

Leaving No One Behind:

Experiences from Water for Women



Report at a glance

Developed as part of a dedicated initiative under Water for Women's Learning Agenda, this report is a synthesis of insights from 16 water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects being delivered by partner civil society organisations (CSOs). The report draws lessons from and synthesises CSO self-assessments on the approaches they pursue to ensure no one is left behind, structured by:

- **Who** CSOs identify as being left behind and why
- **How** they approach enabling voice and meaningful participation
- **What** practical leave no one behind (LNOB) initiatives they are pursuing.

Water for Women projects are four years into implementation across 15 countries. As all have a specific LNOB focus, this report is a timely reflection on the range of strategies CSO partners employ to enable equitable access to WASH services. This report is based on a methodology in which CSOs' LNOB approaches were collated, shared, and used to facilitate participatory engagement for peer-to-peer learning between CSOs to deepen understanding and improve practice. Between August and December 2021, the authors administered an online survey and facilitated an online webinar and undertook an analysis of Water for Women monitoring and project information. Specific case studies that highlight interesting and innovative approaches are included in this report.

About Water for Women

Water for Women supports improved health, gender equality and wellbeing in Asian and Pacific communities through socially inclusive, sustainable and resilient water, sanitation and hygiene projects and research. It is the Australian Government's flagship WASH development assistance program, investing AUD 118.9 million over five years. Water for Women is partnering with CSOs and research organisations to deliver 33 projects in 15 countries. Knowledge and learning are central to Water for Women, positioning the Fund as an important contributor to global knowledge development and sharing in inclusive WASH. Water for Women's Learning Agenda promotes collaborative learning, knowledge development and sharing to support long-term transformative change to WASH policy and practice globally. This report is a product of a dedicated LNOB learning initiative under Water for Women's Learning Agenda. A full list of Water for Women CSO projects is included in [Appendix 2](#).

Acknowledgements

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The following partners made extensive contributions to this learning initiative: SNV, WaterAid, iDE, the Centre for Advocacy and Research, India (CFAR), Thrive Networks/East Meets West, RTI International, World Vision, Plan International, Live and Learn Environmental Education, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and UTS-ISF. We also recognise their leadership and support for progress towards leaving no one behind in WASH access across Asia and the Pacific. Thanks also to the additional Water for Women Fund Coordinator team members, Stuart Raetz and Bianca Nelson Vatnsdal, who supported this learning initiative.

Abbreviations

BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
CFAR	Centre for Advocacy and Research, India
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease (outcome of SARS-CoV-2 infection)
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ESCOW	East Sepik Council of Women (Papua New Guinea)
ESDPA	East Sepik Disabled Persons Association (Papua New Guinea)
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
IRC	International Rescue Committee
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MHH/MHM	Menstrual Health and Hygiene/Menstrual Hygiene Management
OBA	Output-Based Aid
ODF	Open Defecation Free
OPD	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RHO	Rights Holders Organisation
SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
SGM	Sexual and Gender Minority
SNV	SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar
UTS-ISF	University of Technology Sydney Institute for Sustainable Futures
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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Front cover: Ambika Yadav, SNV Nepal's District Coordinator for Sarlahi, discusses COVID-19 prevention measures and tips with a person with disability. Credit: SNV / Meeting Point

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Summary

Progressive realisation of access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services requires effective mechanisms to support equity and inclusion to ensure access is acceptable, used and sustained over time. Leaving no one behind (LNOB) means considering and addressing multiple, intersecting forms of disadvantage and inequality, and addressing systemic causes, including for individuals and groups who are marginalised, excluded or actively discriminated against, or are experiencing inequities, inequalities or stigma¹. While different support mechanisms have been tried globally over the past decades, there is increasing recognition that a transformative approach – one that addresses power and privilege and values belonging and participation – is needed to leave no one behind and realise the aspirations of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As part of a dedicated learning initiative under Water for Women's Learning Agenda, insights on efforts to leave no one behind from its civil society organisation (CSO) implemented WASH projects² in 15 Asia-Pacific countries were collected and synthesised. This report draws lessons from CSO self-assessments in 2021 on the approaches they pursue to ensure no one is left behind, using the United Nations Development Programme conceptualisation of three 'mutually reinforcing levers' of **Examine, Empower** and **Enact**³.

Examine: Who are CSOs working with?

Water for Women has an explicit objective to promote inclusive WASH, and all projects work directly with women and girls and people with disabilities. Projects also work with the elderly, people living in poverty, sexual and gender minorities, and remote populations. A smaller number of projects work with at least one or more religious minority, child-headed households, unemployed people and caste groups.

A range of tools are used to identify and collect disaggregated data; most CSOs (81%, 13 projects) reported using household surveys, a further 63% used gender and power analysis, 50% of projects reported formative research and 38% used community-led assessments along with secondary data. The use of a combination of tools, mixed method and phased approaches was seen as useful in providing insights into complex intersectionalities, but additional efforts were also seen as needed to identify specific groups of people, especially where the status quo makes these people less visible.

Empower: Enabling voice and meaningful participation

CSOs used a multitude of mutually reinforcing 'software' and 'hardware' initiatives. These included capacity-building initiatives for individuals and organisations such as leadership training, life skills training, menstrual health and hygiene sessions, and business skills development; removing barriers to the use of public spaces, including where WASH decision-making forums are held and project activities are implemented (e.g. providing childcare, holding meetings when women can attend, providing materials in a range of formats to accommodate people with different disabilities and educational levels); meeting the 'hardware' WASH needs of marginalised individuals through consulting with them on universal facility designs, and ensuring they are accessible at meeting and public spaces; and provision of assistive devices.

Enact: Inclusive, catalytic and accountable strategies

Support for LNOB includes a spectrum of activities, from compensatory support through to strategies that address systemic causes of disadvantage. Compensatory WASH activities are well documented and aim to address gaps in access or service, through, for example, the provision of subsidised infrastructure, financial support or WASH facility upgrades to increase accessibility. Strategies that address the root causes of disadvantage aim to combat underlying causes of discrimination, such as by changing harmful social norms. Advocacy and partnering initiatives include activities that build capacity and skills in leadership and internal organisational reforms to improve inclusivity, often aiming to modify structural and underlying factors.

¹ De Albuquerque 2014

² The report reflects analysis of 16 projects implemented by CFAR, iDE, IRC, Plan International, RTI, SNV, Thrive Networks/East Meets West, WaterAid and World Vision. Lessons from, and syntheses of, CSO self-assessments on their LNOB approaches are based on an online survey completed in late 2021.

³ UNDP 2018

Across the Water for Women projects, 19 types of LNOB activities were identified. Eleven of these address underlying causes of disadvantage, six are compensatory mechanisms and two are community outreach activities. Some of these approaches are very widespread across projects, with 14 of the projects surveyed (88%) working to build local leadership, 13 projects (81%) working with rights holder organisations (RHOs), and 13 projects (81%) supporting institutional strengthening for inclusive WASH processes. Other approaches are less common, such as supporting targeted subsidies (five projects), self-financing approaches (three projects) and social protection programs (one project).

Implementing LNOB approaches 'at scale', CSOs work to reduce marginalisation and exclusion in WASH beyond their project's geographic and temporal boundaries. Reaching greater numbers of people with a similar approach – 'scaling out' – is a common ambition for projects, though only two projects reported achieving this. More CSOs work to 'scale up', influencing government policies, institutions, laws and data collection. CSOs that work to influence leaders and shift norms and the status quo aim to 'scale deep', shifting the hearts and minds so no one is left behind.

In conclusion, raising and amplifying disadvantaged voices can compel power structures to listen and act and contribute to broader WASH systems strengthening. Linked to this, supporting leadership for LNOB initiatives across multiple levels and organisations helps shift norms, scale deep and embed equitable approaches. Further, partnerships with RHOs and coordination across stakeholders supports the co-creation of LNOB solutions. It is also acknowledged that there are limitations to what WASH initiatives can achieve in the face of overwhelming disadvantage. Additionally, the application of Do No Harm principles can help safeguard against unintended consequences.

The WASH sector has often focused on the measurable approaches of scaling out – reaching beneficiaries with safe WASH services – and scaling up – influencing policy and laws. What is clear is that to truly ensure no one is left behind, thoughtful and sustained efforts to address power and privilege structures that help sustain patterns of inequality are necessary. This analysis of LNOB approaches in WASH shows that CSOs are already beginning to scale deep, and working to shift cultural norms, values and power structures that are root causes of marginalisation. Further research into three key areas would greatly benefit the sector: trade-offs and frictions; evaluation of LNOB approaches; and shifting norms and attitudes about WASH outcomes for marginalised people.

Introduction

Progressive realisation of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) as basic rights requires effective mechanisms to support equity and inclusion to ensure access to WASH services that are acceptable, used and sustained over time. Different support mechanisms have been used globally over past decades, and approaches are increasingly becoming more nuanced in their application. In ensuring that we leave no one behind, all people who may be disadvantaged must be considered. This includes people marginalised by ethnicity, gender identity (including women, girls and trans people), (dis)ability, sexuality, poverty, religion, age and the intersectionality of these identity markers.

Reflecting their mandates, civil society organisations (CSOs) are often at the forefront of providing WASH services that reach the most marginalised in society, working towards the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6), ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. CSOs act in roles as diverse as advocates for the rights of marginalised people through to direct provision of WASH services to those who lack them. Through direct work with communities, local authorities and the private sector, CSOs have deep insights into the challenges disadvantaged groups face and the systemic changes required to overcome them.

Leave No One Behind concepts

'Leave no one behind' means considering and addressing multiple, intersecting forms of disadvantage and inequality, and addressing root causes. The LNOB approach aims to combat discrimination and rising inequalities, including within and amongst countries. Progressive realisation of WASH components as basic rights requires effective mechanisms to support not only equity and inclusion but belonging and participation; they must ensure access to WASH services that are acceptable, affordable, used and sustained over time. Various mechanisms to support inclusive WASH have been used globally over past decades, and approaches are becoming more nuanced in their application. However, practitioners, governments and donors increasingly recognise that a transformative approach – one that addresses power and privilege, and values belonging and participation – is needed to leave no one behind and realise the aspirations of SDG6.

LNOB principles are connected to the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination, core principles in International Human Rights Law. These principles include (UNICEF 2021): non-discrimination and equality, inclusion and participation, and accountability and transparency. LNOB is also one of three guiding principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of the Universal Values guiding the achievement of the SDGs, along with a human rights approach, gender equality and women's empowerment. These values 'place the person and their inherent dignity at the heart of development efforts, empowering all people to become active partners in this endeavour' (UNSDG 2022).

It is important to recognise the breadth and depth of potential disadvantage among those who may be left behind, such as individuals and groups who are marginalised, excluded or actively discriminated against, or are experiencing inequities, inequalities or stigma (De Albuquerque 2014). The term 'potential disadvantage' highlights that we need to consider all people who may be disadvantaged, including people with disabilities, and people marginalised by ethnicity, sexuality and gender identity (including women, girls and trans people), poverty, religion, age or other factors. LNOB aims to understand how people face multiple and compounding sources of disadvantage.

While some causes of disadvantage may be self-evident, others are more hidden and difficult to identify. For instance, underlying political economic contexts that perpetuate power and privilege imbalances, or gaps in institutional capacities and/or entrenched belief systems, can all contribute to exclusion, stigma and disadvantage (UNDP 2018). The human rights approach points to governments as the responsible duty-bearers for overcoming underlying constraints to ensure everyone is included in social and economic development. Civil society has a critical role in advocating for and with marginalised groups and holding duty-bearers to account to meet their basic rights.

The UNDP (2018) conceptualisation of LNOB identifies three 'mutually reinforcing levers' – **Examine**, **Empower** and **Enact** (Figure 1). 'Examine' refers to identifying who is being or at risk of being left behind, and why. This is a first and essential step to understanding and reversing exclusion, but also needs to be an iterative and adaptive process that identifies changing contexts and drivers of marginalisation.



