

VIOLENCE GENDER & WASH

A PRACTITIONER'S TOOLKIT

Making water, sanitation and hygiene safer through improved programming and services

Briefing Note 3: Institutional commitments and staff capacity

This briefing note includes:

1. How violence can affect WASH professionals
2. What staff need to know about violence and WASH
3. What the responsibilities of organisations are
4. Considerations for financing and monitoring and evaluation
5. Examples of good practice in policy and human resources management
6. What we should do if we or our colleagues are affected by violence



Matthew Fryer / University of Winchester

Five key things to remember from this briefing note:

1. WASH sector institutions and organisations must have clear codes of conduct, as well as protection, bullying and harassment policies with clear mechanisms for enforcement. WASH sector institutions and organisations must ensure that staff are aware of the codes and policies and are trained in how to use them.
2. WASH institutions and organisations have a responsibility to ensure that WASH professionals are trained to know about violence related to WASH programming and that monitoring systems consider these issues.
3. Women staff and staff who are lesbian, bisexual, gay, transsexual or intersex (LBGTI) or from other minority groups may face additional vulnerabilities to violence within the workplace – specific attention is needed to understand the sensitivities that exist within the cultural context, which may not be openly discussed.
4. Some staff may not always be aware that their behaviour constitutes violence, particularly where the behaviour is generally accepted in the local culture. Training and awareness raising with follow-up and support is essential for all staff.
5. If you are affected by violence – or have supported someone who has been affected by violence – this can be traumatic. It is important to ask for confidential support to talk through your experiences – this does not show weakness, but self-awareness and strength.

About this document

This document is one part of the 'Violence, Gender and WASH: A Practitioner's Toolkit – Making water, sanitation and hygiene safer through improved programming and services'.

This toolkit has been developed by Sarah House, Suzanne Ferron, Dr Marni Sommer and Dr Sue Cavill, on behalf of WaterAid with contributions from a wide range of organisations and individuals. It was funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) through the Sanitation and Hygiene Applied Research For Equity (SHARE) Consortium and co-published by a number of organisations.

Details of co-publishing organisations can be found on the back page of this document. The acknowledgements, acronyms, definitions and an overview of the toolkit are included in [BN1](#).

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The authors of these materials would be very happy to receive feedback from users of the materials contained within, whether positive or negative, so that it can be used if the materials are updated at a later date.

We would also be interested to receive feedback where the methodologies have been used and their impacts evaluated in respect to reducing violence linked to WASH programmes or services. This will add to the general body of evidence on the best ways to improve policy and programming.

Please send any feedback to: gbv@wateraid.org

Promising good practices

This toolkit brings together a range of examples of *promising* good practice that have the potential to reduce vulnerabilities to violence associated with WASH programmes and services. The approaches have been selected on the basis of case study examples where some successes have already been seen, from good practice guidance already being recommended within the WASH sector or across sectors, and also some selected based on best judgement and common sense. These are approaches and strategies that at least give those who are vulnerable a say in the programme and service provision, which encourage communities to develop their own strategies for prevention of violence, provide opportunities for peer support, and encourage ethical behaviours from staff – and are therefore likely to be effective in helping to reduce vulnerabilities.

There is a critical need to increase understanding of the links between violence and WASH, on appropriate ways to improve policy and programming, and for testing and evaluation of the same.

Every effort has been made to obtain permission for the inclusion of materials, and also to verify that information is from reputable sources, but checks have not been possible for all entries.



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What 'violence' means in this toolkit

The main focus of this toolkit is the forms of violence that occur because of the differences in power between males and females. This is known as 'gender-based violence' (GBV). A large proportion of GBV is aimed at women and girls, because in most societies they face discrimination and hold less power than men and boys. However, violence that is associated with the gender roles assumed by men and boys can also make them the object of violence. People who have other gender and sexual identities, such as those who are lesbian, bisexual, gay, transsexual and intersex (LBGTI) may also face GBV.

We also consider violence against those from specific social groups, particularly those who may be in vulnerable, marginalised or special circumstances; and we consider violence that may occur between people of the same gender, such as between women or between men, or between men and boys.

The forms of violence that are the main focus in this toolkit are: sexual violence (rape, assault, molestation and inappropriate touching), psychological violence (harassment, 'eve-baiting', bullying or other actions which may cause fear, stress or shame), physical violence (beating or fighting leading to injury and death) and socio-cultural violence (social ostracism, discrimination, political marginalisation or social norms that have negative impacts).

Introduction

Briefing Note 2 (BN2) provides an introduction to violence and WASH, highlights case studies of the occurrence of violence and WASH, and includes examples of good practice in programming.

This briefing note, BN3, focuses on the professionals, institutions and organisations working in the WASH sector, and on good practices in policy, human resources, finance, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). It also provides guidance on what we should do if our colleagues or we ourselves are affected by violence.

Violence and WASH professionals

It is important to consider violence and WASH in relation to WASH institutions and professionals because:

1. WASH professionals need to have knowledge on violence and WASH so that we can reduce the risks to communities we are working with;
2. We need to know what to do if we face incidents of violence on the programmes we support, or if we are asked for assistance by someone who has experienced violence; and
3. Colleagues may become perpetrators of violence, or else we may face violence ourselves because of our gender.

Globally there are far fewer women in senior positions of employment. In some countries this is explained by the phenomena of women 'hitting the glass ceiling' (for women from majority groups) or 'hitting the concrete ceiling' (for women from minority groups). Women who do reach senior positions may not align with the expected stereotypes for women, such as being submissive and subservient in behaviour. They may instead be more outspoken and more confident, and as such may be perceived as being 'aggressive'. A man displaying the same behaviour is more likely to be seen as 'strong and competent'. Stereotypes can lead to certain workplaces feeling unwelcoming to women or people from other marginalised groups who do not fit the stereotypes expected of them.

