some countries the ROs are working closely in partnership with the CSO partners that are implementing projects there. This gives the ROs the benefit of hands on implementation experience and opportunities to pilot, and the CSO partners the opportunity to contribute to, and learn from, the research. The partnership seems to work better in some places than others but where it works well it is valuable and adds credibility to the outputs.

The Learning Agenda provides a solid framework to capture the various project GESI activities taking place across different countries. The range of different activities taking place in different contexts is substantial. There was a potential risk that so many examples and anecdotes, in different contexts, could have appeared as a myriad of one off “boutique” initiatives. However, the communities of practice, with lead organisations, and use of different media and formats to capture and share experience, helps to keep it coherent and accessible. This is increasingly important as the projects progress, and more and more information is collected and shared, and needs to be well managed to be effective.

Many of the tools and strategies used in WfW, including the Towards Transformation Strategy, have been developed by the FC in close consultation and collaboration with the RO and CSO partners. This partnership in the development of tools and approaches has helped to build common commitment to them, and also will hopefully share ownership with implementing partners that will continue their work even after WfW ends.

CSO partners are making considerable efforts to capture learning through instruments such as stories of transformation, postcards from the field and learning notes. These are adding up to a rich and valuable depository of learning and information and add a level of context that is difficult to capture in regular reporting. Some are written to formats provided by the FC, which is setting up a unique data source for future analysis.

Information sharing takes place within and beyond WfW partner activities. There are a number of forums for sharing information on GESI and transformative approaches within WfW such as learning forums, online seminars and roundtables, and the WfW Hub. There is

also evidence of information being shared beyond the WfW community, such as global communities of practice within CSO partner organisations, country level communities of practice. Also, the Hub is being used to share information from outside WfW with the WfW community, bringing in new tools and guidelines and research findings. Sharing of experience is especially important and enthusiastically received around areas that are relatively new such as MHH and SGM.

The restrictions on movement and need to communicate remotely due to the pandemic, has pushed the development of communication technology to good effect. The rise in remote working and restrictions on travel and mobility has created many challenges. On the bright side it has pushed the development of communication technology and helped to connect a greater number of people. Field staff that may previously have had less access to seminars and workshops can now join and participate. WfW has used this opportunity to disseminate information more widely and be more inclusive of a wider group of people. While it may still be a self-selecting audience to a degree, and may be less well used once things start to open up again, it does appear to have been a case of looking for the opportunity in a crisis.

Contact between the CSO organisations, research organisations, and especially the DFAT team in Australia, with each of the posts has been good in most cases. Sharing information with DFAT posts can be a challenge for regional programs but steps have been taken to ensure there is good engagement with most posts. This is especially important since there are a number of bilateral activities at post in the WASH sphere. DFAT program managers have played an important role in liaising with posts and other external stakeholders to ensure the GESI progress in WfW is not taking place in a vacuum and can contribute knowledge and learning to other DFAT funded programs, and also to global knowledge more broadly.

Lessons, gaps, and challenges and opportunities

- The research projects are clustered around gender themes more than they are around disability. This opens the opportunity for more research to be done around issues of disability and WASH. For example around the experiences of people with different disabilities, and that experience disability along with other forms of marginalisation such as gender, age, or ethnicity.
- There is also scope to look at the impact of DPO involvement on the access of people with disabilities to WASH services and facilities. This would help to understand if there are any negative impacts for the organisation, and what the longer term impact on the DPOs is in terms of their effectiveness.
- While information is shared with post, there also appears to be gaps in how the CSO partner projects are contributing to and leveraging off other investments that post may be managing. Examples might be the DFAT infrastructure programs with WASH components, or programs addressing gender based violence, women's empowerment, or empowerment of vulnerable groups.

3.5 Assessment of COVID responses

COVID-19 has impacted on everyone's lives and on the way that we all work and live. It has affected the way projects are run and WASH services are delivered, raised new health and hygiene issues that need to be addressed, and impacted on people's ability to WASH access services. Evidence is growing of the disproportionate impacts faced by women who have lost incomes, taken the burden of home-schooling and lockdown impacts, and been increasingly at risk of GBV. Women make up the majority of health workers on the front line of the health crisis, and tend to be the influencers of hygiene behaviours and primary carers

for sick members of their household. For people with disabilities, the crisis has meant further reduction in their mobility and additional challenges in accessing health and other services. Many are particularly vulnerable to the disease but are not in a position to take the extra precautions. WfW CSO partners have responded to the pandemic and the challenges of continuing to deliver WASH projects in several ways.

CSO and RO partners were quick to take steps to ensure the safety of their staff, and the safety of other stakeholders involved in their activities. Most of the international staff based in the countries returned to their home countries and have worked remotely since early in 2020. National staff are also working from home in most cases and have reduced their project related travel. Teams have adapted to communicating on line and national staff, many of whom are women, have been empowered to take on more responsibility at the country level. Project pivots made by CSOs include disseminating messages on health and hygiene, and provision of infrastructure, provision of PPE and emergency supplies to communities. Use of online tools for messaging has been common as well as other forms of mass media campaigns.

CSO partners have worked to support governments. They have helped to identify the most vulnerable and raise awareness of the different impacts felt by men, women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups. Various guidelines and strategies have been developed to help teams and government identify those most vulnerable or affected by the crisis. Guidance on practical approaches that enhance inclusion and are empowering and transformative have been produced and disseminated. New ways have needed to be found to ensure participation where lockdowns or social distancing measures are in place.

COVID-19 responses had the potential to further reinforce traditional roles of women by placing additional responsibility on women for ensuring hand washing and other behaviour changes in the household. The urgency of the situation, and need to achieve outcomes effectively, meant that there was a risk of reinforcing norms in COVID responses. The tension between leveraging gender norms and transforming gender norms was evident in some of the activities. Other CSOs/ROs had made special efforts to ensure that communication and messaging materials did not reinforce gender norms, for example with pictures of fathers helping their children to wash their hands and dealing with disposal of infant faeces. One of the challenges mentioned is the need for information campaigns to be relatable and therefore reflect norms, and a concern that moving too far from this will lessen the impact of the messaging.

There appears to have been a good inclusion of people with disabilities in COVID responses. There are a number of examples of CSOs including people with disabilities in their responses. For example, in one case the CSO had helped people with disabilities and SGM to pivot their businesses as many were involved in service industries such as massage and salons and could no longer work. They were helped to transition to making face masks. Other projects have helped to ensure targeting of support to vulnerable households, and that additional services, for example, for hand washing, are accessible. Another example is of a special focus on the MHH needs of women with disabilities at times of crisis. Collection of data on prevalence of disability has proved useful beyond WfW in response to the pandemic and other crises.