Figure 1. The three mutually reinforcing levers to ensure no-one is left behind

Adapted from UNDP (2018)

In the context of LNOB, 'empower' means to enable the voice of disadvantaged people to be heard through meaningful participation. 'Enact' means to develop and accomplish inclusive strategies and approaches.

In the WASH sector, the way support is enacted (the 'how') can include both 'hardware' strategies (such as accessible infrastructure, financial and in-kind subsidies), and 'software' strategies (including leadership, mobilising collective action, and addressing social norms and stigma, facilitating inclusion without direct financial support or incentives), as well as combinations of the two. Family networks, the wider community, any or all levels of government, the private sector, CSOs and other development agencies can provide this support. It can also be done in ways designed to transform societies, systems and services for the better.

Many LNOB approaches focus on shifting social norms and aim for transformative impact. The ways that CSOs aim to transform systems and services operate at a range of scales from household to local government, through private sector and business support and through support to national government. A previous study of SNV approaches across five countries documented practical implementation of LNOB in rural sanitation and hygiene (Carrard et al. 2020), providing a starting point for appreciating the breadth of initiatives (Figure 2). This analysis identifies that mechanisms to increase access in one area must not inadvertently hinder progress in other areas or cause harm, and should also avoid creating perverse incentives that undermine WASH governance systems. Likewise, LNOB approaches should not inhibit the development of WASH markets, or come at a cost that would prohibit WASH service provision at scale. Using participatory processes to define what 'success' looks like in a particular context can be a helpful starting point, because there is often heterogeneity within and between communities and partners.

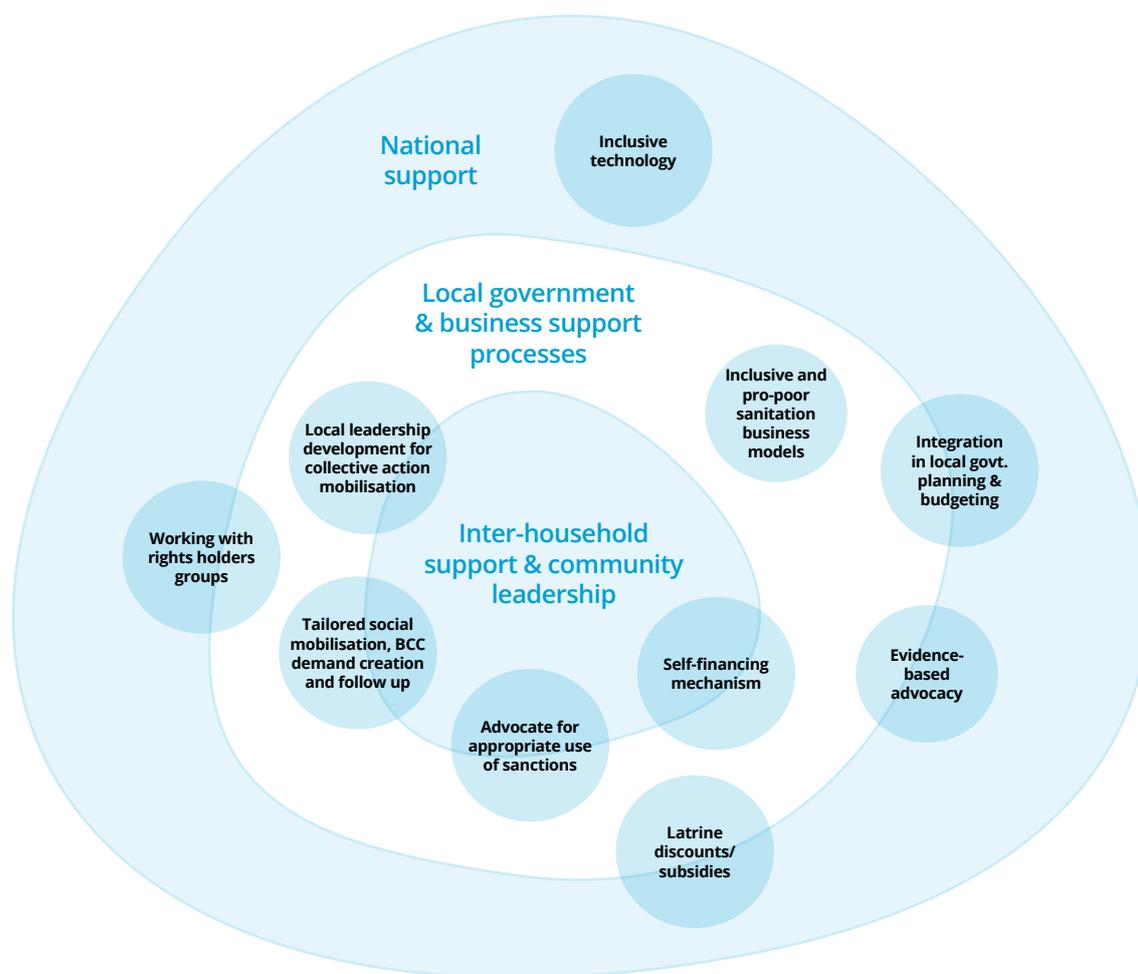


Figure 2. Practical approaches to LNOB in rural sanitation

Carrard et al. (2020)

A UNICEF framework for how LNOB applies to and can be pursued in the WASH sector offers a practical guide for practitioners, consisting of the following steps:

1. Determine who is being left behind, and why.
2. Explore what should be done.
3. Measure and monitor progress.
4. Advance and increase accountability.

This and other conceptualisations outline LNOB as requiring a step-by-step approach, where one action builds to the next. While some frameworks provide guidance, others offer principles and suggestions for analysis. The extent to which these frameworks help to assess and address root causes varies, with some approaches (such as UNICEF's) putting stronger focus on achieving practical and easily measured service outcomes.

As much as LNOB frameworks focus on shifting norms, they also aim to take this influence wider to a range of scales. One common objective is to 'scale out' and reach greater numbers of people and geographic areas with a similar approach. Another form of scaling is 'scaling up', in which the aim is to change the status quo in lasting and systematic ways through influencing institutions, laws and policies. This form of scaling is commonly recognised in the WASH sector, where influencing sector building blocks of policy, institutional arrangements, finance, planning and capacity development (SWA 2022) are considered essential to a functioning and inclusive WASH enabling environment. A third form of scaling, drawn from social and environmental innovation theories, is 'scaling deep', which assumes that durable change can only be achieved when people's hearts, minds, values and cultural practices are transformed (Figure 3). Whereas scaling out may aim to demonstrate and replicate success and disseminate principles of how this can be done in other contexts, scaling deep aims to shift cultural ideas, norms and beliefs, and assumes that for change to last it must be part of the people, relationships and communities that enact it (Riddell and Moore 2015). Scaling deep requires an understanding of and aim to influence power relations.

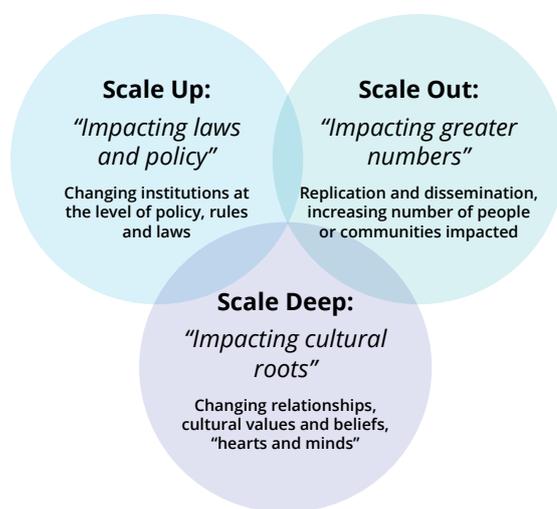


Figure 3. Scaling out, scaling up, scaling deep

Riddell & Moore (2015)

Methodology

Objectives and framework

This LNOB learning initiative aimed to broaden understanding of, and contribute to, thinking and practice around how WASH services can sustainably and equitably ensure no one is left behind across Water for Women's range of partner projects and contexts. The initiative collected, collated and shared data on how CSOs action LNOB in practical and implementable ways, fostering learning across the Fund and beyond, the results of which are captured in this Synthesis Report.

The UNDP framework of three mutually reinforcing levers ([Figure 1](#)) provided the key conceptual framing chosen to inform the design of the learning initiative, including the structure of the survey and a webinar. Following this framework ensured all elements of LNOB were identified, that is, examining who may be left behind, empowering voice and participation, and enacting inclusive approaches.

Activities and methods

Data collection occurred through an online survey in 2021, with additional materials sought where needed. The online survey was designed to capture the breadth of partner LNOB approaches. The survey's questionnaire ([Appendix 1](#)) consisted of nine multiple-choice or open-ended questions, and had three sections:

1. approaches CSOs use to identify who may be left behind
2. strategies CSOs use to empower those people to overcome barriers to accessing WASH
3. practical actions and approaches being taken.

Following a piloting phase, the online questionnaire was shared with Water for Women CSOs and 16 responses were received, representing 80% of Water for Women CSO projects. Responses varied in terms of detail provided, especially to qualitative questions. Data was analysed via a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. An online webinar was held in November 2021, with inputs from numerous partners to share the learnings and validate the data.

Examine: Who may be left behind

Groups that CSOs prioritise for LNOB

Water for Women has an explicit objective to improve WASH access for women and girls and other marginalised groups, and support from CSOs is focused on achieving this. As expected, all 16 CSO projects represented in the survey (see [Appendix 2](#)) reported they were working directly with women and girls and people with disabilities. In addition, eight projects reported they were working with elderly people, people living in poverty, sexual and gender minorities (SGMs), and remote populations. Two projects reported working with at least one or more religious minority, child-headed household, unemployed people and caste groups ([Figure 4](#)). It is worth noting that CSOs have differing definitions of these categories, with some aspects of marginalisation, such as poverty, implicit in CSO work. Some projects indicated that they gather information on the complexity of factors influencing disadvantage, identifying as many as 10 groups of people at risk of being left behind in WASH service access in their project areas. Other CSO projects identified as few as two groups.

Water for Women focuses on longer-term WASH work that takes a systems strengthening approach. Some recognised and transitory marginalised groups were not reported as being targeted by any of the CSO projects, including, for example, pastoral and nomadic people, refugees, people on the move, and sex workers (UNICEF 2021). A few projects did work to meet the WASH needs of mobile people, migrants or internally displaced people, especially with the increased need for hand hygiene as part of COVID-19 infection and prevention control. For instance, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Centre for Advocacy and Research, India (CFAR) were involved in providing handwashing facilities for transit areas for migrants, in Pakistan and India respectively. In addition, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) Bhutan supported the government's Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Program to provide WASH services for transient and seasonal workers.