Women in general, and both women and men from marginalised groups, may have fewer opportunities for education and this can affect their self-confidence or else their colleagues may consider their views inferior.

People with disabilities or who are of other sexualities or gender identities [LBGTI], may face multiple barriers and discrimination in the workplace. Women with disabilities may face discrimination because of their disability, but with an additional layer of discrimination compared to men with disabilities since they are women.¹



Rod Shaw / WEDC, Loughborough University

Women professionals in the WASH sector, South Asia²

(TS1-D-16)

A study undertaken by SaciWATERs, 2011, investigated the profiles, numbers and constraints of women water professionals working in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. They identified that:

- There were low numbers of women working in the water sector;
- There was a clear 'glass ceiling', with very few working in senior positions;
- Most women engineers and associated technical staff were restricted from undertaking fieldwork and ended up doing desk work;
- Women were excluded from decision-making after hours;
- There were different expectations of men and women, with women being under greater pressure to prove themselves;
- Gender-segregated toilets, facilities for transport and security in the field were all lacking;
- They faced challenges taking maternity leave and there was a lack of provision for child-care;
- Men found it difficult to accept women in leadership roles; and
- Most of the women were not forthcoming about sexual harassment; however, a number of examples were highlighted including those related to inappropriate requests from senior colleagues, subtle harassment and suggestions of women having affairs with colleagues.

Female professionals training for or working in the WASH sector in some contexts may have to fend off sexual advances that are demanded in return for better grades, jobs or promotion.

In some cases, women staff may also face having their views regularly ignored, being undermined or malicious rumours started which imply that they are involved in inappropriate sexual liaisons when male colleagues or line managers compliment their work. Women may have more restrictions on their movement than men, posing additional challenges for their participation in fieldwork or undertaking work involving international travel.

In turn, those who control the distribution of WASH-related non-food items and the use of facilities might also abuse their power by demanding sexual favours from vulnerable individuals.

Violence including gender-based violence (GBV) is common. In some societies it is more common and more accepted as the norm than others, although it is an almost universal phenomenon.³ WASH professionals are part of society and hence have the same experience of gender norms, roles and relations as exist in that society. In some countries girls may have faced demands for sexual favours throughout their education, from teachers, peers and other adults, and this may continue as they move into employment. Investigations in West Africa in 2001 highlighted the risks that can occur when people are in positions of power, with widespread sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of beneficiaries by aid workers.⁴ Since this time, much work has been undertaken – particularly by international humanitarian organisations – to ensure that staff sign and abide by codes of conduct, but SEA is still present and difficult to eradicate.

Examples of violence related to WASH or associated professionals

Sexual exploitation by staff

The following case study is not WASH-sector specific, but has relevance to staff from all sectors in humanitarian contexts, including the WASH sector.

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (2001)⁵ – It was reported that agency workers asked girls for sex in exchange for employment and continued to demand sexual favours even after the girls were employed. The girls said they were reminded that the salary they were earning was payment for sexual favours.

“No girl will get a job in this camp without getting sex with NGO workers”

(agency workers in Guinea).

The assessment suggested that those who exploit children are often men in positions of relative power and influence, who either control access to goods and services or who have wealth and/or income. This power and influence are then used

in exchange for sexual favours from children. The report indicates that it is a relatively prosperous ‘elite’ – including UN staff, peacekeepers and NGO workers – whose resources are considerably more than those of the refugees, who exploit this extreme disparity surrounding the refugee population. Exploiters appear to be able to pay for sex when and with whom they want, and to do so with impunity, since the very people they exploit are not able to complain about their situation for fear of the consequences.

Even though agency workers may pay more than other exploiters, this might still amount to very little in most cases. A Liberian refugee girl, for example, may receive the equivalent of US 10 cents in exchange for sex – with which she would be able to buy a couple of pieces of fruit or a handful of peanuts. More often than not, payment may be in kind, such as a few biscuits, a plastic sheet or a bar of soap.

In training

Liberia (2011)⁹ – The following case study highlights the degree of GBV that young women face through their education and training, and hence the likelihood that they may also face the same risks in the workplace – including in the WASH sector. It also highlights a problem that the WASH sector should be aware of if sponsoring girls and young women on training courses, whether long or short.

Young women attending universities in urban areas in Liberia face numerous safety vulnerabilities, particularly related to sexual violence. Across the universities, perpetrators are most commonly

former lovers, boyfriends or partners, professors and fellow male classmates. Transactional sex, or ‘sex for grades’, and sexual intimidation from teachers and faculty staff was a major theme across the universities. Women are most commonly blamed for violence committed against them, including rape, because of their dress and lifestyle choices. At one university, the dormitories were separated by sex though some women sometimes felt unsafe at night with male visitors in the dormitories and also when using the toilets. At another university, the presence of shared bathrooms was identified as unsafe.

Violence against women who take on traditionally male roles

Zambia (1992)⁶ – The PUSH project was a large food-for-work, labour-intensive, shanty town upgrading project in Lusaka, Zambia. The large, mainly female, workforce was structured into gangs of workers, each with supervisors and senior supervisors, all of whom were working on a food-for-work basis. A post became available for a paid assistant technician and members from the community were invited to apply. Several people applied for the post, and a woman was appointed. She was competent, reliable and trusted by the workforce, and the strongest candidate for the job. One day one of the male candidates who had failed to get the job locked her in a room in the community centre and started beating and kicking her head, injuring her very seriously. She was a widow with six children, and could have easily been killed in the attack had a female community development worker not broken down the door. Before she was taken to the hospital and police station the wife of her assailant came across to beg her not to press charges, because of what would happen to her and her children if he was put in jail.