CSO Partners have also responded to the increased potential for domestic and gender based violence. A number of messaging campaigns and activities have presented messages aimed at reducing the risk of violence against women and children and providing information and referral pathways to survivors.

4 Concluding remarks and recommendations

4.1 Factors contributing to success

The overall progress towards the EOPOs is positive and encouraging. This section reflects on the progress made to draw out some of the key factors that have contributed to the success.

Consistent direction and expectations from DFAT. DFAT's initial strong commitment and high aspirations for GESI in the program has been maintained. The initial investment design placed a strong emphasis on gender and social inclusion as central to the implementation of the program. DFAT has continued to stress the importance of this and disseminate information about the GESI approaches in the project. By continuing to ask questions DFAT keeps up the focus on GESI.

"GESI is normally considered to be cross cutting but in WfW it is not cross cutting – it IS the thing"

Alignment with partner organisations values and principles. The CSO partner organisations are rights based organisations, many of which have long experience of promoting gender equality and inclusion. In some cases the CSOs were already at the forefront of inclusive development, and they contributed to developing the tools and approaches developed for WfW. Also, some of the ROs have been at the forefront of analytical work on GESI and WASH for many years and WfW has provided the opportunities to build on this and take it further.

Investment in specific skills and resources: The FC team has maintained a high level of GESI skills within the team to support partners in GESI as well as working with others to bring in specific skills as needed. The involvement of CBM and Edge Effect as advisers in the FC team has been especially effective. Training provided by both organisations has been described as "eye-opening" and has influenced individuals within organisations. Some have described it as transformational experience and have become passionate advocates, especially on disability inclusion but also in several cases on SGM. Several CSOs also have bilateral arrangements with one or other of these organisations to provide training and help improve inclusiveness of their programs beyond WfW, and in other regions of the world. Some of these existed pre-WfW and some were entered into as a result of their work on WfW. Many of the CSO partners also have their own GESI specialists working on the projects who help to ensure that policies and rhetoric are turned into action, and support other team members so that GESI becomes part of everyone's work.

Clear strategy and action plans for GESI: The Towards Transformation GESI strategy is novel in that it addresses mind-sets and organisational cultures through the principles, and sets out clear expectations of each of the implementing partners (DFAT, FC, ROs, and CSOs). The internalisation of the principles of the strategy by all partners came across in the interviews. Each of the CSO partners prepared action plans based on baseline analysis that has helped them to target Do no Harm efforts and ensure inclusive implementation. Starting with clear GESI ambitions has helped CSOs to stay on track (within the challenges of COVID-19) and for their progress to be monitored by the FC.

Research and learning: The Learning Agenda sets out a clear framework for knowledge sharing and learning and is supported by an impressive research program. A considerable amount of written material has been produced by the FC as well as by the individual CSO and RO partners. This material collectively shows a depth of thought and careful consideration of the issues as well as capturing learning from pilots.

Women’s leadership: Several key informants also noted the high percentage of women in key leadership and management positions in the FC and CSO partner organisations who are especially committed to GESI in WASH and who, in their view, had contributed to the progress. WfW has created the space for these women (and the male advocates of GESI) to push boundaries and drive change. They have also become role models to others in their teams, as well as for their RHO partners, and the government staff and communities that they work with.

4.2 Recommendations

Sustainability and scalability

The WfW approach, and the commitment of the CSO and RO partners to inclusion, is achieving much in improving the access of women, people with disabilities, and marginalised groups to WASH services and facilities, and using WASH as an entry point to transforming people’s lives. However to have a long term impact the GESI approach needs to be sustainable and scalable.

One entry point is through other on-going investments and relationships that DFAT has with governments, for example through their bilateral infrastructure, health or education projects. The reality is that these projects are unlikely to ever achieve the same depth of careful engagement with communities that CSO partners have achieved, and will be driven by different incentives including cost effectiveness and meeting targets. It will be important to identify interventions that have the most “bang for the buck” that can be easily adopted by government, and build the case for doing so. Accessibility of WASH facilities in schools and health centers, and integrating MHH into teacher training and curriculum would appear to be low hanging fruits, for example. On the other hand, there may be things that governments lack the capacity, resources, time or staff to undertake. Identifying those things that can realistically be done by government within their constraints, are more likely to be received favourably and supported by bilateral programs working with government. Multilaterals such as the World Bank, and ADB are also likely to be interested in picking up and pursuing the low hanging fruits in their programs.

Another promising entry point is building the capacity of RHOs in WASH and GESI so that they can both continue after the program, and expand beyond the current project sites. Even if the CSO partners are successful in raising the awareness of government staff and integrating GESI into policy, strategy and guidelines, the on-going work of seeing that these are actually implemented will need to rest with organisations on the ground and that have networks and influence to hold governments accountable over the longer term. The RHOs have the potential to be advocacy groups that lobby for budget allocations and monitor delivery in line with inclusive guidelines. There are however, still a number of unknowns discussed below that need to be considered before this is proposed as a strategy that can be expanded.

At the community level, long term sustainability of transformative progress advances will largely be impacted by the success in influencing norms. Transformation occurs over a long period of time and the influence that can be achieved in the timeframe of a program is limited. Ensuring that strategies to influence gender norms are as effective as possible is important.

These and other recommendations are discussed more below.

Working with other DFAT programs

A consistent approach across DFAT funded programs is needed to reinforce messages, especially with government on GESI in WASH systems strengthening. Good efforts have been made to involve post and share information with them.

There may also be more opportunities within countries to links with other DFAT funded programs. In different countries there are projects such as those addressing gender-based violence, or challenging gender norms through working with religious organisations and programs. Sharing experiences, contacts and tools with these programs could be really useful for the CSO partners. DFAT funded programs that are working on strengthening local governance also hold knowledge and understanding of the entry points for women to influence resources allocation and decision-making relating to WASH.

- Establish a community of practice within DFAT on GESI in WASH to ensure that all DFAT funded WASH programs are sending consistent messages.
- Involve relevant staff at post beyond those engaged on WASH to identify other opportunities.
- Hold periodic seminars or round tables at post for CSO and RO partners to share their experience.

Working with RHOs

Working with RHOs has certainly opened a range of opportunities and yielded some lessons. More work needs to be done to refine this as an effective strategy for inclusion. Some of the questions that need to be explored and could be included as future research topics or analysis by the FC are the following:

- Will training in inclusion and gender equality be enough to influence the more traditional women's organisations beyond their activities in WfW projects? Given their ability to influence, what other approaches might help to promote a more progressive agenda for example by expanding their leadership to include more younger progressive women, or including engagement with more progressive feminist organisations?
- What is the impact of their engagement in WASH activities on the normal operating focus and mandates of DPOs? Does it help to strengthen their influence and status or divert them from other core mandates?
- What effect does the involvement of DPOs have on the inclusion of people with disabilities at the community level? Does it change attitudes and policies enough to impact implementation and service provision in the absence of a CSO project?
- How do DPOs approach issues of intersectionality, are they inclusive marginalised people with disabilities such as those from SGM or ethnic minority communities, old people and women?
- What model of engagement and funding mechanism are most effective?

