

Mainstreaming Protection in WASH

WASH actors are responsible for ensuring that beneficiaries safely access their services, without causing harm, and for promoting meaningful access, accountability and participation of beneficiaries in the provision of WASH assistance. By mainstreaming protection into WASH programming, humanitarian actors can maximise the positive impacts of WASH programs on people's safety and dignity and support affected populations access and enjoy their rights.

This note provides guidance on how to practically mainstream protection into WASH programmes in Somalia. It is divided into four sections, representing the four key elements of Protection Mainstreaming. The content is not meant to be exhaustive, but presents examples of key actions that should be taken to ensure the incorporation of protection elements in the delivery of WASH assistance in Somalia.

KEY ACTIONS

Prioritise safety & dignity and avoid causing harm

- ✓ Ensure the **location** and **access routes** to WASH facilities and distribution points are safe.
 - Locate water sources in visible, central locations and not more than 500 metres from settlement
 - Install lights near communal facilities. If lighting is not possible, consider coordinating with NFI sector for the provision of solar lamps / torches for each household.
 - Avoid placing facilities or distribution points near military installations or threats such as attacks stray bullets, crossfire or violence. Weapon bearers should not be present inside distribution points.
 - Introduce accompaniment arrangements to reduce threats to the safety and dignity of women and girls e.g. fetching water in groups
 - Identify central locations for distribution points - beneficiaries should not have to traverse long distances or pass through conflict zones to access distribution points.
 - Distributions should take place in daylight hours giving beneficiaries sufficient time to travel home before nightfall.
- ✓ Ensure the **mode** and **frequency of distribution** minimises exposure to safety threats – be aware that beneficiaries may face theft, intimidation, sexual assault and extortion whilst taking their hygiene kits home.
 - Consider door-to-door distribution
 - Consider the frequency of distributions – the greater the time between distributions the larger the quantities distributed, which puts beneficiaries at risk of attacks and pillage.
- ✓ Ensure that the hygiene **kit size** is appropriate for the beneficiaries to be able to carry home with no additional physical or financial burden and without being dependent on others to carry it for them.

- ✓ **Design** and **construction** of WASH facilities must preserve the safety and dignity of its users. If an individual does not feel safe or dignified in using the facility, (s)he may go elsewhere, potentially exposing themselves or others to harm.
 - Build separate toilet and bathing facilities for males and females. Make sure they are clearly marked in pictorial form for illiterate users and work with community to ensure they are used by the indicated sex.
 - For privacy, provide secondary enclosures around facilities or put locks on the doors to latrines and bathing houses. Discuss this with beneficiaries to consider their preferences.
 - Raise platforms and ramps at water points to ensure safe manual lifting to all, especially children, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities.
 - Cater for the disposal of personal hygiene materials, in particular sanitary pads, nappies and adult diapers.
- ✓ Consider **safety risks to children** e.g. size of drop hole; provide smaller jerry cans for children to collect water to avoid potential injury and consider their physical capacity in designing water pumps.
- ✓ If **overcrowding** at water points is reported, consider scheduling time shifts for water collection in consultation with the beneficiaries and in recognising that different people have different work schedules – women and girls who are most often the water collectors have specific times when they are busy making meals.
- ✓ Ensure that the hygiene promotion services are respectful and inclusive of **cultural** and **religious practice** and there is a proportionate number of female hygiene promoters.
- ✓ **Avoid community tensions**, by providing the local/host community with access to WASH camp assistance in situations where they are experiencing similar shortages of basic WASH services and facilities.
 - Consult both displaced and host communities about WASH needs and assess whether WASH interventions could cause tension, harassment or conflict between the two communities.
- ✓ To prevent improper use of **cleaning chemicals** and **chlorine**, ensure proper storage and that labels and instructions on their usage is in a language or pictorial form that is understood by users.
- ✓ Keep lists of beneficiaries and personal data confidential and safe from unintended use - apply effective **data protection measures**.
- ✓ Work in coordination with protection actors to put in place measures to prevent and respond to **physical/sexual violence** arising from use of or lack of WASH facilities.

Promote equitable and impartial access for all

- ✓ Collect and use data disaggregated by **sex, age** and **diversity** to effectively inform programming.
- ✓ Ensure that assistance and services are **reaching the most vulnerable** - Identify and prioritise the most vulnerable groups in the community and prevent discrimination or exclusion of marginalised groups (refer to Vulnerable Categories guidance note).
 - Apply a systematic **outreach** process in **registering beneficiaries** – otherwise vulnerable persons, such as older people, may easily be excluded as other more mobile and vocal population groups are registered.
 - Ensure **lack of documentation** does not exclude individuals from accessing services