India (2013)⁷ – The Honourable Member of Parliament, Mrs Vandana Chavan, is a standing committee member for water resources and the former mayor of Pune Municipal Corporation. She is a member of the Task Force of the Metropolis Women International Network Forum, whose main goals are to improve female representation in local government and decision-making processes with local and metropolitan authorities, and to facilitate the dissemination of experiences and good practice related to good governance. The local mafia in Pune opposed her efforts to make community toilets more women-friendly and hygienic by installing lights and water taps in each. On the day the water supply was to be connected she was threatened, in spite of the presence of the then-municipal commissioner and Public Health Engineering Department engineers. The local contractor's wife came to throw a tin of kerosene over her, but changed her mind at the last minute. She had a narrow escape and came close to being burned for her initiatives.

WASH facilities in the workplace

Afghanistan (2011)⁸ – An international NGO working in a remote province of Afghanistan has a provincial and two district field offices. It is a province where only 3 per cent of women are literate and there are multiple restrictions on women: they are unable to travel without permission from a male member of their family and when they travel they must be accompanied by a male relative. It is therefore difficult to recruit women staff members to professional posts. In 2011, all the staff working in the provincial office were men, although the organisation had three women hygiene promoters, who are employed along with their male relative (as '*Hygiene Promotion Couples*').

The design and layout of the provincial office/guest house was not women friendly. The room given to women guests to sleep in had no lock on the door, the window blinds did not fully close and there was only one toilet/shower room, which opened onto the main corridor. Groups of men regularly sat just outside the toilet door. The staff undertaking cooking, cleaning and other support tasks were all men. There were no private areas for women to relax and remove their hijab, and nowhere private to wash and dry underwear or other private items such as sanitary cloths. It was difficult to see how a woman visiting the provincial office/guest house could manage menstrual hygiene in such a situation, as there was nowhere private to wash and dry sanitary materials or underwear and also nowhere to dispose of soiled sanitary materials.



Matthew Fryer / University of Winchester

The following example from Afghanistan illustrates to some degree the type of challenges that professional women may also face working in the WASH sector in other countries. The issues are sensitive, and highlighting that such challenges take place may

themselves pose risks for the women concerned, including backlash. This may result in an escalation of the problems being faced, such as increased harassment, greater exclusion or further undermining.

Challenges faced by women working in the WASH sector in Afghanistan¹⁰

(TS1-B-4)

A study of the gender aspects of the National Solidarity Programme in Afghanistan, which was a major contributor to the WASH sector, identified a range of challenges for the recruitment and retention of women in the programme. These included the following:

- Women are prevented from building a rapport with male superiors due to cultural constraints; similarly male support for female staff can be perceived negatively. It is considered inappropriate for male staff to show interest in the advancement of competent female staff.
- Local perceptions of women working in offices are still negative, with one interviewee noting that some men still think that women have been employed for their use and pleasure. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission is recording cases of sexual harassment and assault in government and non-government offices.
- Women tend to be paid lower salaries than their male counterparts, their use of office equipment and transport may not be prioritised, and women may be allocated a small office away from the key decision-makers and managers. All of these aspects marginalise women from programme processes.
- Lack of respect and interest shown by male staff in the work of female colleagues can be discouraging.
- Sometimes female staff will be hired, but are discouraged from voicing opinions or trying to achieve goals. They are 'window dressing'.

Other experiences noted by women working in the sector included that they are not respected as equals with their views often dismissed, particularly when they are recommending corrective actions to identified problems. This makes the working environment demoralising and it is difficult to retain women to work in the sector.

What as WASH professionals do we need to know?

What violence can occur in relation to WASH and why they need to understand the risks

How we can improve programming to reduce vulnerabilities to violence

What they should do or not do if we face incidents of violence in programmes or are approached by people who have experienced violence

The content of the organisation's gender equality, equity and inclusion, and protection policies and what these mean to daily working in programmes

What is acceptable behaviour for staff members, partner organisation staff, consultants and community leaders involved in the project, in line with the code of conduct, and consequences of not complying

What monitoring should be undertaken in relation to gender equality and violence

Responsibilities of institutions and organisations

The key principles identified in [BN2](#) relating to the responsibilities of institutions and organisations are:

Principle 1

Institutionalise the requirement to analyse and respond to vulnerabilities to violence in WASH-related policies, strategies, plans, budgets and systems (human resource management and M&E)

Principle 2

Build the capacity of staff and partners to understand the problem of violence related to WASH and what their responsibilities are in relation to this issue

The issues identified above highlight the importance of institutions and organisations doing the following:

1. Having a code of conduct that covers the sexual abuse and exploitation of beneficiaries with enforcement mechanisms, which staff, partner staff and consultants must understand and sign before working for or with the organisation. Having a code of conduct that does not also apply to partner staff leaves a gap in the accountability chain.
2. Having a bullying and harassment policy with enforcement mechanisms, which staff, partner organisations and consultants must understand and sign before working for or with the organisation. This may be incorporated into a single code of conduct.
3. Ensuring the existence of well-defined channels for staff feedback or complaints for those who experience violence, including different forms of GBV by staff (for example, harassment and abuse by staff of other colleagues or sexual abuse and exploitation of beneficiaries). Such systems should not put the person who reports (the 'whistle blower') at risk of further violence.
4. Providing orientations for staff and partners on the code of conduct and the implications of not abiding by it, so that it is fully understood.
5. Having gender equality, equity and inclusion, and protection policies, so that it is clear to all employees what is expected in terms of behaviour between and towards people of all genders.

6. Providing training for their staff and partners on violence and WASH (covering the areas noted above on what WASH professionals need to know), with associated ongoing learning, practice and reflection.
7. Having systems for mentoring or peer support, with particular attention to women and people from minority groups.
8. In contexts where gender power differences and vulnerabilities to GBV are particularly high, developing additional strategies – such as recruiting two female staff, possibly one younger and one more experienced, to work together on a daily basis for specific positions, including for assignments where travel is involved.
9. Undertaking gender-sensitive budgeting, allocating adequate finance to fund interventions or activities that reduce vulnerabilities to violence for staff as well as at the community level.
10. Undertaking advocacy on violence and WASH, including integrating the topic into other advocacy efforts, such as those related to meeting the rights for water and sanitation and equity and inclusion.

