

Diagnostic tool to ensure inclusion and equity in WASH launched

The IRC WASH, the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and the Queen's University with funding from DfID-funded REACH Empowerment in WASH Project have introduced a diagnostic tool to measure inclusion and equity in the WASH sector. The process entailed working with stakeholders to develop indicators to better understand the relationship between empowerment and WASH-related outcomes; provide a tool to assess and monitor gender issues related to WASH programmes and services; and provide data and research to contribute to informing policy-making related to achieving household water security in an equitable/gender-balanced way.

The Empowerment in WASH Index (EWI) is a tool that supports individuals, households and the wider society (community and local WASH institutions and authorities) levels to monitor gender outcomes of WASH interventions and service delivery or support research on the links between access to WASH, empowerment and wellbeing of individuals. It aims to close the evidence gap on empowerment of sanitation and water security interventions. It also enables local government agencies, non-governmental organisations, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and development partners to assess and monitor gender issues related to their WASH programmes.



The tool

Dr Sarah Dickin, the Research Fellow of SEI, at the National Level Learning Alliance (NALLAP), in Accra said the idea of the Empowerment in WASH Index was to monitor and evaluate activities in the sector over the years. She said the idea was to develop indicators to measure

that in a more robust way so the NLLAP was to enable stakeholders in the sector to understand what issues are important for empowering men and women in WASH. She said, it would enable stakeholders understand which aspect to be targeted first to ensure they reach universal access and no one was left behind in addressing the needs of

marginalised groups.

A tool for all

Mr Jeremiah Atengdem, IRC WASH Ghana, WASH Expert, called for the empowering of vulnerable people to address household WASH security risk issues. “It will also enable local government agencies, NGOs, CSOs and development partners assess and monitor gender issues related to their WASH programmes,” he added. Mr Atengdem noted that the REACH empowerment project was to co-develop an Empowerment in WASH index; as a tool to measure and capture multiple dimensions of empowerment.

Changing the status quo

DR Elijah Bisung, the Assistant Professor of Queen's University, Canada, called for better collaboration to achieve universal access by 2030 in Ghana. sharing findings from the Asutifi North District, one of the areas where the EWI pilot was done, Dr. Bisung said women were less empowered as compared to men in WASH access. Among others, he said women have less influence in decision making about WASH activities including planning, management and expenditure for WASH and at the same time, they are immediately held responsible for WASH failure at the household level. He indicated that social and cultural norms that dictated roles for men and women, particularly those that place WASH responsibilities on women accounted for men dis-empowerment in decisions about WASH roles and responsibilities. “We are Hopeful at

the end of the day; we can change the status quo to ensure that we leave no one behind”.

Conclusion and Recommendations

At the end of the deliberations, participants were happy about the tool and hope that it will be used by many sector players to ensure equity and inclusion in WASH services. There were also several recommendations made to improve equity and inclusion:

- Traditional customary laws as well as national laws and policies should be reviewed and changed reflect the changing development trajectory to include all including women, children and the marginalized.
- Promote a systematic and sustainable integration of gender equity at all levels of programming;
- Enhance capacities of sector implementers, stakeholders and programme managers to ensure systematic gender analysis in planning and programming.
- Provide some practical and strategic illustrations of explicit gender strategies, guidelines and tools.
- Present a user-friendly, easy referenced document for effective gender mainstreaming and equity promotion in the WASH sector.
- Support consistent tracking and accountability system with specific performance indicators and measure of progress in gender monitoring and evaluation.

NLLAP is a WASH sector multi stakeholder platform with the overall goal of improving sector learning and dialogue. It is hosted by the Ghana WASH Resource Centre Network (RCN). The platform offers learning and sharing opportunity for sector players as one of the practical approaches to improving sector engagements/sharing with the long term aim of achieving a knowledge driven WASH sector that delivers quality and sustainable services in Ghana. NLLAP meetings take place on the last Thursday of every month (with modifications when necessary) and are open to all interested parties. The discussions of each NLLAP meetings can be found on the RCN website www.washghana.net.

If you are interested to propose a topic for a meeting please contact us on,
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