- ✓ Ensure that the **location, distance** and **access routes** to the water points, latrines and distribution sites are accessible to all members of the community, including the most vulnerable groups.
 - Separate male and female queuing areas and ensure female staff presence at distributions so that they are accessible to women and girls.
 - Introduce special arrangements for persons who have difficulty accessing water collection points or distribution points - community mobilisation, home/mobile distributions, youth groups assisting older persons. It should not be assumed that friends and family will do it.
- ✓ Make **infrastructure adaptations** to WASH structures to make them accessible to persons with reduced mobility (eg. persons with physical disability, older persons).
 - Make access paths smooth and fit ramps for wheelchair access.
 - Install railings, handlebars and removable seats in latrines for persons with disabilities.
 - Provide bed pans or commode chairs for bed-ridden individuals.
- ✓ Establish **mechanisms** to give priority to those who cannot stand in line for long periods, such as older persons, persons with disability, unaccompanied children, pregnant and lactating women, so that they wait for less time.
- ✓ Consider the **gender balance** of distribution teams and committees to ensure that there are enough women available as a contact point for women in the community.
- ✓ Respond to the **specific hygiene needs** of women, girls, older persons - include sanitary pads and adult diapers in hygiene kits and provide additional personal hygiene items for persons with incontinence or severe diarrhoea.
- ✓ Ensure that beneficiaries **know** about WASH services, how to obtain hygiene kits, where and when the distributions will take place, what they will get, how long it should last and how to use the items.
 - Provide information through various communication means to reach the broader community and to account for different literacy levels eg. door-to-door, poster, radio, social media, use of pictograms).
 - Promote simple hygiene messages for children using child-friendly information (ie. Cartoons).
- ✓ Identify the **power dynamics** in the area. Who has access to water resources? Who is able to influence decisions on WASH interventions?
 - Use this information to inform monitoring activities and identify any barriers to access, discrimination against particular groups or whether assistance is being diverted. Take this into consideration when determining locations for WASH interventions.

Ensure accountability to affected populations

- ✓ Be **transparent** with the affected populations by providing them with accessible and timely information on selection criteria for targeted assistance, organisational procedures and processes that affect them.
- ✓ Set up accessible, confidential and well understood **feedback mechanisms** for suggestions and complaints with a view to improve programming, understand community perceptions, promote beneficiary empowerment and assist in detecting misconduct. Eg. place feedback surveys in hygiene kits, feedback box at WASH facilities, phone lines
 - Set up mechanisms for submitting feedback that do not require the beneficiary exposing themselves to project staff.
 - RESPOND to complaints, regardless of whether corrective measures can/need to be put in place.

- Organize awareness raising sessions so that people know how it works.
- Consider a joint feedback mechanism with other sectors to minimize confusion.
- ✓ WASH staff and committees should be **representative of all groups** within the community (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic group, disability) and all staff and members should be given **protection mainstreaming training**.
 - They can play a key role in identifying issues related to exclusion and discrimination and be proactive in ensuring the voice of marginalised groups is represented.
- ✓ Ensure WASH staff, implementing partners and volunteers working with affected populations understand, sign and adhere to a **Code of Conduct** stating their commitment to respect and foster humanitarian standards and the rights of beneficiaries.
- ✓ Ensure all staff, implementing partners and volunteers involved in distributions and in direct contact with beneficiaries have received training in **prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)**
- ✓ **Rotate distribution teams** so no one team constantly visits the same settlements.
- ✓ Provide clear information to the distribution actors and affected population explaining that beneficiaries **do not have to pay** or provide services/favours to anyone in exchange for receiving WASH assistance. Ensure that this information is communicated to women and girls.
- ✓ In cooperation with protection actors, enhance the capacity of community WASH workers to **monitor, report** and **refer protection concerns** (such as abuse and exploitation) in accordance with standard operating procedures.
- ✓ Coordinate with relevant local authorities, as well as the education and health sectors, to ensure that public spaces, schools, and health centres also have WASH services.

Strengthen participation and empowerment

- ✓ **Involve** and **consult** all categories and layers of the affected population in identifying and responding to WASH needs. Different criteria may affect the power dynamics.
 - Consult women, men, boys, girls, persons with disabilities, older persons and marginalised persons to collect accurate information about their specific WASH requirements and preferences for location and design of WASH facilities. Topics to discuss include privacy - use of lockable doors and 'walls' to provide sufficient/safe cover; access for persons with disabilities.
 - Considering that most often women and children collect water, talk to them directly about safety of the location of and routes to the water collection point.
 - Engage the community and committee representatives to play an active role in identifying solutions and the decision-making processes that affect them, so as to promote a sense of ownership, build their self-esteem and improve the relevance and sustainability of the response.
- ✓ Build **community capacities** to maintain WASH structures and ensure sustainable provision of WASH services eg. establish WASH committees, provide tools for minor repairs to infrastructure
- ✓ Coordinate with **civil society** specialising in working with persons with impaired mobility or disabilities to help identify such individuals and use them as a resource to improve service delivery, train staff and for the referral of cases.