It is acknowledged that having training and a code of conduct will not in themselves prevent violence, including GBV. Yet these contribute to the process of reducing it. Above all there needs to be an organisational culture of zero-tolerance towards violence, which leads to consequences for the perpetrators and with leadership by example and strong support throughout the supervisory system.

If those who are vulnerable to violence are to be protected, codes of conduct *must be proactively enforced*.



Rod Shaw / WEDC, Loughborough University

For further details on the responsibilities aligned with key principles 1 and 2, refer to the stand-alone [Checklist](#)

For information on the protection sector and the 'do's and don'ts' when responding to incidences of violence, refer to [BN4](#)

For examples of good practice relating to policies, strategies and guidelines, codes of conduct and peer mentoring schemes, see the [Toolsets 3-F and G](#)

For information on advocacy related to influencing policies, see [BN2](#)

Codes of conduct

Most international organisations working in the humanitarian sector today have a 'code of conduct', which staff, consultants, volunteers and partners have to sign and abide by. It is not clear if this practice is as widespread in the development field, or how many local organisations have codes of conduct in place.

A code of conduct indicates the organisation's commitment to ensuring that staff abide by a set of minimum standards of ethical behaviour. Such codes usually clarify that it is the duty of staff to report others who they suspect of unacceptable conduct, particularly in relation to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of beneficiaries. If a staff member is found to know about abuses and has not reported them, then they can also face disciplinary action and potentially losing their job.

In many countries there is a legal obligation to report the suspected sexual abuse of children and sometimes adults.

In some countries where cultural understandings around consent and on the acceptability of sex outside of marriage are particularly strict, organisations may go so far as to ban relationships between international and national staff in the code of conduct, even if they

are consenting. It is also important to note that in some countries sex outside of marriage is viewed as a 'crime', and hence women and girls who have sex outside of marriage, including in cases of rape, may be jailed. The implications for such incidents occurring are therefore huge.¹²



Petra Röhr-Rouendaal / WASH Cluster Visual Aids Library

A code of conduct clarifies the mechanisms for reporting concerns and will sometimes provide a confidential option for providing information anonymously. It will usually confirm the principle of confidentiality. It will also recognise that sometimes reporting may be malicious, but the safety of the survivor/victim has priority during a process of investigation.

The existence of a code of conduct will not automatically prevent violence from occurring. Some of the biggest challenges are in the establishment of complaints and investigation mechanisms which are effectively operated and sustained, and for the institution to have the full commitment in this respect. Unless staff see the system working it is not likely to act as a deterrent.

‘The IRC Way’ – Standards for Professional Conduct, International Rescue Committee¹³ (TS3-G-3)

This is a good practice example of organisational standards for professional conduct. The International Rescue Committee, an international NGO working in humanitarian contexts, requires staff to behave according to certain standards of conduct, including those relating to GBV. The standards cover issues related to respect for others, a workplace free from harassment, diversity in the workforce, human rights, transparency, financial integrity and accountability. It includes reporting requirements when staff suspect that others are not following the standards, a phone number to use to report concerns and it also confirms that false reports and failure to report may result in disciplinary action.

The United Nations website for the Protection from Sexual Exploitation or Abuse by UN and Related Personnel,¹⁵ includes a range of guidance on the development of codes of conduct, preventing and responding to exploitation and abuse. Examples of codes of conduct from the IRC, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies¹⁶ and WaterAid can be found in the folder of supporting information.

Supporting women and minority staff

As discussed above, women and other staff who are from minority groups may face multiple challenges when working in the sector. However reporting some of the challenges being faced may lead to a backlash, such as insinuations that the individual only complained because of their lack of competence or trouble-making character, or it can lead to increased harassment.

Hence many women and people from minority groups may not feel comfortable to raise the challenges they face or discuss them openly, and hence they are likely to be greatly under reported.

Strategies for ensuring that women and staff from minority backgrounds are well supported in their posts will vary depending on the context. Some examples include:

- Ensuring that there is a minimum of three women in any team or structure (see box on following page);
- Recruiting two female staff (such as an experienced staff member and a younger staff member) to work together on a daily basis, including for assignments where travel is involved; and
- Establishing ongoing mentoring systems between the staff member and a trusted colleague to provide guidance, encouragement and to discuss challenges faced and possible solutions.

Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Code of Conduct for Technical Vocational Education and Training Institutions, Liberia¹⁴ (TS3-G-1)

This code of conduct was developed to support the placement of women and girls in technical and vocational training in Liberia. The WASH sector relies heavily on the skills of technicians and engineers to ensure good infrastructure, but men traditionally undertake these professions.

Studying and working as a minority within these fields poses numerous challenges for women, including those related to GBV, which are heightened in fragile contexts where GBV in education may be common from primary school upwards. A large proportion of the code of conduct has relevance for reducing GBV risks.

The following case study from Liberia highlights a mentoring scheme that has been established to support young women who are studying engineering and the technical trades (all of which are key to the WASH sector) with the purpose of building peer support and being able to respond to GBV in the workplace.

In contexts where GBV is high, this peer support can be critical to building young women's self confidence and self-esteem, reducing their vulnerabilities to violence and retaining them in the sector.

Research in high-income contexts has shown that having three or more women on a board of directors improves their effectiveness and moves from tokenism to being a critical mass. See the case study in the box opposite.

