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together for children



**CHILD PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING
BRIEFING PAPER FOR THE WASH SECTOR**

CHILD PROTECTION MINIMUM STANDARD #23

“Child protection concerns are reflected in the assessment, design, monitoring and evaluation of WASH programmes. All girls and boys have access to appropriate WASH services that minimise risks of physical and sexual violence.”

How to Use This Briefing paper: This Briefing can act as a quick reference for Plan International Child Protection in Emergencies Staff on how to engage with the WASH sector so that children are taken into account in their programmes. This briefing note gives CPiE staff guidance on which child protection mainstreaming messages should be conveyed to WASH partners. This briefing is aligned with the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and the Sphere Standards, as well as Plan International staff feedback on what actions are the most vital for child protection mainstreaming in other sectors.

Symbols Key:

→ See Tool Annex

INTRODUCTION: WHY MAINSTREAM CHILD PROTECTION IN WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)?

Children represent 50% of all people affected by emergencies. In humanitarian settings, all affected adults and children are in need of access to clean drinking water, sanitation services and hygiene. However, boys and girls have different physical and mental capacities and have less social power than adults, this means that the risks and needs of boys and girls in emergencies is often different from that of adults. For example, boys and girls have specific WASH needs such as child-friendly toilets (size, signage, and lighting to avoid situations of violence), smaller water transport containers, and easy-to-use water supply systems and hand washing facilities. Boys and girls under five years are particularly susceptible to water and sanitation related diseases as they often come in contact with faeces and dirt from crawling (for example).

If the needs and risks of children are not considered, children may experience harm, abuse and exploitation during a humanitarian WASH response. It is therefore important that all WASH workers are aware of the specific needs and risks of children and carry out their activities in a way that protects children and does not put them at risk of any further harm. This briefing sheet is divided into four parts:

- 1) Common Risks for Girls and Boys in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Programmes
- 2) Programme Design: How to Mainstream Child Protection into WASH
- 3) Programme Implementation: How to Mainstream Child Protection into WASH
- 4) Programme Measurement: How to Mainstream Child Protection into WASH

COMMON RISKS FOR GIRLS AND BOYS IN WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH) PROGRAMMES

Common reasons children lack access to WASH Facilities and Hygiene Promotion Sessions:

- Water distribution points are not age appropriate: there is often overcrowding which prevents children from having equal opportunity to access water.

- The size and weight of water pumps and water containers are often too heavy for smaller children – this includes bore holes or access points that are too far for children to walk to, or if accessed, the road poses various threats to children.
- Unfenced water catchments can lead to hazardous environments for children.
- Lack of child-friendly designs for latrines or washing facilities¹ prevent use and/or access, especially for children living with a disability, (e.g. toilet is too tall, squat hole is too large, lack of access ramps, not gender disaggregated).
- Hygiene activities and awareness-raising sessions may not reach children at risk, including children living with a disability, unaccompanied and separated children, children living in child-headed households, children living on the streets, children out-of-school or in residential care (e.g. material is not child-friendly, location and timing of sessions is during school hours).
- Children may not be able to read sanitation messages or hygiene promotion material.
- Consultations with adolescent girls, who often hold the primary responsibility for water collection and use, to inform where to locate bore holes and water points are not carried out.
- Adolescent girls have health and hygiene needs specific to time of menstruation. Lack of access to sanitary pads, clean water for washing, and safe disposal options (such as private latrines) make WASH practices difficult especially during menstruation.

Common Health and Hygiene Risks for Children:

- Compared to adults, children are more susceptible to water-borne diseases resulting from unclean water and unhygienic behaviour (e.g. mothers may not wash hands before breastfeeding).
- Children (especially those under 5) are more likely to be infected by diarrheal diseases and other water-borne diseases due to the lack of soap at hand washing facilities.
- Lack of appropriate access and knowledge about the use and benefits of latrines may push children to practice open defecation, increasing the risks of disease infection.
- Girls may not know how or have the appropriate material to handle their menstruation with dignity and in a hygienic manner.

Common Child Protection Risks Related to WASH

- Risk of physical injury while collecting water, as children carry heavy containers and manage equipment not designed for children.
- Walking unreasonably far distances to reach water distribution points may expose children to hazardous labour and the risk of violence, abuse and exploitation, particularly if they walk in the dark.
- Children may not be able to access safe spaces (i.e. child-friendly spaces/temporary learning centres/school) due to water collection responsibilities or hygiene promotion and awareness-raising activities that are not coordinated with child protection activities. This puts them at higher risk of abuse, violence and exploitation.