Other specific recommendations for working with RHOs in the short term include:

- Ensure representation of women is expanded in the women's organisations that CSO partners are working with to include young and old women, women with disabilities, ethnic or religious minority women.
- Look for ways that progressive feminist organisations can contribute, for example through training, supporting DPO and WO partners to respectively have a stronger gender lens (DPO) and disability lens (WO), and by finding ways to support these intra-RHO connections in WASH decision-making.

Social and gender norms

Although there is some awareness of gender norms and how these act as key constraints on opportunities and equality, there are no specific tools or guidance for influencing them. There are a number of frameworks for understanding social and gender norms and how these can be influenced. Identifying specific norms that could be influenced in activities would help to give more focus and more targeted strategies could be developed that include things like amplifying positive deviance and identifying and working with reference groups. It might be possible to adapt these strategies to focus more specifically on negative social norms that impact on people, especially women with disabilities.

- Develop a gender and social norms framework for WASH
- Provide guidance on strategies that can be used to influence norms
- Adopt a monitoring system that can be used across WfW projects and that will help identify successful strategies (the WASH-GEM framework may be the basis of this).

Transformation and empowerment of people with disabilities

Language around transformation and empowerment are commonly used with regard to gender equality and women, but are less commonly used with regard to people with disabilities where the focus is more on rights and inclusion. The strength of the transformation strategy and focus in WfW, and the partnership that exists with CBM, puts it in a good position to push forward the barriers to develop a framework along the lines of the WASH-GEM framework for working more strategically on this.

- Initiate a dialogue with CBM as to whether this would be useful and how best to involve partners.

Managing knowledge

A huge amount of evidence and knowledge has already been collected and more will come through in the remaining years of the project. The Learning Agenda has put some structure and organisation into managing this so that it can be widely disseminated. It is a valuable trove that can be mined and analysed to draw out common themes and lessons.

- If not already scheduled, plan an in depth review of the Stories of Transformation once enough have been collected to allow this.

Annex A. Terms of Reference

Term:	29 October 2020 to 11 March 2021
Background:	<p>The Water for Women Fund (the ‘Fund’) is the Australian Government’s flagship \$110.6 million (2018-2022) water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) program. It was announced by the Prime Minister of Australia in September 2016 at the High Level Panel on Water (HLPW). The announcement recognised the critical role that improvements to WASH plays to address poverty and contribute to economic and human development. The Fund responds to increasing evidence that gendered approaches to WASH programming contribute to more effective and sustainable WASH outcomes, as well as offer an entry point to improve gender equality and women’s well-being, voice, leadership and economic empowerment. The use of explicit gender and socially inclusive approaches in the Australian Government’s commitment to this Fund is regarded globally and in the WASH sector as progressive, innovative and an important contribution to economic and social development in the region.</p> <p>The Fund is managed by DFAT as part of the aid program and GHD Pty Ltd is contracted to run Fund coordination. It will improve access to safe and affordable water and improve sanitation and hygiene practices for an estimated 2.9 million people in the Indo-Pacific region. Gender equality and social inclusion are a core focus. Under the Fund, 9 civil society organisations are delivering 18 projects across 15 countries in the Indo-Pacific. The Fund includes \$10 million for WASH research through a competitive grants process and is supporting 5 research organisations to deliver 11 research projects (see Water for Women Fund CSO Projects and Water for Women Fund Research Projects).</p> <p>Since April 2020, the Fund has pivoted its CSO projects towards COVID19 with approval to utilise up to \$100,000 of existing funding for each project. Subsequently on 18 May 2020, the Minister for Foreign Affairs approved additional COVID19 funding of about \$3 million. These additional funds were disbursed by the end of the 2019-20 financial year. Fund management is now negotiating with CSOs, the work to be done over the next 6 months, using these additional funds.</p> <p>Intermediate and End of Program outcomes, and additional details on the Fund are presented in Annex B at the end of these Terms of Reference.</p>
Purpose and objectives:	<p>The purpose of the Water for Women (WfW) GESI mid-term review is to assess progress towards the achievement of end-of-program outcomes; identify and capture learning from implementation; better understand gaps, challenges and opportunities; and identify adjustments/improvements as necessary based on these findings for the remainder of the Fund. The mid-term review will also identify opportunities to strengthen communication of results and achievements under the Fund and better understand the Fund’s COVID-19 responses including the effectiveness of GESI interventions in COVID-19 pivots and responses.</p> <p>The mid-term review will complement the recent Independent Review of the Fund. One of the recommendations from this review was the need for a more in-depth review to capture learnings from GESI initiatives (mainstreamed and targeted) across the Fund to date.</p> <p>The primary audience of the review is DFAT. A secondary audience includes the Fund Coordinator (FC) and implementing partners.</p> <p>The key activities and objectives of this review are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct in-depth analysis of Fund progress on GESI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review implementation of the current Water for Women Fund program against the GESI End of Program Outcomes as stated in the Water for Women Fund Design Document. • Identify lessons learned and critical GESI issues in the program’s implementation that could be addressed in the final 2 years (to December 2022) of the program. 2. Hold virtual GESI Roundtable to consider possible actions to improve GESI Fund implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the support of the WfW GESI Adviser – undertake a virtual roundtable with key stakeholders to review recommendations to improve GESI Fund implementation • Roundtable discussion will inform final version of review report. <p>3. Present recommendations for Fund management</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make recommendations on possible actions to improve GESI Fund implementation. <p>4. Develop mid-term review report</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide DFAT and key partners with findings, recommendations and key lessons to inform implementation of the remainder of the program <p>GESI Focus Areas:</p> <p>Four key areas of GESI prominence were highlighted in the recent independent review. It is suggested that these are given high emphasis in the GESI review, particularly considering that there is a strong indicator focus on two of them in particular in the DFAT Partnerships for Recovery framework (women’s empowerment and social protection/GBV). Disability inclusion is also a key aspect in COVID responses by many Fund partners, and in their wider WfW projects.</p> <p>GESI progress is measured against the four fund outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Systems strengthening.</i> Strengthened national and subnational WASH sector systems with greater emphasis on gender and social inclusion (see #4 below) 2. <i>Leave No one behind.</i> Increased equitable, universal access to and use of sustainable WASH services, particularly for marginalised communities and community members; 3. <i>Transformative change.</i> Strengthened gender equality and social inclusion in households, communities and institutions; 4. <i>Knowledge and Learning.</i> Strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in sustainable gender and inclusive WASH by other CSOs, national and international WASH sector actors.
<p>Review Requirements</p>	<p>The review questions (indicative questions proposed in Annex C of these Terms of Reference) will be addressed through a combination of program documentation review, virtual roundtable and key informant interviews. The review will proceed as per the following phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Inception</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception briefing: provided by DFAT Water Section to the GESI Specialist to highlight the key priorities and expectations of the review, provide relevant documentation and clarify and issues/questions. 2. <u>Planning</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and finalise a Review Plan, articulating key review questions, review methodology and approach to data collection, timeline and identification of key informants for the review. 3. <u>Data Collection</u> <p><u>Document Review</u></p> <p>A systematic document review of information and documentation related to the Fund will enable an assessment of country contexts, reported progress against planned activities, and reported constraints, achievements and opportunities. Documents to be reviewed are listed in Annex D of these TOR.</p> <p><u>Interviews and Roundtable</u></p> <p>The Reviewer will work with DFAT and GHD to identify relevant stakeholders for interviews and a GESI roundtable.</p> <p>Consultations with stakeholders will occur in October/November 2020. Interviews will be conducted by email, video communications or telephone. Face to face interviews are not possible due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and social distancing requirements. The actual format of the interview and roundtable to be considered and finalised in the Review Plan.</p> <p>Interviews for the Review will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DFAT Project Staff

