

Issue 91 | March 8, 2013 | Focus on Gender Issues

March 8, 2013, is International Women's Day, a day that has been observed since the early 1900s. Gender is an important issue in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). In most societies women have the primary responsibility for managing the household water supply, sanitation, and health. Water is necessary not only for drinking, but also for food production and preparation, care of domestic animals, personal hygiene, care of the sick, cleaning, washing, and waste disposal. A UN policy paper explains that because of their dependence on water, women have accumulated considerable knowledge about water resources, including location, quality, and storage methods. Despite this, women's central role in water management is often overlooked.

EVENTS

- **WaterAid – Call for Information and Participation: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene and Gender Based Violence.** ([Link](#))

WaterAid is creating a practitioner's best practice resource to help reduce gender-based violence related to WASH in development, humanitarian, and transitional contexts.

The team is interested in being in contact with any organization or individual who has material or experience to contribute to the resource; and/or may be interested in co-publishing the outputs.

REPORTS/VIDEOS

- **Designing Gender-Sensitive Sanitation for Floating Villages**, 2012. J Hagan. ([Full text, pdf](#))

The Tonle Sap Floating Latrine Project was implemented using a development and design process that ensured inclusion of both male and female adults and children as well as members of the frequently excluded floating communities of Cambodia's Tonle Sap Lake.

- **Gender Aspects of Water and Sanitation**, 2012. WaterAid. ([Full text, pdf](#))

There needs to be increased focus on how women's economic and domestic activities are affected by the absence of infrastructure. This paper argues that improving gender

equality, women's livelihoods, educational opportunities for girls, and family health is dependent on making progress in water supply and sanitation.

- **Gender, Water and Sanitation: A Policy Brief**, n.d. United Nations. ([Full text, pdf](#))
Efforts geared toward improving the management of the world's finite water resources and extending access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation often overlook the central role of women in water management.

- **Integrating a Gender Perspective in Sustainable Sanitation**, 2012. Sustainable Sanitation Alliance. ([Full text, pdf](#))

The overall objective of this fact sheet is to provide background information on the needs and methods required to integrate gender perspectives into sustainable sanitation. Integrating gender into sanitation requires comprehensive information about the gender-specific local context provided by assessments such as socio-economic analyses and impact assessments of policies and programs on females.

- **Measuring Water Collection Times in Kenyan Informal Settlements**, 2012. J Davis. ([Full text, pdf](#))

This paper uses GPS loggers and interviews to measure the time taken to collect water in two Kenyan informal settlements. The time devoted to water collection is widely believed to prevent women and girls, who do most of this work, from undertaking more creative tasks, including income generation and education.

- **Transforming Women's Lives**, 2013. WaterAid. ([Video](#))

WaterAid's new film celebrates International Women's Day 2013. Women are key to successful projects. Experience shows that women place a high priority on water supply and work very hard to design, implement, and manage projects because they understand what a difference having these facilities will make.

- **Working Effectively with Women and Men in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Programs: Learnings from Research on Gender Outcomes from Rural Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Projects in Vanuatu and Fiji**, 2010.

Institute for Sustainable Futures. ([Link](#))

This resource guide provides examples of ways to explore gender norms and relations with women and men at the community level and create productive spaces for positive change, even when gender equality is not an explicit focus.

- **Working from Strengths: Plan and SNV Integrate Gender into Community-Led Sanitation and Hygiene Approaches in Vietnam**, 2012. G Halcrow. ([Full text, pdf](#))

Through the adoption of four principles developed in recent research on gender and WASH in the Pacific, the two agencies explored how community-led approaches and partnerships with women's organizations can be used to open up dialogue about gender roles, build capacity of staff and partners to address gender equality, and work toward strengthened gender outcomes.

JOURNAL ARTICLES/BLOG POSTS

- **Bangladeshi Women Catch Up on Sanitation**, *E-Source*, Mar 2013. ([Blog post](#))

This blog post discusses gender mainstreaming in the set up of the Qualitative Information System used for monitoring. Over the last 12 months the IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre and the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) have developed, and BRAC has implemented, a performance monitoring system to measure behavioral change of a large WASH program.

- **Focus on Gender and WASH**. *WASHplus Weekly*, July 2011. ([Link](#))

This WASHplus Update contains links to some of the most recent journal articles and reports on gender issues. Water and sanitation practitioners recognize the importance of incorporating a gender perspective into WASH programs. A gendered approach can create a framework of cooperation between men and women, so that the insights and abilities of both men and women help to shape programs and meet objectives.