¹ WASHING FACILITIES INCLUDE HAND-WASHING FACILITIES AND SHOWERS

- Latrines are a high-risk location for sexual and gender based violence, particularly for girls. They are particularly unsafe when children are unable to lock latrine doors or when latrine materials do not provide sufficient privacy. Girls are especially at risk when using latrines after dark, particularly if there is no electricity or light.
- Children may resort to risky or harmful behaviour when they feel unsafe or uncomfortable using latrines or washing facilities, such as walking outside of populated areas to defecate, or attempting to eat and drink less in order not to use latrines so often.
- Children may be separated from their parents/caregivers during crowded queuing at latrines and water distribution points.
- Children may fall down pit latrines and wells that are not adequately fenced.

PROGRAMME DESIGN: HOW TO MAINSTREAM CHILD PROTECTION INTO WASH

As Child Protection team members, find time to meet Plan's colleagues who will be responsible for WASH interventions, discuss with them planning and preparedness actions that need to be undertaken to ensure children are protected from harm during WASH activities and have equal access to vital WASH services.

Some of the below actions only target child protection or WASH actors. Other actions target both child protection and WASH actors. Note that not all the below actions will be feasible, it is important that you check with your colleagues which actions will be feasible and not. Boys and girls, especially those most vulnerable, must be consulted during needs assessments and throughout WASH program design/delivery/monitoring/evaluation.

Planning and preparedness actions can include:

- Ensure child protection staff are aware of which children are the most vulnerable in terms of their WASH access and use.
- Ensure child protection and WASH staff know the particular protection concerns children face in your context – including in connection to WASH – or are aware of barriers to accessing WASH services in your specific context.
- Ensure child protection staff are aware of or help plan measures to ensure that the most vulnerable children have access to WASH services.
- Ensure WASH actors carry-out consultations with adolescent girls to inform their understanding about adolescent girls' roles, responsibilities and needs in ensuring household water supplies are met.
- Ensure child protection staff are aware of or help plan measures to avoid family separations and keep children safe during crowded queuing for WASH services (e.g. are services in place to take care of children while parents wait at water point, separate queues for mothers with children, etc.).
- Ensure child protection staff are aware of or help plan measures to ensure children's safe access to water points and ability to carry water home without exposure to hazardous labour.
- Ensure child protection staff are aware of communities' current practices regarding and knowledge, cultural norms and understanding of WASH practices to identify potential customs that may present protection issues. This should include consultation with children and adolescent boys and girls to identify culturally appropriate hygiene materials, locations of latrines, security issues, etc.

- Ensure child protection staff are aware of communities' current practices regarding and knowledge of sanitation and hygiene practices and any additional cultural factors that may inhibit access or use of WASH facilities for girls or boys.
- Identify who is responsible for ensuring WASH for infants in your context (e.g. mothers, adolescent girls, grandmothers, etc.) and train them on the appropriate disposal of faeces, hand washing after faecal contact, and clearing human/animal faeces from infant playing areas.
- Advocate with WASH staff to plan complaint mechanisms that are accessible to children regarding WASH services.
- Advocate with WASH staff to include WASH monitoring and evaluation indicators that are disaggregated by age, gender and ability.

Staff capacity building can include:

- *Arrange regular meetings between child protection and WASH staff* to share expertise when assessing children's needs and designing WASH facilities (i.e. water distribution points, latrines, washing facilities, hygiene kits etc.).
- *Advocate for adequate numbers of female WASH staff.*
- *Assign at least 1 WASH staff member to act as focal point for child protection issues.* This can be either a child protection staff member embedded in a WASH programme or a WASH staff member who is trained on child protection issues and is aware of how to refer cases of vulnerable children to child protection or appropriate services.
- *Budget for child protection trainings for all WASH staff.* To ensure that child protection risks and child abuse are dealt with in a timely and efficient manner, it is crucial that WASH staff is educated on the following issues in trainings:
 - o Plan International's and service provider's child protection policy.
 - o How to sensitively communicate with children to avoid further distress.
 - o Context-specific child protection issues and vulnerability criteria.
 - o How to identify and refer cases of abuse to Child Protection.
 - o How to develop child-friendly and gender-sensitive WASH messages.
 - o How to ensure access to WASH facilities for and provide education on hygiene practices for specific groups of excluded children, e.g. children with disabilities, unaccompanied and separated children or children living in child-headed households, as well as for adolescent girls
 - o How to plan and implement child-friendly WASH activities, including child-friendly hygiene promotion (e.g. consult children and adolescent boys and girls about their WASH related needs, teach them how to prevent diarrhoea or care for facilities, etc.).