- Fund Coordinator Staff
- **Partners/Counterparts**
 - Partner CSO and Research Organisations Management Staff
 - Relevant Staff from counterparts in country where program is being implemented (if safe and technically possible under local Covid19 pandemic restrictions)
 - Fund Partnership Group
 - GESI Advisers/officers
 - Partnership Specialist
 - Independent Consultant for Mid-Term Review of Fund

Interviews will, where possible, select a range of performance levels to provide the reviewer with a broader view of progress as well as an assessment of successes and failures.

Key Ethical Considerations

Key ethical considerations relate to (i) consent, (ii) cultural appropriateness and (iii) feedback of findings.

- i. The review will seek verbal consent and ensure key informants and local partners consulted are adequately informed of the purpose of the review, its potential outcomes and consequences, and type of information sought from them.
- ii. Engagement at local level will be undertaken in a gender responsive, culturally sensitive manner, ensuring opportunity and enquiring on women's participation (and facilitating informal groups or meetings).

4. Analysis

The Reviewer will maintain notes of interviews and discussions and then synthesise the key observations, evidence and learnings from the Fund.

5. Reporting

Reporting for the review will include:

- Review Plan: at commencement of review, the reviewer will draft a review plan for agreement with DFAT that may refine the draft ToR presented here along with structure of interviews and the roundtable.
- Aide Memoire: at the completion of the interview and review phase, the reviewer will present preliminary findings to DFAT, Fund Partnership Group and Fund Coordinator for the purposes of validation and refinement.
- Draft Report: following the interview phase, the Reviewer will prepare a draft report to be submitted to DFAT for review and comment.
- Final Report: feedback on the draft report will be reviewed and assimilated or addressed before preparing a final version of the report.
- In consultation with the Fund Coordinator, DFAT will consider making a copy or summary of the GESI review available on the WfW Hub (website) to inform key stakeholders of findings.

Limitations

The following limitations are expected and will be mitigated through pragmatic design and including them transparently in the review report

- **Time and resources**: the rigour of the data gathering and analysis processes for this review will be constrained by the time available (twenty days).
- **Access**: since the Fund covers a wide geographic area in the Indo-Pacific the evaluation will only be exposed to perspectives from a limited range of stakeholders/locations. Access is further restricted due by communications, travel and physical distancing limitations implemented during COVID19 restrictions in Australia and country locations.
- **Measurement** of sector system changes are difficult to describe and assure. Systematic analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, including direct quotes from informants, will be used to make the most value of the information collected.
- COVID 19 limitations on team structure, travel and meeting formats as well as disruptions to workplaces and communities add additional limitations to this review.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attribution: initiatives such as the Fund are implemented through CSO and Research partners such that multiple factors contribute to and/or detract from the achievement of outcomes and outputs. The attribution of outcomes to particular Fund interventions will be difficult to determine. |
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Annex B. Key review question mapping

Equity Criterion Definition: A measure of how well the program met the needs of a diverse range of beneficiaries including women, people with disabilities and people of diverse sexualities

Alignment between Fund ToC and Equity Criteria: Equity questions focus on issues of design and examine the extent to which activities are reaching the most excluded and marginalised beneficiaries

EOPO	Towards Transformation	Intermediate outcomes	Key questions (overarching)	Focus area questions	Sources for review
1. Strengthened national and subnational WASH sector systems with greater emphasis on gender, social inclusion, safely managed WASH and water security. ^[1] _[SEP]	Goal 1: Catalyse and support change towards inclusive and transformative WASH	<p>Increased capacity and agency of governments, private sector, community-based organisations and communities, in planning, investing and delivering sustainable, inclusive WASH services</p> <p>Greater integration of gender and socially inclusive approaches by governments, private sector, community-based organisations and communities</p>	As a result of the investment, do partners increasingly treat gender equality as a priority through their own policies and processes?	<p>Systems strengthening</p> <p>CSOs: What steps have been taken to strengthen the organisation specifically to implement the GESI approach in WfW activities, ?</p> <p>Are these steps just being used in WfW activities or are they being introduced more systematically across the organisation and into other WASH programs?</p> <p>How has the organisation helped to strengthen their local (CSO) delivery partners to integrate a GESI and transformative approach in their WfW implementation, and do you see a change in the organisations approach to GESI outside of WfW?</p> <p>What changes have occurred at the community level to integrate a GESI approach in the planning, implementation, and maintenance of WASH activities?</p> <p>Government/private sector: how do government or private sector partners react to the GESI and transformative approaches of WfW? Are they</p>	<p>FC</p> <p>Key informant CSOs</p> <p>Written question to non selected CSOs</p> <p>MEL</p>