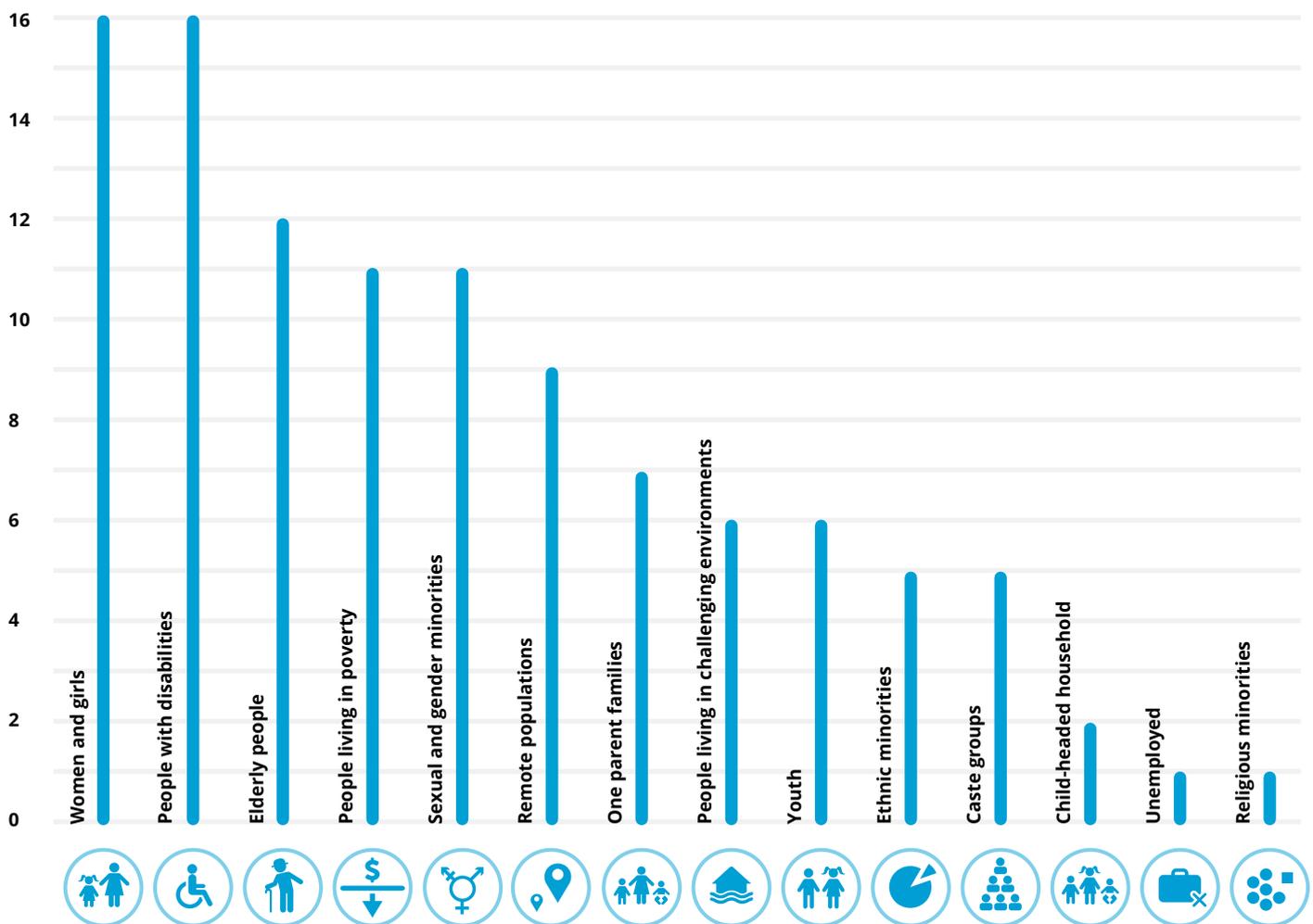


Figure 4. Groups identified as at risk of being left behind in WASH by CSO projects (n=16)

How CSOs identify marginalised groups

Inequalities and discrimination relate directly to exclusion and a systemic failure to listen to diverse and/or marginalised voices, meaning marginalised groups are often under-represented or may not show up at all in existing data (UNICEF 2021). There is an imperative to collect and use disaggregated data to identify who is being left behind.

Examination of CSO survey responses about methods and tools being used to collect disaggregated data revealed that 13 projects (81%) are undertaking direct household surveys as part of their project (Figure 5). Ten projects (63%) mentioned that they have undertaken gender and power analysis, though the extent to which these analyses explore the diversity of gender identities and experiences of people from SGM communities was not assessed and remains unclear. Other primary data collection methods used by CSOs were:

- formative research (seven projects)
- community-led assessment (six projects)
- research with marginalised groups (one project)
- caste and power analysis (one project).

In other instances, CSOs relied on secondary data from other sources such as data from local partner organisations (eight projects) and/or existing data such as the national census (six projects).

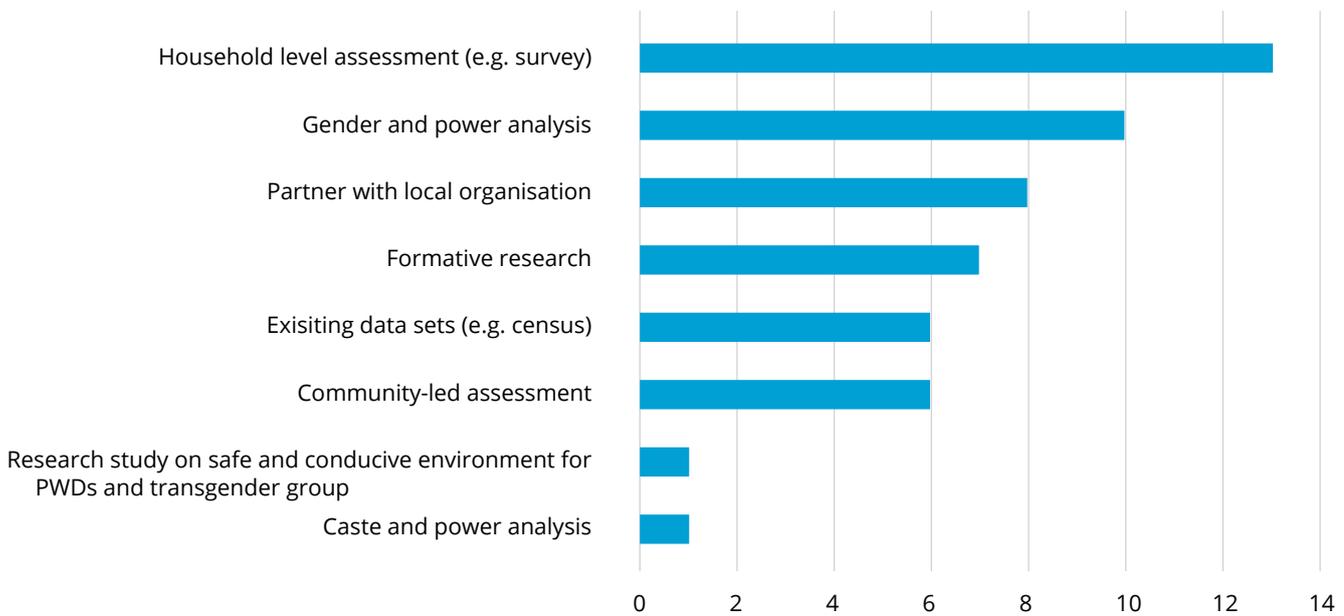


Figure 5. Tools CSOs use to identify those at risk of being left behind with regard to WASH access (n=16)

Most CSOs indicated that their method of gathering disaggregated data involves more than one tool, with half indicating they use three different tools (Figure 6). One CSO (CFAR India) indicated that it uses seven tools (as listed in Figure 5). Employing multiple tools to collect disaggregated data is considered good practice, because it captures the voices of different groups.

One example of a combination of approaches being used came from Plan Solomon Islands:

“Most of the barriers were identified through the conduct of our baseline survey, conducted at the start of the project. In other approaches such as Community Led Total Sanitation, household data have been collated and analysed where barriers are being identified. Through [focus group discussions], these have been facilitated to gauge different barriers that people face as well.”

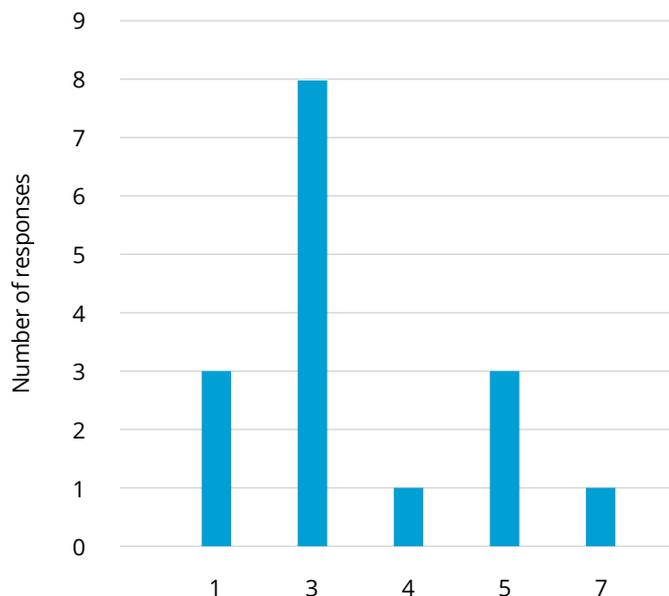


Figure 6. Number of tools used by CSOs to gather disaggregated data (n=16)

In many instances, people face multiple barriers and forms of disadvantage. For example, women and girls from ethnic minority groups and poorer families living in rural areas have been reported as the most likely to be left behind (UNDP 2018). Disaggregated data assists in identifying multiple sources of disadvantage, but additional efforts may be needed to identify specific groups of people, especially where the status quo makes these people less visible. CSOs identified a range of ways that their projects work to identify people facing multiple barriers. The responses fall across a spectrum, ranging from use of a few tools at project commencement to identify marginalised people (e.g., a household baseline survey) through to use of a combination of tools used throughout project implementation (Figure 7).

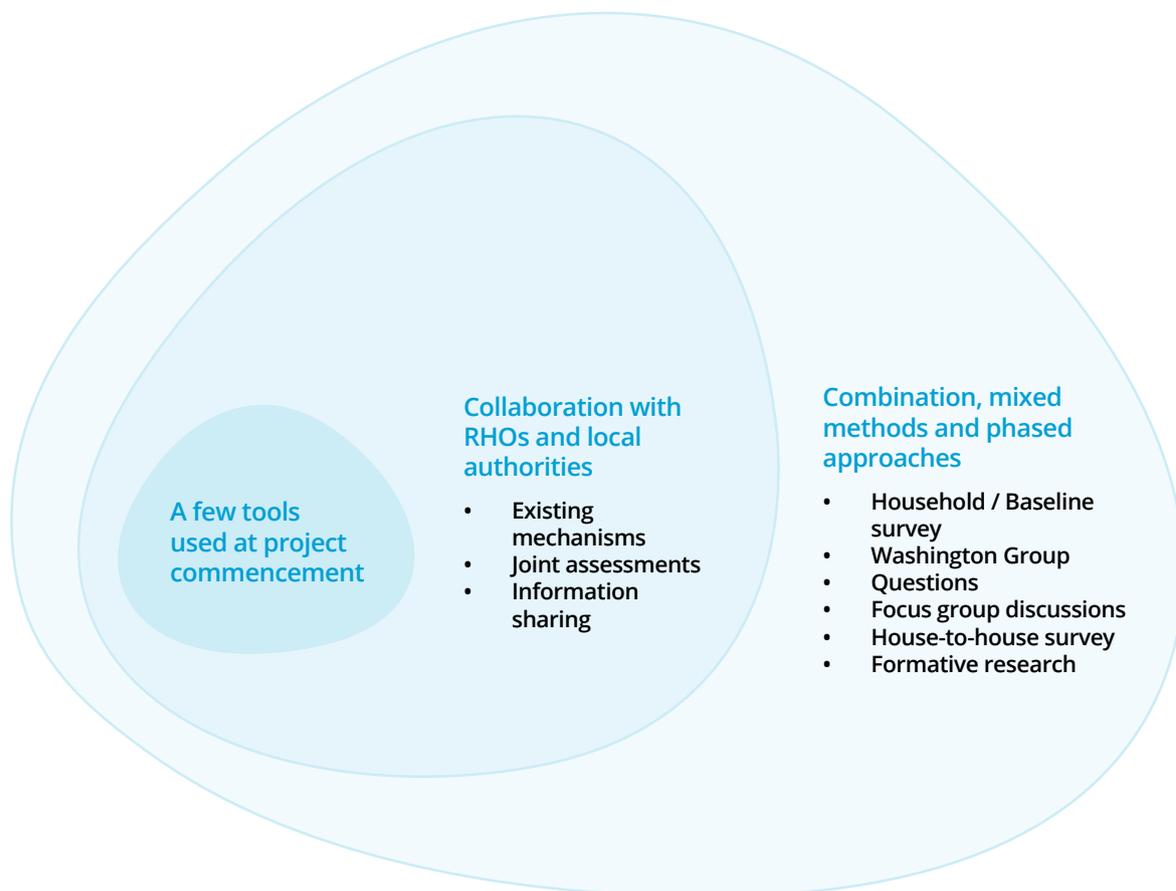


Figure 7. Ways CSOs identify people facing multiple sources of disadvantage

A ‘toolbox’ of approaches – including collecting disaggregated data – enables CSOs to employ multiple tools at different stages when needed (Carrard et al. 2020). Those CSOs working in partnership with local authorities and rights holder organisations (RHOs) also mentioned that they share information, either relying on existing mechanisms and systems to identify marginalised groups or in undertaking joint assessments. The use of a combination of tools, mixed methods and phased approaches is useful in providing insights into complex intersectionalities. These findings confirm those of previous studies, particularly that identification of marginalised groups should not be a one-off activity (Kohlitz et al. 2019) and that the co-creation of strategies with local partners will result in better targeting of LNOB approaches (Carrard et al. 2020).