Budgeting can include:

- *Sufficient latrines*, especially female latrines which are often used by both mothers and children. Note that the Sphere Standards indicator is one toilet for every 20 people and the female/male ratio is 3:1.
- *Sufficient safety measures*, such as providing lights in each latrine and routes between housing and latrines, and inside locks on latrine doors to ensure adequate privacy and safety.
- *Staff time* to develop child-friendly hygiene promotion and hygiene messages, e.g. providing child-friendly IEC material, theatre performances demonstrating hygienic behaviour, teaching songs, playing board games, story-telling, etc.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: HOW TO MAINSTREAM CHILD PROTECTION INTO WASH

During programme implementation, ensure that child protection and WASH field staff is equipped to take the following key programme implementation actions to ensure children are protected from harm in WASH programmes and have equal access to vital services.

Staff awareness & allocation:

→ To monitor these actions, see: Indicators II and III.

- Train WASH staff on the specific child protection issues in your context.
- Ensure WASH staff are trained on, understand and sign Inter-Agency Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policies.
- Ensure WASH staff are trained on and have the necessary knowledge and skills to know:
 - o The types of child protection incidents that could happen at or because of WASH
 - o How to handle these incidents if they occur
 - o How to identify other child protection risks
 - o How the child protection referral mechanisms works so that they feel confident reporting cases of abuse in a timely way.
 - o How to develop child-friendly and gender-sensitive WASH messages.
 - o How to ensure access to WASH services for specific groups of excluded children and adolescent girls.
 - o How to plan and implement child-led WASH activities.
- Ensure both male and female staff are assigned to WASH-related activities.
- Ensure WASH staff regularly communicate with child protection colleagues on priority information for children and families about WASH interventions and issues and to ensure the referral mechanisms are working.

Drinking water:

→ To monitor these actions, see: Indicators VIII.

- Ensure sufficient quantity of safe drinking water is provided to all children at distribution points, households, schools, child-friendly space (and any other gathering point for children).
- Ensure sufficient quantity of clean water available for cooking, personal hygiene and cleaning.
- Ensure children are included in hygiene promotion activities that demonstrate safe use of water treatment agents.

Water distribution points:

→ To monitor these actions, see: Indicators I.

- Ensure WASH teams place wells and water distribution points in locations that are identified as safe and accessible for children and adolescent boys and girls (e.g. no more than 500 meters from households).
- Ensure water distribution guidelines (e.g. schedule, single-sex lines, age restrictions, complaint mechanism, etc.) are developed in consultation with communities, including vulnerable groups, including children and adolescents

- Ensure WASH teams establish sufficient water points to avoid over-crowding (e.g. no more than 30 minutes wait time) or over-use of only a few water points. Implement additional measures to avoid crowding, e.g. ensure adequate flow capacity, set up separate lines for mothers with children and children with mobility difficulties, etc.
- Ensure water collection points are accessible and easy-to-operate for children, especially children living with a disability, e.g. provide ramps and handrails on raised pumps, ensure children can operate hand pumps, etc.
- Implement measures to ensure that children are not at increased risk when fetching water at long distances.
- Establish water distribution schedules after consulting girls and boys, to ensure that times do not interfere with other obligations (e.g. schooling, chores, and meal preparation) and allow children collecting water to return home before dark. Double check that schedules are clear to child-headed households, as children may not be able to read clocks.
- Ensure that water containers and jerry cans are available in child-friendly sizes and designs.
- Ensure children are educated on how to safely collect water and store it to prevent contamination.

Latrines and washing facilities:

→ To monitor these actions, see: Indicators IV, V and VI.

- Locate latrines no more than 50 metres from housing areas and no more than 20 metres from Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) and in clearline of sight from the CFS.
- Ensure latrines and washing facilities are constructed in a safe, dignified and child-friendly way. At a minimum, ensure that they are:
 - o Easy for children to operate (e.g. handrails, small pit holes or low seats).
 - o Accessible for children with a disability (e.g. ramps are provided for children in wheelchairs, etc.).
 - o Central, accessible, lockable, well-lit and clearly signed.
 - o Designed with small latrine openings so that children do not risk falling in.
- Ensure that the routes to/from latrines are well lit, especially for female latrines.
- Provide child-friendly hand-washing facilities at latrines (e.g. low water spouts).
- Build clearly marked, single-sex latrines and washing facilities. Note that the ratio of female to male latrines is 3:1.
- Build separate washing facilities for adolescent girls and women to dispose of or wash and dry their menstrual cloths or other hygiene materials in privacy
- Provide sufficient and appropriate latrines at temporary learning centres and schools to support adolescent girls' attendance during menstruation.
- Locate schools' hand-washing facilities conveniently next to latrines and provide soap (or an alternative) as well as a minimum of 1-2 litres of water per child per day for hand washing.

Hygiene promotion and awareness-raising:

→ To monitor these actions, see: Indicators VIII.