				showing interest in adopting GESI strategies into their own planning, management, and delivery of WASH programs?	
2. Increased equitable, universal access to and use of sustainable WASH services, particularly for marginalised communities and community members. ^[1] _[SEP]			<p>Does analysis of gender equality gaps and opportunities substantially inform the investment?</p> <p>Does the M&E system collect sex-disaggregated data and include indicators to measure gender equality outcomes?</p> <p>To date, how has the Fund contributed to increased equitable access to, and use of, WASH services? How can this be improved?</p>	<p><i>Inclusion vs transformation</i></p> <p>Are more transformative outcomes influencing the effectiveness (inclusiveness and access) and sustainability of WASH activities?</p> <p><i>Disability Inclusion.</i></p> <p>Does the Fund actively involve people with disabilities and/or disabled person’s organisations in planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation?</p> <p>Does the Fund identify and address barriers to inclusion and opportunities for participation for people with disabilities to enable them to benefit equally from the aid investment?</p>	<p>FC GSI</p> <p>FC WASH</p> <p>MEL</p> <p>Key informant CSOs</p>
Strengthened gender equality and social inclusion in households, communities and institutions. ^[1] _[SEP]	Goal 3: Help to push the boundaries of socially transformative practice in WASH.		<p>Does analysis of gender equality gaps and opportunities substantially inform the investment?</p> <p>Risks to gender equality are identified and appropriately managed?</p> <p>To date, how has the Fund furthered gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) including transformative equity?</p>	<p><i>Inclusion vs transformation</i></p> <p>Which GESI approaches are showing signs of leading to more transformative outcomes?</p> <p>Is there a link between the level of investment in internal capacity building of organisations and more transformative practice in GESI in WASH programming?</p> <p><i>Do no harm</i></p> <p>What processes are in place to mitigate harm and monitor the effectiveness of specific Do No Harm strategies?</p>	<p>FC GSI</p> <p>MEL</p> <p>Key informant CSOs</p> <p>Written question to non selected CSOs</p>

			<p>Does the M&E system collect sex-disaggregated data and include indicators to measure gender equality outcomes?</p> <p>Is there sufficient expertise and budget allocation to achieve gender equality related outputs of the investment?</p> <p>How can the approaches to GESI be improved?</p> <p>How does country context influence progress and what strategies are adopted in less conducive environments</p>	<p>Have there been any unintended consequences as a result of challenging norms that support gendered and social inequalities?</p> <p>How have harmful practices and impacts been identified and addressed through a Do No Harm lens?</p> <p>Norms change:</p> <p>How are partners defining, measuring and monitoring norms change?</p> <p>Can we see any processes that are leading to tangible results in norms change?</p>	<p>Case studies Pakistan and Cambodia</p> <p>Research organisations</p>
<p>Strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in sustainable gender and inclusive WASH by other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), national and international WASH sector actors. </p>	<p>Goal 2: Generate and communicate knowledge, learning and evidence</p>	<p>Documentation and sharing of gender and socially inclusive evidence and effective practices with other CSOs, national and international sector actors</p>		<p>Inclusion vs transformation</p> <p>Which GESI approaches are showing signs of leading to more transformative outcomes?</p>	<p>FC K&L and MEL</p> <p>FC GSI</p> <p>Key informant CSOs</p> <p>Research Organisations</p>

Other questions to be considered and reported on by the Fund:

Fund level inquiry questions on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and equity – some, but not all, covered in the above.

Fund outcome indicators for each EOPO

Annex C. Selection of countries and CSO informants

Nine partner organisations are implementing projects over 15 countries. Given the time limitations this was narrowed down to five countries: one from South Asia, two from Southeast Asia, and two from the Pacific for this review. Partner organisations working within these countries were identified as the key informants. The selection of the organisations and countries took account of the following:

- *Different country contexts for promoting gender equality:* The countries in which projects are being implemented vary considerably in size, population, stage of economic development and cultural and religious contexts. These and other factors influence the level of gender inequality in the country and the extent to which governments and societies have made progress towards greater equality. The countries were selected to reflect countries where progress in improving gender equality and empowering women is being made and that present a more conducive environment for partner organisations to implement GESI approaches, as well as other countries where there are much greater challenges to be overcome. This context of the enabling environment helped to contextualise the progress made and results achieved in the partners' journeys towards transformative approaches. Annex D maps the countries against various indicators of gender equality and was used to ensure a range of different enabling environments. Several of the CSO partner organisations implementing projects in these countries were also working in other countries, hence they were able to also contribute valuable experience and comparison from these countries as well.
- *Organisational background in women's empowerment and promotion of gender equality and social inclusion:* Some of the partner organisations have strong backgrounds in, and are known for, their progressive approaches to promoting gender equality and social inclusion in their projects, while others are still gaining experience in the transformative approach promoted by WfW. The five CSO partners interviewed include those that are more familiar with GESI and transformative approaches, as well as those for whom such a strong focus on this is still relatively new.
- *Delivery models:* "Policy dilution" is a specific challenge faced by donor organisations trying to turn inclusion and transformative change approaches into reality on the ground. DFAT works with GHD, GHD works with CSO partner organisations, that in turn work with local delivery partners – either a local branch of their own organisation or a separate local organisation. At the point of delivery these local delivery partners will be the ones working with local community leaders and institutions. While DFAT may have designed the project with a strong focus on GESI, keeping the same depth of intention through to the point of delivery through several layers of partnership is a recognised challenge. The focus on strengthening national and sub national WASH sector systems provides the basis to address this in the project, however the extent to which this has happened for GESI was an area of exploration in the evaluation. Hence, the selection of CSOs to participate in the evaluation include those with different layers of partnership and delivery models. Some are delivering projects through local branches of their organisation, and others through separate local NGO partners.

The five countries selected were Nepal, Vietnam, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

Annex D. List of Key Documents

- Water for Women Design Document
- Water for Women M&E Framework and related infographics
- Water for Women Knowledge and Learning Strategy and Learning Agenda
- Water for Women Towards Transformation Strategy (GESI strategy)
- Gender and Social Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool and Reports
- 6 monthly and annual Water for Women Progress Reports
- Field Monitoring Visit Reports
- DFAT Aid Quality Checks and Partner Performance Assessments
- COVID19 approved proposals for initial pivot and for new funding
- COVID19 response updates and initial reporting
- DFAT COVID19 policies and guidelines
- Independent Review of Progress of Water For Women Fund and COVID-19 Response - August 2020
- Civil Society Organisation Partner Project Design Documents (PDDs)
- Research Project Designs / Plans
- CSO and Research organisation progress reports
- Knowledge products
- Knowledge and Learning Event Reports