TUSEME Clubs, supporting and empowering young women studying engineering and technical trades, Liberia¹⁷

[\(TS3-G-2\)](#)

Started in Tanzania, TUSEME Clubs aim to support the empowerment of female students and girls to be able to speak out more confidently on a range of issues, including those relating to GBV. The clubs are supported by the Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in a range of countries across Africa, including Liberia. Here the clubs support girls and women studying engineering and technical trades. These professions are particularly relevant to the WASH sector and where women are in a minority. The TUSEME Clubs provide a peer support network for women and girls studying technical trades, including being more able to resist GBV throughout their studies and working lives. This is an issue which is highly prevalent in many countries and often very high in fragile states.

Three women is the 'critical mass' for boards of directors¹⁸

Findings indicate that the presence of three or more women on a board of directors improves women's experiences and enhances communication with management within the board. The following experiences were expressed by female members of boards of directors in Fortune 1000 companies:

"The sense of being an outsider is what my experience has been being the only woman on boards."

"The stage with one woman is the invisibility phase. The stage with two women is the conspiracy phase: if the women sit next to each other, if they go to the ladies room together, the guys wonder what the women are up to. Once you get three women on the board it becomes mainstream – it is normal to have women in the room and those questions go away."

"I've been on two boards with four women. The dynamic changes because you're, in most cases, a third or more of the board. The competition to get your voice heard is over, because it's like all of us sitting around. It's a supportive dynamic, more consensus, less combative, more collaborative. You can see the guys decompress from their normal very aggressive style."

"We were passing around resumes in the process of choosing a new board member. The resumes had photos. One guy picked up a woman's resume and said, 'We already have two women, so we can throw this one out'. I was livid. When another resume came my way, I said, 'We already have two bald guys, so we can throw this one out'. They got the message."

"Three is like three legs on a stool. Strong. It is clear you are not there because of gender, but because of talents."



Rod Shaw / WEDC, Loughborough University

While the above research was undertaken in a high-income context, the principle of having a minimum of three women or people of other minorities in any team or structure is an important one that is applicable in all contexts. This includes in staff teams or on committees and other structures.

Having a minimum of three women in any structure or even 50 per cent of the membership will not necessarily ensure that they will have a voice, *but it is a significant step forward* from having only one woman who is much more likely to be marginalised and excluded. When combined with other support to build the confidence of women and the respect between men and women, equality of participation will be improved with multiple benefits.

Policy, strategy and guidelines

Considerations related to violence and WASH should be integrated into all relevant key policies, strategies, guidelines and plans. Below are a number of examples of good practice which are covered in more detail in [TS3 – Good practices in policy and programming](#).

The following example shows how violence linked to WASH has been considered and integrated into an Environmental Health Sector¹⁹ Framework.

International Rescue Committee (IRC) Environmental Health Sector Framework²⁰

(TS3-F-5)

The Environmental Health Sector Framework is an aid to help IRC country programmes design effective environmental health programmes with clear goals and clear links to other IRC sectors. The framework incorporates safety and dignity concerns throughout, establishing the key areas where safety, protection and women's empowerment relate to the IRC's environmental health programming in humanitarian response.



Andrew Tovovur / Halcrow et al, 2010

The following two boxes highlight case studies in [TS3](#) that provide an overview of good practice in gender equality and child protection policies. Other examples of policies, including a policy on vulnerable adults by ACORD, are included [on the USB](#).

Plan International and the International Save the Children Alliance's gender equality policies²¹

(TS3-G-4)

This case study provides an overview of two policies on gender equality – by Plan International and the International Save the Children Alliance.

They explain the organisations' beliefs with respect to gender equality, their principles, their commitments and processes supporting implementation, as well as providing definitions (for gender equality, gender equity, gender discrimination and culture).

WaterAid and the International Save the Children-UK's Child Protection Policies

(TS3-G-5)

This case study provides an overview of the WaterAid Child Protection Policy and the Save the Children-UK Child Safeguarding Policy.

These policies provide an overview of the global policy commitments to child protection of WaterAid, as an international NGO that works mainly in developmental contexts, and of Save the Children-UK, which works in both development and humanitarian contexts.

Together the two policies include guidance on what staff and representatives should do and not do in relation to protecting children.

The WaterAid policy includes a checklist for establishing local information on statutory authorities and other agencies with specialisation in this area, while the Save the Children policy identifies training commitments and links to other related documents with more detailed guidance.

The following example highlights a collaborative effort by a local authority, a local NGO and an international NGO to develop a strategic framework for improving safety in public spaces in an urban environment.

Strategic framework for women's safety in public spaces, Delhi 2010²² (TS3-F-1)

This draft strategic framework for improving the safety of women and girls in urban environments was developed through collaboration between a local authority, a local NGO and an international NGO. It includes strategies that relate to the WASH services themselves, as well as protection and legal aspects, and strategies on education and advocacy.

The WASH Cluster²³ is working to improve the capacities of its members to improve the quality of humanitarian responses at the global level. The Global WASH Cluster Accountability Resources have been developed as part of this process, and include guidance on actions to reduce vulnerabilities to violence related to WASH.

Global WASH Cluster Accountability Resources²⁴ (TS3-F-2)

The WASH Accountability Resources are a package of resources to promote accountability in WASH programmes in emergencies. They include a booklet, checklist, community leaflet and an accompanying CD with supporting information.

The tools are simple to understand with case studies, guidance notes, and draft leaflets and other documents, which can be edited to suit specific contexts.

The resources were developed as part of a range of learning and capacity building initiatives to improve the quality of humanitarian responses; nonetheless they are also relevant for WASH sector actors working in development and transitional contexts. The tools also include a toolkit for emergency response on building trust in diverse teams.

A range of additional useful resources on GBV related to WASH has been developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) from existing materials to improve the consideration of and responses to GBV across all key sectors working in humanitarian contexts. The following box provides a link to more details in the [TS3](#).

IASC gender and GBV guidance for humanitarian interventions²⁵ (TS3-F-4)

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) was established to strengthen co-ordination in humanitarian assistance. Gender, GBV and WASH recommendations are incorporated into a number of key IASC documents including the guidelines for GBV in humanitarian settings, the gender handbook, including the stand-alone gender and WASH sheet, and associated gender training materials.