- Show children how to use latrines hygienically. For many children, this may be the first time they have seen latrines. Because children learn from observation, so it is vital that staff demonstrate how to use latrines hygienically (e.g. use of ash and soap, use of water, use of lids, importance of hand washing).
- Encourage caretakers to properly dispose of children's excrement. Parents and caregivers should be provided with information about safe disposal of infants' faeces, laundering practices and the use of potties or scoops for effectively managing safe disposal.
- Disseminate suitable menstruation materials to girls above 11 years. Carefully consider who will be a part of this distribution and include sufficient numbers of female staff so that they are distributed respectfully and girls are not solicited for sexual favours following distribution.
- Disseminate child-friendly hygiene messages that are disability- and gender-specific to help children understand the importance of hygienic behaviour (e.g. use cartoons or pictures).
- Educate children on how to prevent contamination of water (e.g. use clean water containers and lids to ensure water is not contaminated during transport, not playing inside water tanks, etc.) and how to safely use potentially dangerous water treatment materials.
- Include male and female teenage representatives in WASH committees to ensure children's needs are accommodated in WASH projects.

PROGRAMME MEASUREMENT: HOW TO MAINSTREAM CHILD PROTECTION INTO WASH

It is crucial that you monitor whether WASH has safeguarded children and not exposed them to further harm while taking their special needs and vulnerabilities into consideration. At the same time, monitoring should give answers to whether and in how far children have effectively accessed WASH services. The below action indicators are suggested but be sure to select from these indicators only those that apply to or can be adapted for your specific context and WASH programme. You may come up with different indicators based on your specific intervention. These results can be documented and shared as ways to improve your programming and as lessons learnt on child protection mainstreaming. Be sure to disaggregate all data by sex and age.

In addition, you can use → [Mainstreaming MEAL Tool – Mainstreaming Quality Scorecard](#) from the MEAL Toolkit to self-assess your mainstreaming work into other sectors. Adjust the scorecard to your context by working in partnership with other sectors to identify benchmarks for successful mainstreaming.

Action indicators	Monitoring tools
I. Percentage of surveyed children who have access to child-appropriate size water containers for carrying water	Consultation with children, Evaluation of surveys
II. The female-to-male ratio of representatives in WASH committees	Consultation with WASH committee members
III. Percentage of surveyed hygiene promoters who can give the name of at least one adequate place or actor where they can refer a child survivor of violence (including sexual violence)	Survey, Consultation with hygiene promoters, Child Protection actors mapping
IV. Percentage of girls and boys who have access to and use latrines and washing facilities	Consultation with hygiene promoters and children
V. Percentage of girls who use latrines for menstruation management	Consultation with girls
VI. Percentage of schools, child-friendly spaces and health facilities where child-appropriate WASH facilities are in place	Consultation with teachers, child-friendly space staff, health care staff and children
VII. Percentage of surveyed children who report having learnt new behaviours through hygiene promotion (either direct demonstration or posters and signs)	Pre-and post-tests, Consultation with children
VIII. Percentage of children who have access to sufficient water for hygiene, cooking, and drinking water	Consultation with children and teachers, CFS staff, health staff or others who regularly observe children drinking water

Further Resources

Child Protection Working Group, *Minimum Standards on Child Protection in Humanitarian Action*, Standard 23 - <http://cpwg.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/03/CP-Minimum-Standards-English-2013.pdf>

The Sphere Project, *Sphere Handbook*, p 79-139 - http://www.spherehandbook.org/~sh/resources/resources/Sphere_Core_Standards_and_CHS.pdf

ChildFund International, World Vision, IRC, and Save the Children, *Inter-Agency Facilitator's Guide: Applying Basic Child Protection Mainstreaming in Training for Field Staff in Non-Protection Sectors* - <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/5340.pdf>

Global Protection Cluster, *Protection Mainstreaming Training Package*, 2014, p. 183-187 - http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/aors/protection_mainstreaming/PM_training/1_GPC_Protection_Mainstreaming_Training_Package_FULL_November_2014.pdf

UNICEF, *Compendium of WASH in Schools*, 2012 - http://www.unicef.org/wash/schools/files/Compendium_of_WinS_Facilities_in_Emergencies.pdf

House, Mahon and Cahill. *Menstrual Hygiene Matters: A resource for improving menstrual hygiene around the world*, 2012 - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08a95e5274a31e0000690/Compiled_MHbook_LR.pdf

Oxfam, *Working with Children in Humanitarian WASH Programmes*, 2012 - <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/working-with-children-in-humanitarian-wash-programmes-298948>



About Plan International:

Plan International is an independent child rights and humanitarian organisation committed to children living a life free of poverty, violence and injustice. We actively unite children, communities and other people who share our mission to make positive lasting changes in children's and young people's lives. We support children to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to claim their rights to a fulfilling life, today and in the future.

We place a specific focus on girls and women, who are most often left behind. We have been building powerful partnerships for children for more than 75 years, and are now active in more than 70 countries.