One lesson emerging from CSOs’ work to understand and breakdown bias and exclusion is that they have varying levels of understanding of, and ability to collect information on, the complexities of exclusion. How people of normative gender and SGMs are perceived by CSOs provides an example of this. It is assumed that in many instances CSOs’ working understanding is that sex-disaggregated data requires collecting information on sex assigned at birth, and that there is varying appreciation of the complexities of diverse gender identities and experiences of people from SGM communities among WASH practitioners. Additionally, CSOs tailor their tools to their own philosophies, contexts and objectives, causing variation in tool application. It is also possible that some of the approaches used are similar but have different names, such as focus group discussions and community meetings.

Another emerging issue, particularly pertinent throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, is the often compounding and dynamic nature of vulnerabilities. For example, increased economic hardship related to COVID-19 restrictions has reduced many people's ability to pay for water. Those CSOs that use a range of ways to monitor and collect data in an iterative way, using multiple mechanisms at different stages of program implementation (rather than a one-off process), are more likely to identify changing patterns of exclusion (Kohlitz et al. 2019).

Empower: Civic engagement and voice

Once disadvantaged groups are identified, LNOB approaches require that specific steps are taken to empower those groups to be engaged and have their voices heard in ways that represent their own interests in decision-making processes. 'WASH programming alone may not be able to address root causes of inequality and there may be need for broader, multi-sectoral initiatives that target specific population groups and address the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination' (UNICEF 2021). CSOs employ a great diversity of approaches, ranging from practical and physical support through to those that address the root causes of disadvantage, such as economic empowerment and capacity-building.

Many CSOs adopt a range of approaches to ensure meaningful participation of disadvantaged people in WASH planning and decision-making. An important starting point for all CSOs, after working to identify marginalised groups, is to partner with RHOs to better understand their needs and priorities. After understanding the severity of disadvantage and reasons people face compounding disadvantage, CSOs tailored their approaches to different groups. CSOs used a multitude of mutually reinforcing software and hardware initiatives to support women and girls and other marginalised groups to strengthen their voices. These included:

- capacity-building initiatives for individuals and organisations such as leadership training, life skills training, menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) sessions and business skills development
- removing barriers to the use of public spaces, including where WASH decision-making forums are held, by using universal design principles and providing assistive devices (e.g., wheelchairs, walking frames)
- making reasonable adjustments to project activities (e.g., providing childcare, holding meetings when women can attend, providing materials in a range of formats to accommodate people with different disabilities and educational levels)
- meeting the hardware WASH needs of marginalised individuals through consulting with them on universal facility designs and ensuring they are accessible at meeting and public spaces and providing assistive devices.

Meeting the practical needs of women, girls, people with disabilities, transgender people and other marginalised groups in private and public spheres supports their access to WASH decision-making forums, where they can engage meaningfully and speak for themselves in demanding their rights. This is exemplified by World Vision in Vanuatu, which facilitates the participation of women and people with disabilities in training through community mobilisation to ensure their inputs into Drinking Water Safety and Security Planning.

"We have learnt that to address the needs of people appropriately, they must be involved and their views heard on how they should be supported. In other words, they must be at the centre of their own transformation rather than it being imposed on them."

WaterAid PNG

Box 1. IRC Pakistan's LIFE project

The IRC implements Water for Women's Leveraging Inclusive WASH for Empowerment (LIFE) project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan, across three districts (Peshawar, Swat and Buner). Lack of access to safe drinking water, poor health and hygiene practices, weak governance and lack of participation of marginalised groups in decision-making around WASH is particularly acute in rural and remote areas of the country.

Where traditional gender norms greatly constrain women, girls' and transgender women's involvement in public life, vocational and life skill-building sessions are culturally accepted entry points to increase participation. IRC adapted approaches and sessions to reach different marginalised people, including providing:

- independent living skills training to people with disabilities and their caregivers
- life skill sessions to women and girls
- vocational training to women/girls and trans people to enhance their skills.

IRC Pakistan's considered approach to LNOB is notable for efforts to:

- understand the multiple barriers faced by marginalised groups and employ multiple engagement tools (e.g., community meetings with target groups, participatory learning and action modules)
- tailor initiatives to meet the needs of specific groups (e.g., tailored MHH training sessions for girls and for women with disabilities, assistive devices for people with disabilities)
- tackle individual and community needs, and advocate for greater inclusion in the policy enabling environment (e.g., review of WASH policies)
- use hardware projects to rehabilitate WASH infrastructure in targeted communities, schools and health facilities to make it safe, inclusive and responsive to the needs of marginalised groups
- develop new, innovative and targeted ways to engage with marginalised people
- coordinate and collaborate at multiple levels with community, government and OPDs, and sustain this effort over a long period.



IRC supports transwomen in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, through the provision of entrepreneur kits containing WASH items, and basic business management training
Credit: IRC

Enact: Integrated, equity-focused SDG policies, initiatives and budgets

Support to LNOB may include a spectrum of activities from compensatory support through to strategies that address root causes of disadvantage. Compensatory WASH activities aim to fill gaps in access or service, through, for example, the provision of subsidised infrastructure, financial support or WASH facility upgrades to increase accessibility. Previous studies have identified a range of compensatory support approaches used in rural sanitation (Carrard et al. 2020); this report expands upon that list to include CSO approaches in water, urban sanitation and hand hygiene. Strategies that address the root causes of disadvantage aim to tackle underlying causes of discrimination, such as changing harmful social norms. Advocacy and partnering initiatives, activities that build capacity and skills in leadership, and internal organisational reforms to improve inclusivity often aim to change structural and underlying factors.

Overview of CSO LNOB approaches

Across the Water for Women projects, 19 types of LNOB activities were identified. Eleven of these types address root causes of disadvantage, six are compensatory mechanisms and two are community outreach activities (Figure 8). Some of these approaches were very widespread across projects, with 14 of the projects surveyed (88%) working to build local leadership, 13 projects (81%) working with RHOs, and 13 projects (81%) supporting institutional strengthening for inclusive WASH processes. Other approaches were less common, such as supporting targeted subsidies (five projects), self-financing approaches (three projects) and using social protection programs (one project).

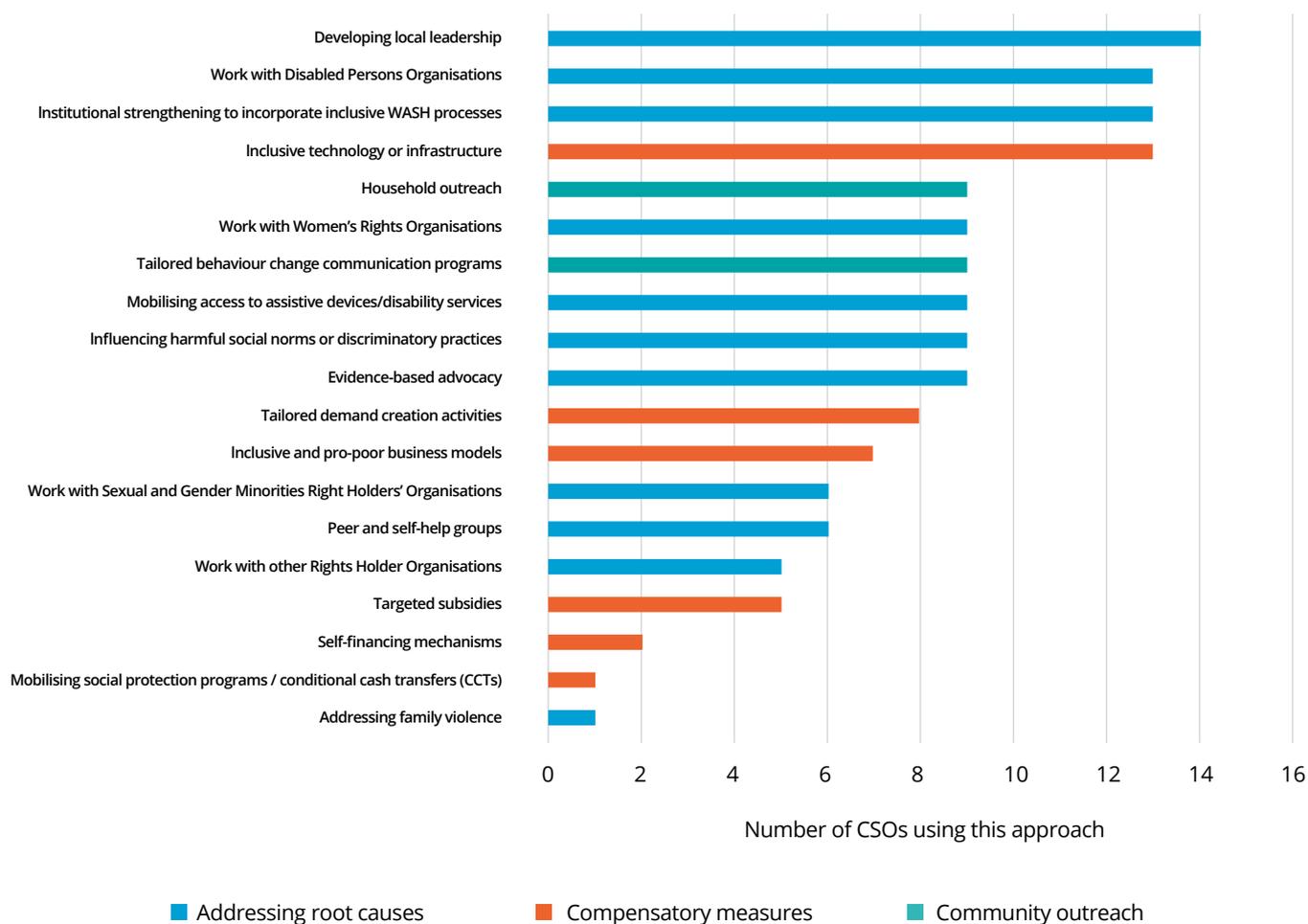


Figure 8. LNOB activities, and number of CSOs implementing each type under Water for Women (n=16)

Mobilising, partnering with and supporting rights holder organisations

Most CSOs have partnered with RHOs, including 13 with OPDs, nine with women's rights organisations and six with SGM groups. Some of these partnerships are with existing local organisations in project areas, and others are with national representative bodies or technical advisory partnerships (e.g., CBM Australia's Inclusion Advisory Group is a partner of, and advises, multiple Water for Women projects). CSOs note numerous benefits of institutional partnerships at both local and program-wide level.

In some instances, the CSO reported a central role in revitalising existing RHOs or informal networks, triggering the formation of new groups and/or supporting collective action by RHOs. In several instances, CSOs have gone further than partnering with existing RHOs – they have supported the formation of new groups. Examples include the formation of the Single Window mechanism for transgender people by CFAR India (see [Box 2](#)) and women-inclusive WASH committees, or Jirgas, by IRC Pakistan (see [Box 1](#)).