Annex E. List of contributors

Organisation	Proposed interviewees	Focus of interview
DFAT GEB	Felicity Errington and/or Annemarie Reerink	DFAT approach and experience to GESI and transformative approaches
FC Gender and MEL Program quality, K&L, and WASH	Jose Mott, GSI Advisor Heather Brown, GSI STA, Stuart Raetz, MEL Advisor Alison Baker, Team leader, Kate Orr, K&L Advisor, and Matt Bond, WASH Advisor	Progress on implementing GESI GESI results reporting Lessons from research and link to technical quality
Partner organisations SNV (Nepal) ghalcrow@snv.org Thrive Networks Lynn.Foden@thrivenetworks.org Plan International John.Kelleher@plan.org.au World Vision Shiv.nair@worldvision.com.au Wateraid Tom.muller@wateraid.org.au	Gabrielle Halcrow, WfW Program Manager Ratan Budhathoki, Program Manager, Nepal Tshering Choden GSI Advisor, Nepal, Bhutan and Laos Harishova Gurung, GSI in Nepal Lynn Foden (CEO) Hanh Nguyen John Kelleher WfW Program Manager Lee Long WfW Silvia Program Manager in Indonesia Shiv Nair WfW Project Manager Chloe Morrison Kendra Derausseau Navara Kiene, Co-country Director Pip Robertson, Equality and Inclusion Officer Sharon Pondoros, GESI, PNG	Progress in implementing GSI strategies and meeting EOPOs, COVID pivot, examples, challenges, etc
Research partners UTS (range of countries and projects in pacific and SEA) IWI (based in Nepal)	Juliet Willetts Alok Rajouria Manita Raut Gitta Shrestha	Research findings, what's new, what differs across countries Findings, receptivity of Nepal stakeholders, potential influence on who? How?
Others CBM	Aleisha Carroll	Various

Independent reviewer	Marcus Howard	
Nepal Apang Sangh, Sarlahi, Nepal	Mr. Birendra Ray, President Ms. Diwani Ghimire, member	
Bhutan Network for Empowering Women	Phuntshok Chhoden	

Written responses were received from:

IRC Team in Pakistan
iDE Global team in Cambodia
Plan PNG (AROB) Gail Pigolo
Plan PNG Live and Learn (New Ireland) Mat Johnston
Plan (Solomon Islands) Angellah Anisi

Annex F. Virtual Roundtable Summary

Participants

Thirty-eight participants joined the online virtual roundtable. Participants were from DFAT, the Fund Coordinator and head office and field offices of the CSOs and ROs.

Agenda

- Welcome and scene setting
- Presentation on high-level summary findings
- High-level comments and discussion
- Discussion in groups
- Report back in plenary
- Next steps and roundtable evaluation

Mentimeter results

Any surprises in the report?

- No surprises- not really- no major surprises-no surprises
- Reflected our conversation, no surprises
- Not yet attention to intersectionality
- Most confirms what we thought
- Positive message
- Progressive and traditional women's organisations – opportunities in this space
- Pleasantly surprised by the progress on disability inclusion and SGM
- Collaboration and learning under the Learning Agenda not woven in
- No mention of SGM despite the support from Edge Effect
- Any data analysed on GESI
- This is building off what has been on-going
- Recognising that some Women's organisations actually reinforce gender norms and need to be aware of this
- That partners found it easier to work on disability inclusion than some gender equality issues
- Learning agenda is key for future transformative change.
- Voices of people associated with GESI groups don't seem to be represented in the data
- It is a well-written report, somehow I feel we need to avoid comparing disability inclusion vis-à-vis gender equality. It is important to understand disabled people are also women. This may require more in-depth analysis
- Less focus on marginalisation/intersectionality than anticipated
- The finding that organisations found working on social norms regarding disability was "easier" than for gender equality
- Would be good to see where the CSOs are on the continuum visually
- Other social determinants that impact gender from caste to traditional beliefs
- The ability to factor in every aspect that is essential for GESI and being near universal in terms of observations and learning
- Expected results are achieved and captured
- Any change story on SGM

- Would be good to know a bit about the gender lens within disability inclusion
- The importance of the role of GESI-advisors and staff at project level
- More analysis on intersectionality
- GSI and livelihoods
- Voices of women, people with disabilities and their representative orgs
- More specifics on which dimension of GE progress more than others and why
- Recommendation around disability inclusion even if just capturing what works well
- Stronger recognition in the report of the benefits of collaboration amongst partners
- Gender, disability, sgm mentioned – but inclusion is broader in context (Eg. Ethnicity, informal dwellers, excluded castes,) intersectionality
- Important role and leadership of GESI advisors and staff at project level
- Can we map the continuum?
- Dynamics of social exclusion/inclusion in WASH including social status, age, wealth, poverty, geography etc.
- Political economy of GE needs more explanation
- MHM and disability – how well is the program improving access to MHM for women and girls with disabilities?

Anything missing?

- Intersectionality – especially youth/young women’s agency in local WASH decision-making
- Some more concrete recommendations for CSO programming – several for DFAT though
- Focus on monitoring and measuring change re GESI
- Would like to see reporting on how the CSOs are operationalising intersectionality in particular vis-à-vis government partners
- Recommendation around disability inclusion even if it is about capturing what has been working well
- A gender lens to the findings on disability inclusion and maybe the need for relooking at internal CSO gender and inclusion composition especially in implementation at ground level
- Fantastic collaboration and sharing between partners on GESI through many channels inc the Learning Agenda, real strength of the fund and moves it beyond the traditional grant program
- What are the challenges of inclusion of SGM people
- GSI and its impact on their livelihoods
- More on collaboration between women’s organisations, DPOs and other partners who particularly advocate on inclusion and equality, How can we promote this ?
- Deeper understanding for the “policy dilution” that was noted. Was phrased “policy dilution by some local partners” which appears to put the onus of this issue squarely on implementers rather than policy developers
- Recommendations: didn’t feel disability and marginalisation came through
- Understanding relationship between Governments and norms and governance on gender
- I would be interested in hearing more detail about challenging negative social norms/ taking a DNH approach so as not to replicate women’s WASH burden
- CSO transformational change is supported by research and learning. Is this now working well in the Fund?
- Deeper private sector focus? Start shifting focus on climate change GESI vulnerability?

- Inclusion beyond gender, disability, sgm, Example, ethnicity, caste, excluded groups, poverty intersections.
- Linking national level gender indices to project level progress in selected countries
- Important role and leadership of GESI staff at project level across countries
- Expansion on why working on gender is tougher than disability inclusion, and some specific recommendations on this would be helpful
- Are we really moving towards a holistic approach? Challenges outlined in outcome 1 on gender and systems strengthening didn't clearly come through in the recommendations – a very important area

Anything not clear?

Regional and country differences

Recommendations would be great to see these strengthened for the benefit not only of DFAT but Fund partners

How the success factors worked possibly with a case study to illustrate it

How data was analysed to reach findings and recommendations

A question why this particular DFAT department prioritise GESI as core while others put it as cross-cutting

Are we really moving towards holistic approaches, at community or sector level? Combining the various aspects of inclusion and equity, like economic empowerment, violence, voice, learning

Role of GESI staff at project and country level and their important leadership role

Actioning the recommendation but that is for the Fund to figure out

Distinction of progressive women's organisations

Role of DFAT post in facilitating cross-learning on GESI across DFAT-funded projects/projects in-country

Change story for illustration of the success

What is ground breaking research?