- **Freshwater Availability and Water Fetching Distance Affect Child Health in Sub-Saharan Africa**. *Env Sci Tech*, Jan 2012. A Pickering. ([Full text, pdf](#))

Time spent walking to a household's main water source was found to be a significant determinant of under-five child health. A 15 minute decrease in one-way walk time to a water source is associated with a 41 percent average relative reduction in diarrhea prevalence, improved anthropometric indicators of child nutritional status, and an 11 percent relative reduction in under-five child mortality. These results suggest that reducing the time cost of fetching water should be a priority for water infrastructure investments in Africa.

- **Heavy Loads: Children's Burdens of Water Carrying in Malawi**. *Waterlines*, Jan 2013. E Robson. ([Abstract](#))

This paper documents water carrying by children aged nine to 18 years across Malawi in southern Africa and evaluates impacts on health and school attendance. Overall 89 percent of girls and 66 percent of boys carried water, with 68 percent of girls, but just 32 percent of boys, carrying water daily. Water as the heaviest load routinely carried was reported by 57 percent of children, and 35 percent reported pains and health problems from load carrying. The authors conclude that girls in rural and remote rural communities have the heaviest burdens of daily water carrying detrimental to their health and school attendance.

- **Sanitation in Developing Countries: A Review Through a Gender Lens**. *Journal of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Development*, Feb 2013. E. Tilley. ([Abstract](#))

The authors argue that strategies to make technologies gender-responsive need to be based upon a thorough analysis of the social context and how these are negotiated and institutionalized in a specific context. A lack of robust gender-segregated data on sanitation policies and technologies, along with reductionist framings of gender are to blame for limited progress in verifying the need for, and impact of, gender-responsive sanitation. Technology and policy development and implementation would benefit from

gender-considerate interpretations of shame, dignity, safety, and status.

- **Technology & Innovations in the Water Sector: Closing the Gender Gap.**

Journal of Gender and Water 1(1) 2012. D Dobyns. ([Link](#))

When investments are made to improve access to clean water, women spend less time collecting water and more time participating in income-generating activities. Exciting advancements in water gathering and data technology have led to new innovations. This paper highlights selected innovative water solutions in the field today and the continued need for innovation, investment, and action. Addressing the global water crisis requires a variety of efforts ranging from basic, low-tech, community-based solutions to large capital-intensive infrastructure investments.

- **Women in Water in Pakistan Show the Way.** *The Water Blog, Nov 2012.* M

Ahmad. ([Blog post](#))

The Water and Sanitation Program conducted case studies in Rehmatabad, Yazman, and Ather in Punjab, Pakistan, to document the role of women in rural water supply planning, decision making, community development, entrepreneurship, and operations and maintenance. Findings from those case studies show dramatic improvements in several key areas, including economics, education, and health.

WEBSITES

- **International Women’s Day 2013.** United Nations. ([Website](#))

This year’s theme for International Women’s Day, “A Promise Is a Promise: Time for Action to End Violence against Women,” seeks to strengthen the international community’s commitment to put an end to violence against women.

- **Quick Guide to International Women’s Day: Live Chat, Data, a Contest, Videos, and More.** The World Bank. ([Website](#))

International Women’s Day 2013 comes at a time of heightened concerns globally about women’s safety in society—hence the day’s theme. The World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim addresses the issue in a [Huffington Post blog](#) and invites feedback from the public on ways to accelerate progress for women and girls.

- **Welcome to Inclusive WASH-Building Skills Toward Inclusive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.** ([Website](#))

Led by WaterAid in Australia, in collaboration with the WASH Reference Group, this project aims to provide practical skills and evidence to support practitioners' implementation of WASH projects that address the needs of all in the community.

Each WASHplus Weekly highlights topics such as Urban WASH, Indoor Air Pollution, Innovation, Household Water Treatment and Storage, Hand Washing, Integration, and more. If you would like to feature your organization's materials in upcoming issues, please send them to Dan Campbell, WASHplus knowledge resources specialist, at dacampbell@fhi360.org.



About WASHplus - WASHplus, a five-year project funded through USAID's Bureau for Global Health, creates supportive environments for healthy households and communities by delivering high-impact interventions in water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH) and indoor air pollution (IAP). WASHplus uses proven, at-scale interventions to reduce diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections, the two top killers of children under five years of age globally. For information, visit www.washplus.org or email: contact@washplus.org.

Please let WASHplus know at any time if you have resources to share for future issues of WASHplus Weekly or if you have suggestions for future topics. An [archive](#) of past Weekly issues is available on the WASHplus website.

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