Similarly, SNV Nepal and World Vision Papua New Guinea (PNG) have supported the formation of networks of people with disabilities, which have in turn established self-help groups that meet regularly to share information and discuss issues. SNV Nepal and WaterAid PNG have also helped revitalise OPDs that were inactive (e.g., SNV Nepal's work with the Dailekh District OPD and establishing disability help-desks within rural municipalities). When RHOs are established or re-established, consideration needs to be given to their sustainability if they are reliant on partnering with Water for Women CSOs.

Some CSOs have taken a long-term approach to partnering with local OPDs to implement rural inclusive WASH activities, involving them for the whole life of the project. For example, the involvement of OPDs and people with disabilities in project assessment phases and data collection phases has helped raise awareness of disability issues within communities under WaterAid's project in PNG.

CSOs reported that working with RHOs has opened referral pathways and information to services. For instance, the East Sepik Council of Women (ESCOW), working with WaterAid in Wewak Province, provided referrals for gender-based violence services in PNG.



A development officer works at the Ramnagar rural municipality disability help desk, Sarlahi, Nepal

Credit: SNV Nepal

Box 2. Centre for Advocacy and Research partnering with transgender leaders and a community-based organisation

Recognising the importance of strong partnerships with communities most affected by social exclusion and gender inequality, CFAR forged purposeful partnerships with community-based organisations (CBOs) representing the most excluded and marginalised.

In Bhubaneswar and Jaipur, CFAR partnered with Sakha, Third Gender Welfare Trust and Naibhor Sanstha, transgender and SGM CBOs, Swabhiman, Odisha Blind Relief Association, OPDs and women's rights organisations.

CFAR assessed the needs of groups/communities, prioritised the services and social entitlements, reached out to the most excluded and mobilised them, and advocated with and actively engaged key stakeholders in WASH and other social entitlements to strengthen social inclusion. To make this happen, CFAR facilitated stakeholders to set up CBO-led mechanisms such as the Single Window Forums⁴ and representative structures such as community management committees and self-help groups at the slum level to mediate between the WASH system, urban local bodies and the marginal community.

In both Bhubaneswar and Jaipur, CFAR enabled transgender CBOs to set-up community-led single-window mechanisms and self-help groups. All these efforts influenced policymakers, and it slowly but decisively evolved into a nationwide initiative from the national and sub-national WASH system to strengthen gender-responsive WASH programming.

In Bhubaneswar, in 2018, within three months of establishing the Single Window Forums, transgender CBOs secured strong buy-in from policymakers and administrative focal points. Within a month, 122 applications were submitted for various services and schemes. Many transgender persons received water connections, ration card and unique identification numbers. Having secured the trust and confidence of transgender persons with respect to WASH, allied systems and the community, CFAR used major events including World Toilet Day, World Water Day and International Women's Day to make their situation of deep-seated marginalisation and exclusion visible. Today, transgender persons are represented in decision-making bodies; CBO leaders in both cities are members of the National Council for Transgender Persons, set up by the Union Government.



Members of the transgender and wider community take a pledge towards gender equality at International Women's Day 2021 celebrations in Jaipur, India
Credit: CFAR

⁴ Single Window Forums are a consultative mechanism used by CFAR to strengthen collaboration between community, civil society networks, local authorities, service providers and stakeholders to support the delivery of inclusive WASH services for the most vulnerable and marginalised communities in urban settlements of Bhubaneswar and Jaipur.

Fostering local leadership

Fourteen projects intentionally fostered the leadership skills of women, people with disabilities and gender minorities through partnership with RHOs. This approach builds the skills and confidence of individuals and RHOs, which has benefits for self-organising, engaging in forums and increasing economic self-sufficiency.

SNV Bhutan reported that building leadership of and supporting RHOs has been useful in building the capacity of WASH sector actors via increasing the voice and agency of women and other disadvantaged groups. These measures are considered to be long term, because engagement with RHOs has resulted in them becoming embedded and active players in the national WASH sector (such as becoming members of the national WASH technical steering group) and regularly presenting during national WASH stakeholder meetings/forums and advising on strategy/guidelines.

Similarly, the formation of women's committees through IRC Pakistan's LIFE project (see [Box 1](#)) provides support to mainstream women in decision-making processes at community levels. The project also enhances the capacities of women leaders at community level through skill development activities such as life skills and vocational skills training and linking them with markets to expand their businesses.

In several cases, projects engage with school students and young people to foster leadership. For instance, SNV mobilises local youth to support labour needed for construction of low-cost toilets in Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Also, IRC Pakistan engages students through WASH clubs at school level to act as change agents in their communities. Another strategy CSOs employ is to identify leaders for change in LNOB within government, and facilitate their engagement with project activities (e.g., IRC Pakistan), or foster community leaders to drive sanitation demand-led and community-led total sanitation initiatives that incorporate LNOB principles (e.g., SNV Lao PDR, Plan Indonesia, World Vision Bangladesh).

Inclusive technologies and infrastructure, and information and communication

Many CSOs have taken action to reduce the physical barriers to WASH access for particular groups of marginalised people, particularly people with disabilities. These types of initiatives and universal access design features (e.g., modified latrines, ramps) increase access to and usability of WASH facilities.

When CSOs have undertaken behaviour change communication (BCC) activities (now common, particularly for handwashing with soap to reduce the spread of COVID-19) many have sought to ensure that marginalised groups can access that information. For instance, BCC and information, education and communication materials, including those for MHH, have been presented in tailored or accessible formats. In one example, World Vision Bangladesh tailored social BCC materials to SGM groups. In another example of material development by people with disabilities themselves, Plan Indonesia's OPD partner designed its own brochure showing what an accessible toilet looks like to them (see more about this project in [Box 3](#)).

Most CSOs reported building or rehabilitating WASH facilities based on universal design principles as an LNOB approach, and described working directly with OPDs to do so. In many cases this involved developing accessible designs suitable to the local context (e.g. in New Ireland Province, PNG, with Plan and Live and Learn Environmental Education and in Cambodia with iDE, see also [Box 6](#)). When new designs have been developed, CSOs have worked to share these and have them incorporated into government standards.

"For inclusive technology or infrastructure, the project engages the different marginalised groups, for example disabled people's organisations and women's council etc., to ensure that their views are heard when designing or constructing WASH facilities. Access to WASH facilities such as toilets and water points are built with ramps and handrails to ensure people with disabilities can use the facilities. Also at institutions, toilets are built with MHH facilities to ensure the girl child feels comfortable while in school during her periods."

World Vision PNG

Box 3. Plan Indonesia's Transforming Lives in Eastern Indonesia

Plan International Australia and Yayasan Plan International Indonesia, in partnership with Edge Effect, are implementing the WASH and Beyond – Transforming Lives in Eastern Indonesia project in five districts. One of the aims of the project is to influence gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) outcomes that are beyond WASH, and provide support to marginalised people, including women, girls and people with disabilities, 'as agents of change in claiming their rights in households, communities and public domains'. One way this is achieved is through partnerships with RHOs and establishing participatory action research (PAR) groups to facilitate cycles of iterative learning and action. The process intentionally puts power in the hands of marginalised people as part of the transformative journey. Additionally, the project established district-level leadership and reference groups including PAR group members, women's organisations and OPDs, government representatives (village, sub-district and district levels) and community leaders. The leadership and reference groups foster collaboration between marginalised people and the wider community and reduce anticipated challenges in advocating for inclusive and safe WASH, including by talking directly to district-level decision-makers who can drive change that supports cohesive communities. The results of this process include the group's creation of a Facebook page to document stories of people with disabilities and the lack of safe, accessible and inclusive toilets. The PAR groups are using their lived experiences and local knowledge as opportunities to focus on building increased advocacy skills (Woolf and Leong, 2020).

In addition to supporting OPDs through PAR, the project has extended the involvement of OPDs in WASH governance at the district level. Fifteen OPD members, including nine women with disabilities, have been made formal members of district WASH working groups (multistakeholder forums consisting of government agencies and CSOs). OPD members are now entrusted with planning and management of district WASH budgets, demonstrating their leadership skills and ensuring marginalised voices are included in institutional planning and decision-making. By being included in the strategic groups, OPD members can participate directly in advocacy efforts. They have influenced head of district regulations on WASH to include GEDSI aspects and require/encourage participation of women and people with disabilities in leadership roles.

At the national level, the project supports OPD representatives to advocate for inclusive WASH in meetings with the Government of Indonesia and CSOs at various levels, (including meeting with the Ministry of Health to influence the draft National WASH Policy. At the community level, the project works in partnership with OPDs in delivering hygiene promotion campaigns and open defecation free (ODF) monitoring in the targeted villages. OPD members have been supporting and working with people with disabilities in the villages to ensure they have safe and comfortable access to WASH facilities.



Members of the Ruteng Women's PAR Group promoting hand hygiene and mask wearing for COVID-19 prevention
Credit: Yayasan Plan International Indonesia

In some instances, CSOs provided assistive devices to improve living conditions and mobility for people with disabilities. For example, IRC Pakistan provided wheelchairs, and World Vision Vanuatu engaged women with disabilities in the design of commode chairs. In addition to OPDs, World Vision Bangladesh partnered directly with disability services to provide assistive devices and other disability supports to people with disabilities.

Building capacities

The participating CSOs design, tailor, support and run capacity-building activities across a multitude of topics to build the skills and knowledge of their government, community and RHO partners, and their own staff. The focus of these capacity-building initiatives ranges from life skills to leadership skills targeting multiple organisations and organisational levels.

Strengthening the capacities of civil society actors, both CSOs and RHOs, protects space for engagement in decision-making (UNDP 2018). There were numerous examples of CSOs working to strengthen the capacity of RHOs, and this was most often a mutually beneficial co-learning process in which WASH-focused CSOs also learnt about the specific issues of the RHO (e.g., women's groups, OPDs). For instance, SNV Bhutan provides leadership training for women and people with disabilities through their Leadership for Change initiative (see [Box 4](#)). CSOs have in many cases applied Do No Harm principles supported by Water for Women ([Box 5](#)) to reduced unintended negative consequences for women and marginalised groups from enhanced participation and engagement.

Box 4. SNV Bhutan – An integrated approach to LNOB and Do No Harm

SNV has invested in capacity-building of government partners and SNV staff on GEDSI, Do No Harm and human rights approaches. The Do No Harm principles and approach are well integrated within the LNOB initiatives, from formative research with marginalised groups through to supporting the development of the government's national last mile guidelines. Additionally risks and mitigation strategies related to GEDSI have been components of the project design, with periodic reviews and self-assessments. Most importantly, measures are discussed thoroughly with local stakeholders, including RHOs, before implementation to avoid negative unintended consequences.

To ensure the meaningful participation of women, including those with disabilities, in WASH decision-making processes, SNV Bhutan has invested in a leadership for change initiative that focuses on working with local women's organisations to form/strengthen women's networks, increase women's skills in leadership and WASH and working with supportive men to inform pathways for increased women's leadership in WASH. Additionally, forming strategic partnerships with RHOs, particularly DPOs, informed by a steering group of women with disabilities and CBM Australia, has proved effective in increasing the meaningful participation of people with disabilities in decision-making. Investing in sessions with disability champions prior to a WASH decision-making forum discussion also proved to be effective.



Women discuss pathways for gender and socially inclusive WASH during a Bhutan Network for Empowering Women leadership workshop
Credit: Bhutan Network for Empowering Women

Some CSOs provide targeted training and capacity-building to specific groups. For example, IRC Pakistan provided independent living skills to people with disabilities and their caregivers, and life skill sessions to women and girls. Similarly, World Vision Vanuatu developed a carers training curriculum to empower people with disabilities and their carers to access safe sanitation, manage menstruation and incontinence, and participate in community activities.