Do they have organisations chosen actually have a strong base to begin with? Does this bias findings?

Diversity of disability – has that been considered?

Engaging with organisations outside traditional women's groups will have benefits but could be problematic if we are working with government systems. What other approaches could be encouraged?

- Reasons for "policy dilution" In the report it was phrased as "policy dilution by some local partners" which seems to frame this as an issue on the part of implementers rather than policy developers. Could policy be improved?
- Political economy of GE needs to be explained
- Is there weight or prioritisation for the recommendations?
- How DFAT can integrate intentional collaboration between RHOs and CSOs to strengthen GESI
- Not clear what is the distinction between traditional vs progressive women's organisations
- What are the components and scale of the continuum

- Intended use of the review by DFAT
- Given the diversity of country contexts and CSO organisations we can cherish the learnings and appreciate the differences that produce them
- Many questions asked: what was the priority?
- Recommendation 1 – very true but what needs to be done? What might some solutions to progress?
- Any findings/recommendations on value for money or efficiency?
- There are some key issues in the report for DFAT on how to use the learnings from the review to contribute to overall program effectiveness

How do you feel about this workshop?

- Excellent interaction
- Positive
- Engaged
- Challenged, inspired, ready
- Rich discussion and encouraging
- Insightful and rich
- Useful and informative
- Informative
- Illuminating
- It feels like a family with many opportunities to communicate
- Good to hear the views, questions, and suggestions of WfW partners
- Great opportunity to hear from a range of partners and stakeholders
- Great but brief
- Really inspired to hear [some of the] comments
- Positive, engaging, more work to be done
- Inspiring
- Informative, engaging, great discussion
- Engaging
- Great to collaborate with other fund partners and GEDSI advocates
- Very insightful and through stimulating workshop
- Look forward to continuing the conversation
- Great roundtable! Thanks for the opportunity to engage
- Looking forward to this conversation continuing
- Collaborative and sharin of learning
- Interactive! Engaging! Succinct!
- Sharing progress and learning
- Inspiring key learning
- Always good to be around smart and passionate colleagues
- Thank you – good workshop
- Follow up discussion will be helpful on some of the issues raised
- Great team work and provide opportunity for everyone to speak up. Having more clear goals to lead the conversation would have been helpful
- Engaging and reflective, some good observations on what is missing etc. Group presentations were telling given the common challenges everyone is facing on integrating GESI

Breakout group summaries

Group 1: Gender and social norms

How can we be more effective at shifting harmful gender and social norms through hygiene promotion? How to engage men and boys to change their behavior? Empowering PWD and increasing access and use of WASH services?

- Important to reflect on how we deliver behavior change communications. How are we promoting handwashing messages? Are we promoting positive roles effectively? Are we pushing the boundaries in our communications?
- Reflect on the importance of intersectionality in communications. Are we employing communication means that are accessible and using content that is relatable? Are the voices of women and girls and PWD being represented?
- Important to be conscious of language and use of images. Using images that include men doing traditional roles. Visual cues are important. Who is giving the message? Is the hygiene promotion done by men?
- Accessibility should be considered in communications materials. Important to represent people that people can relate to. Are people with disabilities involved in promotion activities?
- Leadership for change. Engaging women in business development activities. Involving not just women but also their family members (husbands).
- Integrating WASH with other sectors is key. Gender training to staff delivering activities is also key.
- Importance of diagnosing and measuring gender norm change effectively.

Sharing the Funds K&L on transformative GESI in WASH: What's coming out of the Fund that we think can have the most influence on the global WASH community? How can these opportunities be strengthened?

- The Fund is an excellent example of mainstreaming gender into WASH programming. Gender is mainstreamed across the Fund and the approach is well integrated.
- M&E tools coming from the Fund are valuable to the sector- tools for understanding and measuring shift in gender norms would be useful. SAT is a valuable tool.
- Partnerships with Right-holder organisations. The partnerships and knowledge transfer between gender and WASH practitioners is a good story to tell.
- Involvement of WASH with other sectors

Group 2. A more transformative approach with women's organisations:

What have we learned about supporting traditional women's organisations with whom we work to be more pro-active in gender equality and transforming gender norms?

Where are the opportunities for working with more progressive women's organisations, and what changes do we hope to see as a result?

- **Learnings from working with more traditional organisations**
 - A generational issue – generally younger cohorts come with a more progressive perspective

- In working with more progressive organisations, they are more likely to be more informal, so this can throw up challenges for partnership, because of compliance requirements
- **We are learning more about creating safe spaces for young women**
 - Many of the more traditional women's networks, councils and organisations consist of older women in positions of power, who therefore have the authority
 - We need to diversify spaces for different cohorts of women, to strengthen voice and agency (having quotas for committees etc is one such strategy)
 - Tapping into PWD and gender diverse organisations can help strengthen opportunities for focusing on intersectional issues by women's organisations
 - Some traditional women's organisations do have a more progressive focus on some issues, eg. ESCOW in PNG can be transformative when focused on GBV, so sometimes stepping outside of traditional WASH issues is an effective way of engagement – finding different entry points for engagement.
- **Experience with reaching out to both traditional and progressive organisations**
 - Including their networks into community activities, eg. linking them into their work with community health care workers etc
 - There is sometimes a lack of response from more progressive organisations because they are not able to see the connections between WASH issues and what they are doing – we need to build understanding of those connections between the WASH sector and GESI organisations
 - Decision-making in both types of organisations can often be centralized, and local branches can have less capacity to be involved in grassroots activities (eg. DPOs)
- **Having a Do No Harm approach** through the initial stages of the project is helpful – through a DNH framework, we can look at different ways to engage with a range of rights holder organisations and bringing them into WASH processes/systems/decision-making
- **GESI resourcing**
 - Models for engagement comes down to level of resourcing for GESI at project and Fund levels
- **The gendered and generational difference is important to note**
 - More informal networks for advocacy can have significant leverage (example of advocacy for 50% women's representation in parliament)
 - The motivation of younger women in advocacy issues is increasing – it is important to tap into these movements for change
- **WASH capacity building for RHOs**
 - Supporting capacity development of RHOs in WASH issues helps bring strategic alignment in the WASH and GESI agendas, but need to balance this with level of RHO capacity – we need to make sure we are not stretching their capacity.
- **Knowledge and Learning**
 - Case studies on connecting with progressive movements eg. on gender diversity issues
 - Important influence of GESI research in WASH programming (the 'in', 'through' and 'beyond' WASH)

Question 3: Coordination and alignment with other DFAT programs:

Where are the opportunities to coordinate with other DFAT funded programs to reinforce GESI messages and share tools and knowledge (GESI in WASH systems strengthening, GBV, challenging gender and social norms etc)?