These materials provide a comprehensive overview of gender and GBV in humanitarian settings, including a range of practical guidance relevant to WASH sector professionals working in the humanitarian sector.

The IASC GBV guidelines are currently in the process of being updated (2013–14).



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There is a range of guidelines and toolkits available for responding to gender issues related to WASH. Four relevant, useful examples follow:

1. **Resource Guide: Working effectively with women and men in water, sanitation and hygiene programmes**²⁶ (on USB stick) – A clearly produced toolkit, flashcards, poster and associated case studies from Fiji and Vanuatu by the Institute of Sustainable Futures, University of Technology, Sydney and International Women's Development Agency and partners – see [TS4-I](#) and [TS3-H-4](#).
2. **Infrastructure for All: Meeting the needs of both men and women in development projects**²⁷ (on USB stick) – A resource developed by the Water Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC), Loughborough University, specifically to help engineers, technicians and project managers understand the importance of considering gender in technical programmes, including WASH. Available also with a booklet, *Building with the Community*, and notes for training, *Developing Engineers and Technicians*.
3. **Gender in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion, guidance note**²⁸ (on USB stick) – A simple and clear note by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which covers gender and diversity issues related to WASH programmes.
4. **Training tools on WASH innovations to improve dignity and reduce violence against women**²⁹ – Developed by the Thoughtshop Foundation from case studies from Oxfam. Refer to [TS3-C-4](#) for more details.

Advocacy on improving policy is included in [BN2](#)

Financing and budgeting to reduce violence related to WASH

Gender sensitive budgeting

There is a growing awareness of the need for 'gender sensitive budgeting' (GSB) in development and humanitarian contexts. GSB is budgeting that integrates a gender perspective and tracks how budgets respond to gender equality commitments

and targets.³⁰ Although budgets may be perceived as gender neutral, they can either promote gender equality or make inequalities worse.

The key question when considering budgets from the gender perspective is:

"What impact does this budget have on gender equality? Does it reduce gender inequality, increase it or leave it unchanged?"

It involves assessing the impacts of the budget on women and girls compared to men and boys, taking into account their different needs and priorities.

The same question should be asked, but with specific consideration for impacts on violence.

"What impact does this budget have on reducing vulnerabilities to violence including GBV linked to WASH? Does it reduce vulnerabilities, increase them or leave them unchanged?"

Budget allocations should be adequate to ensure that:

1. Policies, strategies, plans and guidelines have been reviewed and updated with consideration of violence and WASH. This may require bringing in a GBV or protection specialist to review current core organisational documents.
2. Funds are available for training and ongoing reflection and learning for staff and partners on gender, including violence related to WASH.
3. Women staff will be recruited and employed as well as men at levels that guarantee a 'critical mass', to ensure peer support and influence in the organisation (and not just as a token woman).
4. A mentoring and peer or other appropriate support system can be maintained with appropriate training and guidance.
5. Where women are in a significant minority, younger women can be employed alongside more experienced women to gain experience and confidence.



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6. Funds are available to guarantee that both women and men are included in assessment, mobilisation, implementation and M&E teams. It should also be ensured that there is more than one female team member to guarantee the safety and integrity of female staff when in the field, particularly when this involves an overnight stay away from home.
7. WASH infrastructure is sited and designed to minimise vulnerabilities to violence (solid doors, locks, lighting, adequate water flow, close to or ideally inside house compounds etc.).
8. Funds are available for cross-sectoral engagement to link with organisations and structures focusing on protection, women's rights, livelihoods etc.
9. In emergencies WASH non-food items are made available for distribution in adequate amounts to prevent the practice of transactional sex to purchase items.

Refer to the stand-alone checklist for other areas that can help to reduce vulnerabilities to violence and hence should be considered while budgeting.

Financing and fundraising

Sometimes the concern is raised that including gender-related costs might reduce finances available for other purposes. Budgets that are 'gender blind' and do not take into account the different needs of women and men and vulnerable groups may end up strengthening gender inequalities and supporting the more powerful.

Most funding proposal applications require an explanation of how gender has been considered, and it is likely that most funding agencies would support a clearly explained budget allocation that has the potential to reduce violence.

The proposal will be strengthened by showing the links between the budget allocation and:

- How it has the potential to reduce violence related to WASH; and
- How this reduction in violence is linked to an increase in attainment of human rights.

Refer to [BN2](#) for further details on how violence related to WASH is linked to a range of human rights. [TS7](#) provides specific clauses from a number of international and regional protocols, conventions and agreements that can be abstracted directly for this purpose.

There is a need to increase the consideration of violence and feelings of safety of the users within monitoring and evaluation of programmes. This will increase the evidence of how programming interventions have, or have not, reduced

vulnerabilities to violence related to WASH. This in turn will assist in strengthening the argument on the need to consider violence, which will in turn be useful for increased donor education³¹ and increasing funding support in this area.

Monitoring and evaluation

Violence is a complex issue and WASH programmes can only make a contribution to longer-term change. However, it is important to collect some information that relates to safety and violence without making the WASH monitoring system too complex. Many of the indicators that are relevant to violence are also relevant to gender mainstreaming, protection and participation. The WASH monitoring system should be conceived so that it remains practical, feasible and ethical.

Detailed research studies on violence or GBV – by GBV or protection specialists

Detailed research studies into violence or GBV, particularly where people who have experienced violence are to be interviewed, should always be undertaken by someone who has trained in researching violence or GBV. This is important because of the ethical considerations required for the handling of data on people who have been affected by violence, so as not to re-traumatise them or make their situation worse. Ethical guidelines are available which are used by specialists in this area.³² Refer to [BN4](#) for further details.