Box 5. Five common Do No Harm strategies across Water for Women

1. Ensure the project is informed by a gender and social power analysis undertaken at inception
2. Consult with and amplify the voices of people with lived experience
3. Engage with RHOs for GEDSI capacity-building of staff, partners and stakeholders and for advancing their rights agendas
4. Engage with men and boys to support empowerment initiatives of women, girls and the marginalised
5. Engage with WASH duty-bearers on GEDSI issues in WASH, and support their direct engagement with RHOs on GEDSI and WASH issues

Targeted subsidies

In Cambodia, two CSOs (iDE and Thrive Networks) have adopted similar, but procedurally different, time-bound and targeted sanitation subsidies to assist poor and marginalised households to invest in household latrines. Identification of poor households is via the nationally recognised poor identification process managed by Commune Councils, with people given ID Poor 1 (the poorest) and ID Poor 2 status eligible for subsidies. These approaches align with Cambodia's National Guidelines on Smart Subsidies for Rural Sanitation. iDE has facilitated the sale of over 343,000 sanitary latrines (CS WASH Fund 2016; iDE 2020; Rivera et al. n.d.). The main driver of iDE's increased reach to IDPoor households has been the incorporation of targeted subsidies across six rural provinces of Cambodia where the program operates (see [Box 6](#)). iDE is currently adapting its targeted subsidy approach to 26 flood-prone villages to include more indicators of climate and socio-economic vulnerability.

Thrive Networks in Cambodia uses the targeted subsidy approach to increase household water connections for poor and vulnerable households. The model, described as Output-Based Aid (OBA), pays operators USD50 per poor or vulnerable household connected, with these businesses often female-led (see section below).



A farmer from Samroang Saeon village, Cambodia, and her children stand by their new piped latrine from iDE. Behind them, brown watermarks from the last monsoon rain can be seen on the brick wall. Before having the latrine, the family was forced to go to toilet in the bushes
Credit: Water for Women/Miguel Jerónimo

Box 6. iDE sanitation subsidies to poor households

iDE's Sanitation Marketing Scale-Up Program (SMSU3) approach to reaching the poorest with sanitation is a combination of market-based approach and targeted subsidy. In line with government guidance, the program only offers subsidies in provinces with a high level of sanitation coverage of at least 67%. Subsidies are allocated at two levels that respectively correspond with IDPoor 1 and 2 status. The IDPoor System is an initiative administered by the Cambodian government that identifies poor households, assesses their level of poverty, and distributes identification cards for these households. In this model, the poorest households, classified as IDPoor 1, receive a USD 25 subsidy voucher, reducing the price of an Easy Latrine to about \$32.50. The relatively less-poor IDPoor 2 households receive a \$20 subsidy that brings the retail price to \$37.50. Project-connected businesses have sold over 86,000 latrines since 2019, 39,000 of which have been purchased at a partial discount by IDPoor households. In addition, the program has applied the targeted subsidy mechanism to a super low-cost latrine shelter called the Soft Shelter. While the Soft Shelter has a retail price of \$33, both IDPoor 1 and 2 households are able to buy this product as an add-on to their latrine purchase for \$13 with a \$20 subsidy provided by iDE. This product is intended to serve as a temporary solution that enables households to use their latrine immediately after installation until they are able to save enough money to construct a permanent shelter structure. Overall, 7,000 soft shelters have been sold to IDPoor households.

iDE's monitoring has shown that in low-coverage areas, many non-latrine owners have the means to pay for latrines, but are not yet doing so for reasons that may not be financially driven. In such areas, implementers should consider delaying the introduction of subsidies until coverage rate increase in order to minimise the risk of market distortions (iDE 2020).

As of 2021, iDE is also working in flood and storm-prone environments, primarily around Cambodia's Tonle Sap Lake, to prevent households currently living in those areas from being left behind as the rest of the country rapidly approaches full sanitation coverage. To improve coverage in this area, iDE is adapting its targeted subsidy mechanism to consider and select for poverty and aspects of climate and gender vulnerability at the household level. This is especially important around Tonle Sap Lake, where there is a high density of ethnic minorities (e.g. Vietnamese, Cham) who are not eligible for inclusion in the current IDPoor system. In partnership with Causal Design, iDE will develop this mechanism then test it in a randomised controlled trial to verify the degree to which it is able to reach vulnerable households and encourage them to invest in safe sanitation. iDE and Causal Design will conduct quantitative analyses of the cost-effectiveness of the mechanism and its market-distorting effects, sustainability, scalability and impact on increasing sanitation uptake.



In addition to reaching the lowest income households, through a human centred design and market approach, iDE has also sold more than 450 permanent latrine shelters with accessibility features for households with members living with a disability
Credit: iDE / Tyler Kozole

Economic empowerment through inclusive and pro-poor business models

Multiple initiatives are improving the self-financing and economic independence of both organisations and individuals. CSOs have worked with RHOs (OPDs and women's organisations) to develop income-generating activities. For example, World Vision Vanuatu is working with disability service providers to develop assistive WASH devices, such as commodes, envisaging them as a source of income for the providers. SNV Bhutan has run a program to train women in masonry to support female-led sanitation businesses, and also engaged them as part of a leadership for change program. iDE and SHE Investments have hosted a female-led entrepreneurship capacity-building program. IRC Pakistan supported female entrepreneurs to empower themselves economically by providing entrepreneurship kits and linking them with markets to expand their businesses and live independently. They also provided soap-making training to women's committee members.

Support to vulnerable or marginalised individuals has included support to businesses led by women or people with disabilities. An example of this is the Thrive Networks OBA water connection approach, which has seen female-led operations connecting piped water supplies to 3,750 poor and poor and vulnerable households in target provinces. This pro-poor business model includes capacity development for female-led water operators in water management and finance, leadership in water committees, compliance with the national water quality standard and regulation, and staff management.



Female masons laying stones for pit toilet construction in Guma Gewog, Bhutan
Credit: SNV Bhutan / Tashi Dorji

Systems strengthening to incorporate inclusive WASH processes

Thirteen CSO projects have approaches to strengthen institutions to be more inclusive and encompassing of the needs of marginalised groups, including incorporating inclusive WASH processes through capacity-building. In Bhutan and Nepal, for example, this has led to several local governments providing institutional budget support for disability inclusion.

In many instances, CSOs work to strengthen government institutions through policy reviews, training and evidence-based advocacy. For instance, IRC Pakistan's institutional strengthening work has been undertaken together with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Health Engineering Department, other relevant government departments, schools and health facilities.

Ensuring representation in WASH decision-making bodies has been an important step towards institutionalising approaches. Partnering with OPDs has made this possible in multiple instances.

SNV Nepal's partnering with Ward, Rural Municipal, and District-level OPDs has proved an effective way to ensure people with disabilities are represented in corresponding levels of WASH Coordination Committees. In Nepal, these committees are government-recognised coordination and decision-making mechanisms, and members plan, coordinate, and monitor WASH activities within their municipalities. Having members who are living with disability ensures that disability issues are systematised through all stages of WASH activities.

WaterAid PNG's long-term approach at the provincial level supports representation from the East Sepik Council of Women and the East Sepik Disabled People's Association on the District WASH Committee (see [Box 7](#)). Ongoing involvement raises awareness and has ensured that the District WASH Plan has specific provisions on inclusive WASH and both organisations collaborate with government to address them. World Vision Vanuatu has influenced the Department of Water to include disability accessibility in its Drinking Water Safety and Security Planning bids (government).

Box 7. WaterAid's Inclusive WASH for Wewak District, Papua New Guinea

In Wewak District, East Sepik Province, WaterAid is working to strengthen government-led WASH systems service delivery through an adaptive and inclusive district-wide planning approach, supported by Water for Women. The project works to empower women and people with disabilities through support for the creation of, and effective participation in, decision-making forums associated with WASH governance and service delivery. It supports two local RHOs – ESCOW and the East Sepik Disabled Persons Association (ESDPA) – to be WASH leaders and service delivery partners.

The project works to institutionalise and strengthen inclusive WASH to be a lasting operating approach at the provincial level. After an initial baseline documenting GEDSI issues in the province, ESCOW and ESDPA now have permanent roles on the District WASH Committee, where they raise awareness and inform the District WASH Plan's specific provisions on inclusive WASH. They also collaborate with government to address these issues. WaterAid provides support to the RHOs to participate and lead activities, such as awareness-raising workshops with government.

WaterAid's partnership with ESCOW and ESDPA is also a long-term pillar of a project in which the partners jointly implement community rural WASH services. The RHOs join community visits in the assessment phase, collecting data on women and people with disabilities as well as running awareness-raising sessions with communities. The RHOs provide referral services, with ESCOW providing a violence referral pathway and information to prevent gender-based violence, while ESDPA links people with disabilities to services.

The LNOB approaches pursued have been successful in increasing Provincial WASH governments' understanding of gender and disability inclusive WASH. Having ESCOW and ESDPA as members of the District WASH Committee has led to greater focus on gender and disability in the roll out of the District WASH Plan and increased their status as WASH leaders. This is mostly attributed to WaterAid's learning and awareness work across all stakeholders, and building the technical capacity of ESCOW and ESDPA on WASH systems strengthening. The project has also led to these organisations having stronger governance and operational systems, as WaterAid has supported their core organisation development.



A representative from East Sepik Disabled Persons Association, who is visually impaired, inspects a model built by the WaterAid team to feel the design and provide technical input
Credit: WaterAid Wewak team

Mobilising resources for LNOB

Institutionalising inclusive practices into WASH decision-making has led to increased resourcing from government for LNOB initiatives across eight CSO projects (Figure 9). For example, in Nepal, SNV reports greater prioritisation of people with disabilities in local government budgets as a result of increased engagement. Examples include:

- prioritising the needs of people with disabilities during flood relief efforts
- providing inclusive handwashing stations during the COVID-19 pandemic
- funding staffed disability help-desks within rural municipalities together with disability networks
- funding for menstrual hygiene materials and awareness for women with disabilities.

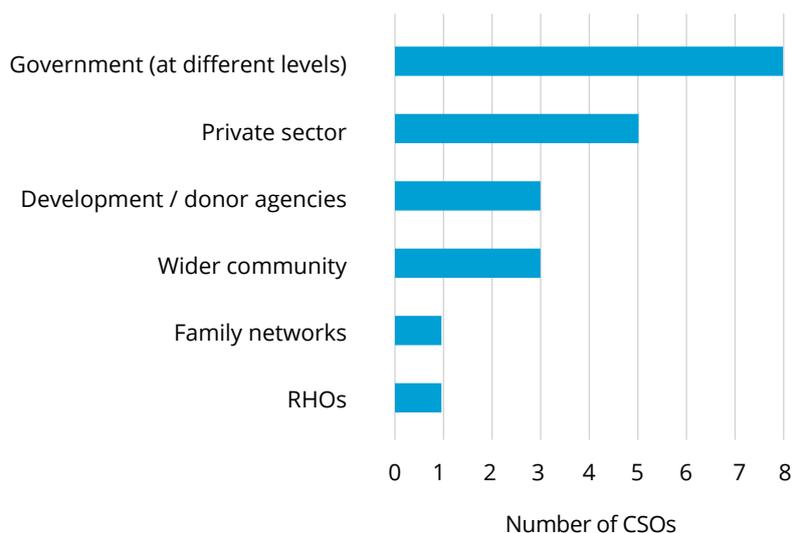


Figure 9. Sources of additional resources CSOs mobilised for LNOB initiatives

A regional analysis of where projects have been able to leverage additional resources shows that Southeast Asia has had the most success in doing so, with four out of five reporting that they mobilised additional resources from the private sector (Figure 10). Others mobilised additional resources from the community, development agencies, or CSOs, RHOs and family networks. The Pacific region had the fewest (two out of six) projects reporting that they had leveraged additional resources. In South Asia, half of the projects mobilised additional resources.