Coordination with other DFAT projects; 'why aren't our WfW projects engaging with them more than they seem to be'; what are the opportunities.

Discussion

- Coordination with Post in-country is a priority; e.g. for IRC in Pakistan, there is a range of programs that the High Comm manage; opportunities to seek the High Comm to link IRC with other partners and create opportunities to GSI share the materials with them. First step is approaching the High Comm and getting them to make the connections with other programs.
- Look for platforms at a regional level in Sth Asia; countries with a similar context, so can leverage regional platforms to engage in dialogue; for regional platforms like SARC, make a bid in those spaces to present ideas; other sanitation networks at regional level; partners could link with them and host a regional dialogue and promote the work that DFAT and the partners are doing; SACOSAN is another example. (GC – find a platform where other DFAT partners are represented and then try to engage with those. Would operate at the high level, policy/leadership level.) locating WASH within the GSI framework. could move up from country level to regional fora.
- WfW has more GSI focus than other DFAT programs; e.g. ANCP, where GSI is cross-cutting. WfW has really shown GSI in a good way within the projects while other DFAT programs still treating as cross-cutting. There is an opportunity for DFAT [presumably the staff managing WfW] to promote WfW success at policy level, reaching out to other departments within DFAT; so DFAT WfW team helping to facilitate coordination and discussions within the department.
- we talk about coord with other DFAT programs, but are we also considering programs supported with multilaterals? (DFAT contributes core funding for WASH to a range of multilaterals; up for new commitments soon; WB GWSSP, ADB, UNICEF and WHO; interesting point about how we use this to engage in dialogue about GSI). Nutan—a lot of these multilaterals have a focus on gender, creating opportunities for WfW partners to collaborate with them; suggest we work with them more from an 'on-the-ground' perspective, demonstrating where WfW is making an impact.
- need to manage the relationship with Post. Do the Fund partners have a single contact with each Post? (no, e.g. PNG, spread across infrastructure, health, others; Post officers often rotating, so not consistent.) Consistency is needed; need a focal point at each Post; there may be people with a responsibility for WASH, but need to look for other people who could play a role as the focal point for GSI; need to target people at the Post who have an interest in GSI. (we have been looking for people at Post doing WASH or health but not GSI, need to identify those people and leverage their interest; Post, Ambassador etc, always looking for opportunities for public diplomacy, so can leverage this to showcase GSI progress.
- would love a regional approach to engage in the Pacific; there would be an advantage in having a way to identify other DFAT work in the Pacific doing gender and social inclusion; whether that be a forum, website, network
- livelihood and economic recovery; good to make links with relevant projects working in these areas, particularly in a post-COVID recovery stage.

Annex G Political economy of gender equality

Introduction

The following is adapted from a Beginners Guide to Political Economy Analysis⁶ published by UK Aid. The following application to the political economy of gender equality is very brief and illustrative, but responds to a request by several contributors to the WfW GESI review for more information.

Structure

The structure of the economy can influence the speed at which progress towards gender equality can be made. For example, where economies are based on extractive industries progress tends to be slower than where economies are based on manufacturing. In part this is because power (money) rests in fewer hands in extractive industry economies leading to greater contestation of power, and in part it is because most of the economic opportunities are in sectors that are dominated by men (mining, construction, logistics). Whereas in economies based on manufacturing there tend to be more formal sector opportunities for women – and as light manufacturing. Formal sector opportunities tend to be more empowering for women compared to informal opportunities. Agriculture based economies also tend to change more slowly and women in agriculture or family businesses are least likely to be empowered.

Beyond the economy, ethnicity and religion can also influence the pace of change towards gender equality where they are dominant in a country.

Bargaining

Bargaining processes can take place at the household, community, local government or national government level. Elements to look at is how these take place – what the forums are and who is included. There may be formal and informal means of engaging in the bargaining process.

Women can be excluded from a formal process simply because the time is wrong, the place is not safe for them to reach, or that they were not invited – or that they simply do not know how the system works in the first place. There may or may not be an informal process open to them through which they can exert influence – for example by influencing male friends and relatives who then do engage and can advocate on their behalf.

Where they are involved, they may not have the skills and “currency” needed to exert any influence on the process. At the household level, having some control of family finances gives a degree of bargaining position. At the community level factors such as self esteem, confidence, and information are all important to increase the bargaining position. When women can, and do, engage in a voting process, their votes can become a currency.

Women’s bargaining position – or their agency - is increased with collective action. When they act together their influence is greater.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders include those individuals or groups that have the ability to support to resist progress through their engagement in the bargaining process. Women seeking progress

⁶ Alan Whaites, A. (2017). *The Beginner’s Guide to Political Economy Analysis (PEA)*. UK Aid

need to be able to identify and to influence these institutions, networks or individuals. Positive influencers may include networks of women's organisations, networks of supportive politicians, trade unions. It may be the support of strong women or male leaders – or elite.

On the other hand there may be collective resistance from religious political parties or organisations. Moreover, state sponsored women's organisations with mandates and budgets to help implement government policy, may be co-opted into promoting state ideologies regarding the role of women in order to achieve development outcomes. At the household and community level resistance may come from family members or from the community, this might be especially strong in societies where families are

The deep culture of government institutions, including planners and service delivery agencies that hold on to traditional norms relating to women's role can hold back progress even when laws and policies may be in place.

Incentives

Incentives and disincentives can apply on both sides. The fear of violence may inhibit women from engaging in the bargaining process, on the other hand, the incentive of gaining the "women's vote" may be an incentive to adopt their issues and priorities into political agendas. Desire for status and recognition can be either a pro or a con depending on who gains the most from different actions. Prejudice and harmful beliefs can be powerful incentives to resist change. At a national level targets that need to be met can be powerful incentives which has made the SDG targets in SDG 5 important tools for the gender equality advocates, especially when they are adopted into national plans.

Examples

Over many years, women around the world lobbied for changes in laws relating to domestic violence and violence against women. Collective action from grassroots organisations was amplified with the support of the often newly formed ministries or departments of women following the Beijing conference on Women in 1995. Support from some religious movements was added, and the economic cost of violence was calculated bringing mainstream governments and even the business community on board. As new laws started to be passed, a neighbourhood effect was seen whereby women's networks and coalitions expanded regionally, and were strengthened by global advocates. Governments, not wanting to be left behind, followed their neighbours and also passed laws.

There is still much work to be done to implement these but continuing advocacy by women's organisations and networks to lobby for guidelines and budgets, for example, has achieved much over the years.

On the other hand we are currently seeing a more nuanced and complicated trend regarding women's right to abortion. The politics around this are in constant flux, especially when religion becomes a powerful force in political decision-making.