Monitoring of violence related to WASH – by WASH practitioners

Monitoring of violence related to WASH is important to:

- Understand the scale of the problem;
- Check that WASH programmes are not resulting in increases in violence; and
- To measure the social outcomes of the programme for women and men.

Therefore WASH practitioners should integrate questions into assessments and monitoring regimes that allow learning to take place, so that programmes can be improved to reduce vulnerabilities. **Recording and reporting events is different from detailed questioning about how an event impacted someone or made them feel.** Care must be taken not to overstep the skills and capacities of WASH practitioners, and **in particular not to start interviewing people affected by violence directly.** The latter may result in re-traumatisation and so it is important to be mindful of the way that we interview people who have been directly affected by violence. As noted above, this should be undertaken by someone trained in GBV and incidents should be reported in ways that protect confidentiality.

What can WASH practitioners monitor?

Indicators for violence linked to WASH

The following indicators could be included in the WASH monitoring system and measured using both qualitative (e.g. group discussions or accessibility audits) and quantitative means (e.g. household surveys):

Safety and use of facilities

1. General feelings of safety when collecting water/going to the toilet or performing other WASH-related activities.
2. Whether or not women and girls feel safe to use latrines at night.
3. Whether or not women and girls feel that they have adequate provision for menstrual hygiene management.

Women and girls' empowerment

4. Increases in engagement of women in WASH committees
 - a. What percentage of members are men and what percentage are women?
 - b. What roles do women have (including leadership roles)?
 - c. Are women speaking during meetings?
 - d. Are other members listening to their views?
 - e. Do women feel confident and respected?
5. How many women and how many men have paid jobs relating to the WASH programme?
6. Have adolescent girls, and younger girls and boys been involved in the design, siting and management of facilities (where appropriate)?
7. Have there been any changes in gender roles – such as a reduction in the workload for women and girls, engagement of men in hygiene-related activities etc.?
8. Has there been an adjustment in the attitudes of men and women in the community supporting a change in women's and men's work roles?
9. Do women know where to go for help if they are subject to violence, and do they know where and how to make a complaint?

Incidents of violence and feedback/complaints mechanisms

As well as monitoring indicators that relate to WASH programme outcomes, such as women feeling safe using facilities, it is also important to keep track of any incidents of violence including GBV or whether



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there are any complaints related to violence including GBV. Two main types of violence may be reported: a) violence that is committed by other community members, and b) violence that is committed by staff from agencies providing support (sexual exploitation and abuse).

Community-based complaints or feedback mechanisms should allow for feedback and complaints related to both a) and b), above. Yet the response mechanisms for each are likely to vary.

Either type of information may also be collected by other agencies, and collaboration with them will be important to track these indicators and respond to complaints as they arise. The IASC Working Group on Accountability to Affected Populations is planning (2013) to trial more inter-agency community-based complaint mechanisms.³³

Possible indicators that relate to reports of violence including GBV committed by community members on other community members include:

1. Number of reported incidents of violence including GBV related to WASH;
2. Number of complaints of violence including GBV-related issues identified through the feedback/complaints mechanism; and
3. How many of these have been responded to.

Incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by staff working in WASH organisations or other institutions should be monitored by the head offices of the WASH organisations (which may be in or external to the country) and in-country by organisations/institutions that specialise in and are responsible for protection.

Assessing staff awareness

It is also important to try to assess staff awareness of GBV issues and what they can do to minimise the risks. This can be done formally during training evaluations or informally in staff meetings, supervision sessions or annual reviews.

Methodologies for monitoring

A range of methodologies can be used to monitor changes related to violence with links to WASH. Examples can be found in [TS4 – Methodologies for working with communities on violence, gender and WASH](#). Such examples include: the use of focus group discussions, accessibility audits, community safety mapping, barrier analysis, pocket chart mapping, participative ranking, participation ladder, individual interviews (with key stakeholders, not directly with people who have experienced violence) and observations on engagement of men and women in WASH committees.

Training staff in codes of conduct, policies and how to reduce their own vulnerabilities to violence

Training of all staff in codes of conduct and policies related to protection, including those relating to sexual exploitation and abuse, should be compulsory.

Training and/or comprehensive orientations should be given to all staff who will be working in a country that is different from their country of origin. The training should cover the country context-specific vulnerabilities to violence, cultural norms and misunderstandings that can occur in relation to sexual attitudes and behaviours which might lead to violence.

The level of attention on pre-service training of staff on violence-related issues seems to vary dramatically. Some organisations provide comprehensive pre-service training (such as Voluntary Service Overseas), while others (such as the United Nations) require that staff and consultants complete a compulsory online training before traveling to a programme country, and some (such as RedR and the United Nations) integrate harassment and violence-related issues into security training. Some agencies do not provide any pre-service training.

Some publicly available training is available. Two good examples are available from:

- **Register of Engineers for Disaster Relief** – which provides a standard training course on [Personal Safety and Security](#). This includes a range of violence-related issues, including sexual violence.³⁴
- **InterHeath**³⁵ – which provides a range of health-related courses, including [Trauma and Psychological First Aid](#); [Bullying and Harassment](#); and [Responding to Sexual Assaults for Human Resources and Security Managers](#).

InterHealth has also produced a [Sexual Assault Booklet and Associated Medical Kit](#), which can be purchased online. The medical kit, however, should be specific to the user and should be dispensed by a qualified practitioner. It is currently working

to develop a 'stand-alone' Sexual Assault booklet. Organisations and individuals working in humanitarian and development contexts can consult Interhealth on a range of health-related issues in person or by email.

Responding to sexual assaults on staff

Even with codes of conduct and policies in place, harassment and sexual assaults can occur against staff – whether the perpetrators are other staff or people from outside of the organisation.



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Importance of medical care³⁶

Ideally medical care should be started immediately, but many interventions will still be worthwhile if started within 72 hours.