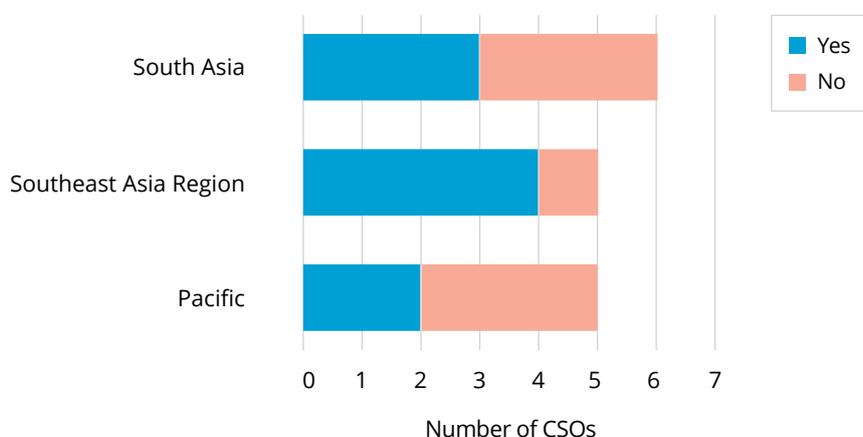


Figure 10. Regional breakdown of additional LNOB resources mobilised (n=16)

Scaling of CSO LNOB approaches

As described in Section 2, there are three main forms of scaling of approaches: scaling out, scaling up and scaling deep. When CSOs were asked about whether their LNOB approaches had been scaled, most reported examples of either scaling out – replication of their approaches with other communities – or scaling up – where LNOB approaches were adopted in law, policy or some other institutionalised/systemic way (e.g., through by-laws, regulations, or decision-making body membership). Half of the CSOs indicated their project had some impact beyond their implementation area (Figure 11).

Three projects indicated that there was uptake of an inclusive WASH tool or manual they had developed beyond their project area. An example of this was IRC Pakistan’s MHH training module for women with disabilities. Developed for the project, this was taken up by the MHH working group, then the national MHH working group organised formal train-the-trainer sessions with stakeholders from other areas.

Two projects reported that LNOB delivery models had been taken up in other areas (Figure 11). In India, CFAR’s Single Window model is now facilitating government faecal sludge management in 45 wards and solid waste management in five wards (and 22 project wards in Bhubaneswar). In addition, the Sweekruti scheme for empowerment of transgender people is implemented across six districts in the state of Odisha.

Three projects reported scaling up impact on government policy, strategies and/or data collection approaches. One of these is in Bhutan, where the SNV-supported LNOB approach has resulted in the development of the national government’s Leave No One Behind and Post ODF Strategy. The Strategy emphasises accessibility, building on empirical evidence from an initial LNOB study.

Clusters and other sector coordination mechanisms share best practices, meaning that LNOB approaches and lessons are shared between CSOs. An example of this is in PNG, where World Vision leads the National WASH Cluster, and reports that best practice approaches have been adopted by or influenced the work of other CSOs.

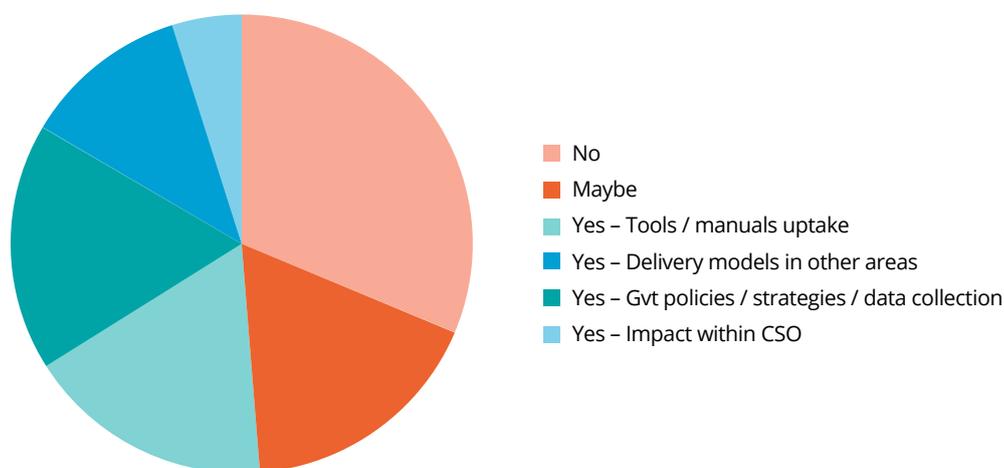


Figure 11. Instances of uptake of CSO LNOB approaches beyond their project areas (n=16)

Lessons learnt

There is a depth of experience of LNOB approaches across Water for Women and a richness that is challenging to capture. Direct quotes to represent these CSO lessons in their own voice are shown in [Figure 12](#). Some of these points were mentioned by multiple CSOs, so deserve elaboration.

Raising disadvantaged voices

Raising disadvantaged voices can compel power structures to listen and act, contributing to broader WASH systems strengthening

The multiple ways that CSOs work to support the voices of the women, girls, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups and ensure their participation in WASH decision-making bodies means that their messages and voices cannot be ignored. These initiatives to influence and shift attitudes have in many instances resulted in measurable benefits (through budget allocations, etc.). CFAR India describes this as compelling power structures to act. CFAR is evaluating LNOB approaches by 'tracking participation, representation, leadership roles and securing inclusion of SGMs in the context of social, occupational and spatial vulnerabilities. This enables us to bring together all marginal groups on one platform, often compelling/enabling power structures into collaborative WASH inclusion'. From the perspective of CSOs, influencing power structures or duty-bearers to uphold the rights to WASH for all, especially marginalised groups, strengthens the accountability and transparency of service mechanisms and sector strengthening.

Supporting leadership for LNOB

Supporting leadership for LNOB initiatives across multiple levels and organisations helps shift norms, scale deep and embed equitable approaches

Supporting leadership development was the most common LNOB approach CSOs employed. CSOs have been creative in developing leadership skills for LNOB and activities to build leadership skills within themselves, in RHOs and in duty-bearers at multiple levels of government. Building leadership skills within women's organisations and OPDs has been important support for increased civic engagement, self-organising, advocacy efforts and meaningful participation in WASH sector decision-making forums. Life skills, vocational skills and business management skills may not at first appear to be core to achieving WASH goals, but contribute by enabling marginalised groups to advocate for their rights more effectively.

Influencing the views of government and community leaders on issues of equity and inclusion helps shift norms and structures of exclusion. Working closely with leaders could be considered a form of scaling deep, because it seeks to shift leader's core values, beliefs and commitment to tackle marginalisation within their realms of influence. Scaling deep with people in leadership positions is prioritised because these people have the power to shape others' and wider cultural views. As a WaterAid PNG representative stated, 'Identifying champions in government is key, as they can influence others on equity and inclusion'.

There are limitations

There are limitations to what WASH initiatives can achieve in the face of overwhelming disadvantage

While some CSOs have started to address economic and other forms of disadvantage, others have expressed that the WASH projects cannot address systemic LNOB issues, which can be overwhelming.

One area that received relatively little mention throughout this study was how CSOs manage trade-offs resulting from LNOB efforts. For example, there are potential trade-offs between pursuing targeted and tailored approaches

We simply address part of the WASH issues for these individuals but they have other issues like housing, economic empowerment that are key and they need to be helped to tackle this, but the project is limited and even the community around them are equally poor and cannot provide the social welfare support.

World Vision PNG representative

for different groups and the complexity and difficulty in implementing and administering these at wide scale. Many CSOs described their perceptions of 'success', but the extent to which these perceptions were based on evaluation and measurement was not clear.

Partnerships and coordination

Partnerships with RHOs and coordination across stakeholders supports the co-creation of LNOB solutions

Numerous CSOs highlighted the benefits to their own organisations and personal growth gained through both formal and informal partnerships with RHOs. These partnerships build a mutual understanding of imbalances in power and privilege. CSOs working with RHOs have been able to jointly assess exclusion and marginalisation and co-create solutions. Some, like World Vision Vanuatu, pointed to the time required to build relationships and trust to support joint development of LNOB approaches. Other contributing success factors include coordination with duty-bearers and referral services. Conversely, some CSOs, such as Plan Solomon Islands, highlighted that implementing LNOB initiatives in the absence of sufficiently resourced and capacitated government counterparts is particularly challenging.

Do No Harm

Do No Harm principles guard against unintended consequences

Any WASH or other program can result in negative consequences, particularly for marginalised people, who may inadvertently be exposed to increased stigmatisation or risk of gender-based or other targeted violence. Water for Women sees harm as a continuum, understanding that discriminatory attitudes are the underlying cause of violence and other severe harm. To 'Do No Harm' requires deep understanding of the complex dynamics of people's lives, and robust program monitoring systems, responsive to unintended consequences and capacity. Acknowledging violence as a daily reality in the lives of women and marginalised people, transformative practice recognises the importance of understanding its causes and dynamics. It requires understanding of and linking with survivor-centred and rights-based prevention and responses services for advocacy and referral.

While few CSOs explicitly outlined the potential trade-offs in pursuing some LNOB approaches, they did outline the need to guard against unintended consequences by applying Do No Harm principles, applying inclusive practices and working in partnership with RHOs.



A development officer discusses the importance of menstrual hygiene with mothers group members in Ramnagar Rural Municipality, Sarlahi, Nepal
Credit: SNV Nepal

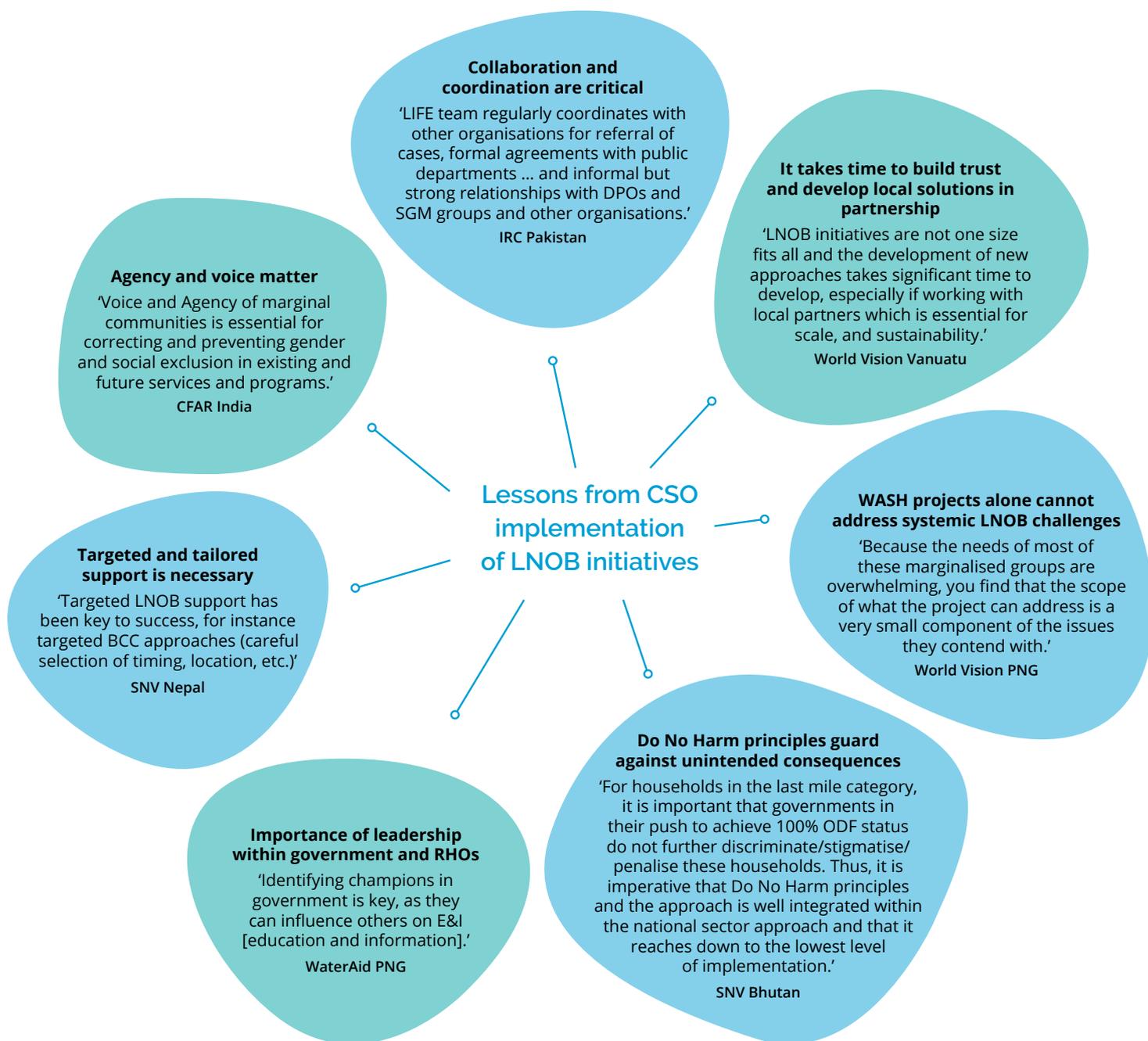


Figure 12. Lessons from CSO implementation of LNOB initiatives

Conclusion

Prioritising the needs of women and girls and people with disabilities and ensuring they are not left behind is a key strength of Water for Women projects. All projects prioritise and tailor empowerment and engagement activities to these two marginalised groups. In addition, specific projects identify and work with some of society's most ostracised groups, such as ethnic minorities, caste groups and SGMs.

The need for disaggregated data is mostly well understood by CSOs, and household surveys are the most common way that they collect detailed data, with gender and power analysis also commonly used tools. For those working with extremely marginalised groups such as SGMs, those CSOs have a toolbox of approaches for identifying issues, needs and different points of view. Partnerships with RHOs and participatory approaches that involve marginalised people in project design, monitoring and evaluation throughout project implementation are critical to CSOs' understanding of intersectionality and exclusion. CSO projects benefit from iterative processes that foster ongoing learning and co-generation of LNOB approaches responsive to changing circumstances.

The participating CSOs play critical roles in strengthening the voices and meaningful participation of women, girls, people with disabilities, ethnic groups, elderly and youth, ethnic minorities and SGMs. The practical ways CSOs enact LNOB supports empowerment in multiple and mutually reinforcing ways, helping these groups to speak for themselves in decision-making forums, and compelling power structures to act.

There are potential trade-offs and frictions between a focus on technical infrastructure WASH priorities and the imperative to understand the root causes of discrimination and disadvantage. The skills required for each of these areas are vastly different, indicating a need for multi-pronged, multidisciplinary WASH teams that can respond to the engineering/ procurement aspects of WASH and also the sociological and/or anthropological skills required to unpack power and privilege.

The WASH sector has often focused on the measurable approaches of scaling out – reaching beneficiaries with safe WASH services – and scaling up – influencing policy and laws and strengthening systems. LNOB, however, is concerned not only with policy, but with social psychology (UNICEF 2021), and CSOs working on LNOB approaches find themselves questioning norms of caste, class, privilege and power. What is clear is that to truly ensure no one is left behind, thoughtful and sustained efforts to rebalance power and privilege are necessary. This analysis of LNOB approaches in WASH shows that CSOs are already beginning to scale deep, and working to shift cultural norms, values and power structures that are root causes of marginalisation.

Further research in three interrelated areas would support strengthened LNOB activities within WASH initiatives:

1. Learning how to make decisions about the relative focus on technical WASH dimensions and LNOB priorities to support CSOs to form intentional, justifiable approaches to grappling with trade-offs and frictions.
2. Improving evaluation of LNOB work to inform decision-making about priorities and ensure investments achieve inclusion, belonging and participation. Previous research (Carrard et al. 2020) identified a gap in monitoring and evaluation approaches that map LNOB strategies to outcomes. This synthesis of approaches in Water for Women projects confirms the need for further exploration and learning in this area.
3. Building evidence about the links between shifting social norms, particularly with respect to leaders and institutions, and achieving outcomes for marginalised people. While the complexity of social change means that causal pathways will not be clearly definable, analysing the ways in which shifting norms can contribute to LNOB in WASH would inform future priorities.



LEADING FOR LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND - IT'S TIME TO RESET!

WITHOUT INCLUSION =
? ! ?
LESS UNDERSTANDING
LESS OWNERSHIP
LET THE MARGINALIZED
BE HEARD!

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERS
TO BE ABLE TO SEE A BETTER VERSION OF THE WORLD
COURAGE
THE DESIRE TO HELP OTHERS
PERSISTENCE

THROUGH TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP:
EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS
ALSO AT THE DECISION-MAKING TABLE
LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

TIPS TO START:
THINK ABOUT ACTIONS IN MY OWN HOME
KEEP LISTENING
AND SPEAK UP!
WILL WALK MY TALK
BE AMBITIOUS

COLLECTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE
PARTNERSHIP IS THE NEW LEADERSHIP

CHANGE THE NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN LEADERS

FROM REFLECTION TO ACTION TO DO!

IF WE KEEP DOING WHAT WE DID WE KEEP GETTING WHAT WE'VE GOT...
MORE OF THE SAME WAY
NEW PERSPECTIVES ROAD
WE NEED TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERS

GIVE A SAFE SPACE FOR HONEST CONVERSATION

CUNERA / DRAWUP

Water for Women's Leading for Leaving No One Behind World Water Week 2021 session outcomes in illustration; one of 10 selected by the Stockholm International Water Institute and Netherlands Government Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be documented in this way
Credit: Draw Up / Cunera Joosten

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For further information please contact:
waterforwomen@ghd.com
waterforwomenfund.org

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Appendix 1. Online survey

LNOB Survey Questions for Water for Women Partners

The purpose of this survey is to collect information to support peer-to-peer learning amongst Fund CSOs. Survey responses will be collated, synthesized and shared to promote learning, including at an online workshop. This survey is not intended to evaluate projects and there are no right or wrong answers.

Progressive realisation of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) as basic human rights requires effective mechanisms to support equity and inclusion to ensure access, that is acceptable, used and sustained over time. Different support mechanisms have been tried globally over past decades and approaches are increasingly becoming more nuanced in their application. In ensuring we Leave No One Behind (LNOB) all people who may be disadvantaged must be considered, including women, people with disabilities, people marginalised by ethnicity, sexuality and gender identity, poverty, religion and the intersectionality of disadvantage.

This survey will collect information on how Fund projects:

- 1) Examine who may be left behind
- 2) Empower them to overcome barriers to accessing WASH
- 3) What practical actions are Enacted.

Support to LNOB may include a spectrum of activities from compensatory support (e.g., subsidies) through to strategies that address root causes of disadvantage (e.g., changing social norms). When answering survey questions please think about project related actions, strategies and research.

CSO information

What CSO and project are you responding for?

I agree to have the information provided included in Synthesis Learning documents by Water for Women Fund and in compliance with data use and storage by SNV.

If you are happy to be contacted for any follow up questions please provide your email address: [text box]

EXAMINE: disaggregated and people driven data and information

1. Which groups has your project identified as at risk of being left behind in WASH?
 - People with disabilities
 - Women and girls
 - Sexual and gender minorities
 - Youth
 - Elderly people
 - People living in poverty
 - Unemployed people
 - Ethnic minorities
 - Caste groups
 - Remote populations
 - One parent families

- People living in challenging environments
 - Other [text box]
2. What tools or approaches does your project use to identify who is at risk of being left behind with WASH access?
- Existing data sets (e.g. census)
 - Household level assessment (e.g. survey)
 - Community-led assessment
 - Partner with local organisation
 - Formative research
 - Gender and power analysis
 - Other [text box]
3. Where people face multiple barriers or types of disadvantage affecting their WASH access, how has your project identified these people? Please provide examples if you have some. [text box]

EMPOWER: civic engagement and voice

4. What approaches does your project use to empower those who are at risk of being left behind? For example, ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making. Please provide specific, practical examples. [text box]

ENACT: integrated, equity-focused SDG policies, interventions and budgets

5. What approaches does your project use to LNOB in WASH access? Please tick the boxes for those that align with your project activities.
- Targeted subsidies
 - Work with Disabled Persons Organisations
 - Work with Women's Rights Organisations
 - Work with Sexual and Gender Minorities Rights Holders' Organisations
 - Institutional strengthening to incorporate inclusive WASH processes
 - Developing local leadership
 - Inclusive and pro-poor business models
 - Tailored behaviour change communication programs
 - Tailored demand creation activities
 - Inclusive technology or infrastructure
 - Mobilising social protection programs / conditional cash transfers (CCTs)
 - Self-financing mechanisms
 - Evidence-based advocacy
 - Influencing harmful social norms or discriminatory practices
 - Household outreach
 - Mobilising access to assistive devices/disability services

- Peer and self-help groups
 - Other [text box]
6. Please describe 2 or 3 of the most used initiatives identified above. Please provide short descriptions and indicate: whether measures are considered temporary or longer-term; what scale initiatives operate at (such as community, local government, business, national); and, who is leading, implementing and/or supporting these initiatives (such as project, government, private sector, RHOs, etc.). If you have links to case studies feel free to include these. [text box]
7. Does your LNOB initiative mobilise additional resources? [Yes/No]
8. If yes, where are resources mobilised from?
- Family networks
 - The wider community
 - Government (at different levels)
 - The private sector
 - Civil society organisations
 - Rights holder organisations
 - Development agencies
 - Other [text box]
9. What have you learnt from implementing LNOB initiatives? Please reflect on the following questions in your response: Are you monitoring and evaluating your LNOB initiatives, and how? How do timing, sequencing and/or targeting affect success? How are project activities versus other external contributing factors impacting outcomes? [text box]
10. Do you have examples of uptake of LNOB approaches beyond the project area? For example, have approaches been adopted by other CSOs or in policy? [text box]

Appendix 2. Water for Women CSO projects

CSO	Country	Water for Women Project
IRC*	Pakistan	Leveraging Inclusive WASH for Empowerment (LIFE)
Plan International*	Indonesia	WASH and Beyond – Transforming Lives in Eastern Indonesia
SNV*	Bhutan	Beyond the Finish Line – Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All in Bhutan
SNV*	Nepal	Beyond the Finish Line – Inclusive and Sustainable Rural Water Supply Services in Nepal
WaterAid	Myanmar	Humanitarian WASH Project (HWP)⁵
WaterAid*	Papua New Guinea	Implementing inclusive WASH for the people of Wewak, Papua New Guinea
WaterAid*	Timor-Leste	Beyond inclusion: Realising gender transformational change and sustainable WASH systems
World Vision*	Papua New Guinea	WASH Voices for Empowerment (WAVE), Papua New Guinea
SNV*	Lao PDR (Laos)	Beyond the Finish Line – Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All in Lao PDR
CFAR*	India	Mobilising, facilitating and replicating socially inclusive WASH initiatives in India's urban slums
iDE*	Cambodia	Cambodia water, sanitation, and hygiene scale-up program 2.0 (WASH-SUP2)
Habitat	Fiji	Strengthening community resilience and inclusion through improved WASH services in Fiji
Thrive Networks/East Meets West	Vietnam	Women-led Output Based Aid (WOBA) Vietnam
Thrive Networks/East Meets West*	Cambodia	Women-led Output Based Aid (WOBA) Cambodia
World Vision*	Vanuatu	Laetem Dak Kona: Gender-Equitable and Disability-Accessible WASH in Vanuatu
Plan International*	Solomon Islands	New Times, New Targets: Supporting Solomon Islands government WASH transition and resilient WASH for all
Plan International*	Papua New Guinea	Resilient WASH in the Islands Region of Papua New Guinea
World Vision*	Bangladesh	SHOMOTA – Strengthening gender equality and social inclusion in WASH in Bangladesh
WaterAid World Vision Plan International	Papua New Guinea	WASH Em i Bikpela Samting - Delivering improved health outcomes through inclusive WASH across PNG

* Indicates projects which completed the LNOB survey under this Learning Agenda initiative

⁵ Formerly 'Supporting safe births in Myanmar – strengthening health systems to improve the quality of maternal healthcare' (2018-2020)



waterforwomen@ghd.com
waterforwomenfund.org