The following interventions may be considered:

- First aid to any injuries
- Post exposure prophylaxis to HIV (PEP)
- Emergency contraception
- Prophylaxis against common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) – this will vary depending on the infection and may involve a number of different courses of treatment
- Hepatitis B prophylaxis and/or vaccination
- Pregnancy test (usually undertaken before giving PEP, because some PEP drugs should not be given to someone who is pregnant)

Supporting a colleague who has been sexually assaulted³⁷

When a colleague discloses to you that they have been sexually assaulted, the following suggestions may be useful:

1. Affirm the person's strength in disclosing the incident and the fact that they should not be alone in dealing with the situation.
2. Reassure them about efforts to be made to ensure confidentiality, and that the decision on whether identifying details of an incident should be disclosed with others will remain with the person who has experienced the incident. However, do not promise to keep the information secret, as in some incidents other people may also be at risk and hence action may be needed to protect others. In the case of sexual abuse and exploitation of beneficiaries, there is usually a mandatory – and a legal – requirement to report.
3. Allow the person to take back some sense of control in their life by not forcing decisions on them. Offer information sensitively on what they need to consider in reaching a decision about what to do next, and encourage them to take the time that they need to make any decisions.
4. Listen actively and compassionately taking your lead from the person who has experienced the assault. Do not ask them to look in depth at how they are feeling, as this should only be undertaken by a professional trained in psychosocial care (see the box which follows). This does not mean not to listen to what they want to say, including if they decide to share their feelings with you. It is important to support them when they are ready to talk.
5. Consider their ongoing safety, but do not force them to leave the area if they feel supported where they are.
6. Consider their medical and psychological well-being and where and how they might access help – this should include where they can get confidential medical and psychological assistance.
7. Consider the legal implications and who will support them in deciding whether to report the incident or not.
8. It is useful for the person who was assaulted to keep the clothes they were wearing at the time (including their underwear), as this can be used for forensic evidence if they decide to press charges (their instinct may be to wash everything straight away).
9. Remember that they may need immediate, intermediate and long-term support. Just because someone has stopped talking about an incident or showing distress in the same way does not mean they are no longer struggling.
10. Note that there is not one correct way to respond to a sexual assault – the person who has been abused needs to make their own decisions about what works best for them.
11. Supporting a colleague following a sexual assault will have an impact on the person who is doing the supporting. It is recommended that over time more than one individual takes a supporting role, and that care is provided for the carer. See later in this section for more details.

Your feelings immediately after an assault³⁸

- Most people experience feelings of shock after a sexual assault.
- Do not be surprised at the range of feelings that you may have.
- Some people feel numb, other extreme emotions, and many both at different times over the first week.
- Many of these feelings are part of a survival response, designed to protect from the future danger and to aid recovery.
- Find people that you trust and let them know what you need.
- Feeling numb or extreme emotions makes it harder to make decisions about your care, but take the time to make decisions yourself. This can help you gradually feel in control.
- Talk to people that you want to, when you want to, if you want to.
- Try to rest (even if you can't sleep), eat and drink regularly, and do gentle exercise.

Psychosocial care³⁹

Research suggests that during the early stages after an assault, it is best for the person who has been assaulted to draw on their own coping style and to use their own existing support networks. Being forced to talk to someone when we don't want to can make things worse.

If the person is feeling isolated or would appreciate speaking to someone outside of their existing support network, then speaking with a professional trained in psychosocial care is recommended.

People will react differently over time to the situation. It is common, however, for the initial numbness to give way to increased anxiety in the first few days and weeks. Most people find it useful to re-establish patterns and routines in work and life as soon as they are able, but some find this more difficult and may need time away from work.

Support from a psychological health professional is not mandatory following an assault, but many people report that speaking to a professional can be useful and can help to reduce distress.



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Care for ourselves when interacting with people who have experienced violence

Witnessing incidents of violence or hearing about people's painful experiences can be traumatic, and it is important to take care of our own well-being. Most professionals working in protection, GBV or psychosocial health will have regular 'supervision' or counselling, where they can discuss how they are feeling and reflect on and process the events they have witnessed and heard. This is usually compulsory for people working in psychosocial health or social services, but in many situations the resources or commitment to this may not be available.

For WASH practitioners this is not common practice. Many organisations have formal review processes on their performance with their direct line manager, and this may offer an opportunity to discuss difficult

issues they have faced. Some organisations may also have mentoring schemes. Where these supervisory and other support mechanisms are not adequate or appropriate to help process what we have witnessed or heard, many organisations will also offer the opportunity of speaking confidentially with a trained counsellor. Requesting support from such a professional is not a sign of weakness or a failing, but a professional awareness that some events are traumatic and we may need help to process them and to maintain psychological health.

However, it may also be helpful to talk though the incident we have heard about with a trusted colleague, friend or family member, but ensuring we maintain the confidentiality of those involved.

The usual advice about ensuring life/work balance also applies, and it is important to make sure we do things that we enjoy and give us pleasure and allow us to 'switch off'.

Endnotes

The examples included in this document have been summarised or abstracted from the references identified in the endnotes. A full list of references referred to in the toolkit can also be found in [TS8](#).

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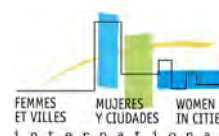
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Commitments of co-publishing organisations

It should be noted that the organisations co-publishing this resource might not currently practice all of the recommendations proposed within it.

Co-publishing the resource provides an indication of the organisations' commitment to help their staff become increasingly aware of the issues relating to violence and WASH, and that they will continue to work to improve their organisation-wide commitment, policies, strategies, plans and programming over time to reduce vulnerabilities to violence related to WASH wherever it is realistically possible.

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A PRACTITIONER'S TOOLKIT

Making water, sanitation and hygiene safer through improved programming and services

Briefing Note 3

Institutional commitments and staff capacity