Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Ministry of Water and Energy

Community-Led Accelerated WASH Project (COWASH)
Phase IV



(Illustration by Merkebu Shiferaw)

Women Empowerment in COWASH
May 2022

NIRAS








COWASH Interventions

OVERVIEW OF COWASH

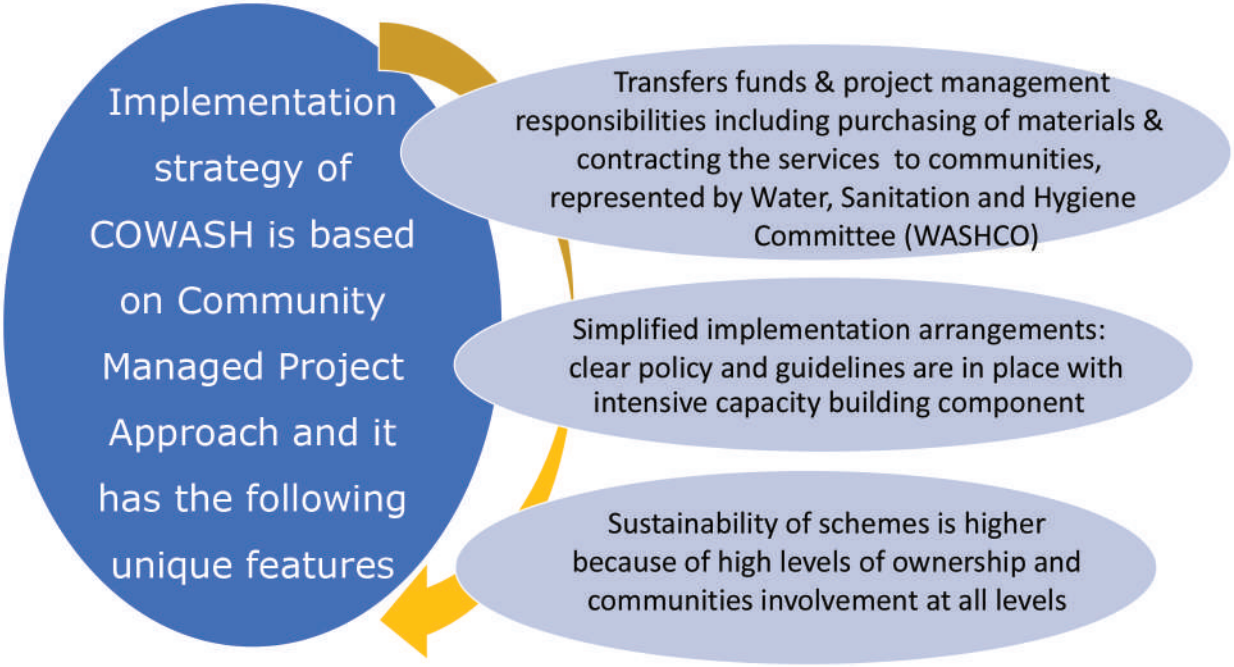
Community-led Accelerated WASH (COWASH) is a bilateral project funded by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and the Government of Finland (GoF) with four phases to date. COWASH directly contributes to ensure universal access to improved water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. COWASH is also designed to contribute to the 10-year development plan of the country.



Currently, the project operates in 104 Woredas of 7 Regions (Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, Sidama, South West, SNNPR, and Tigray).

COWASH also works with non governmental organizations and the wider WASH sector stakeholders.

COMMUNITY MANAGED PROJECT (CMP) APPROACH



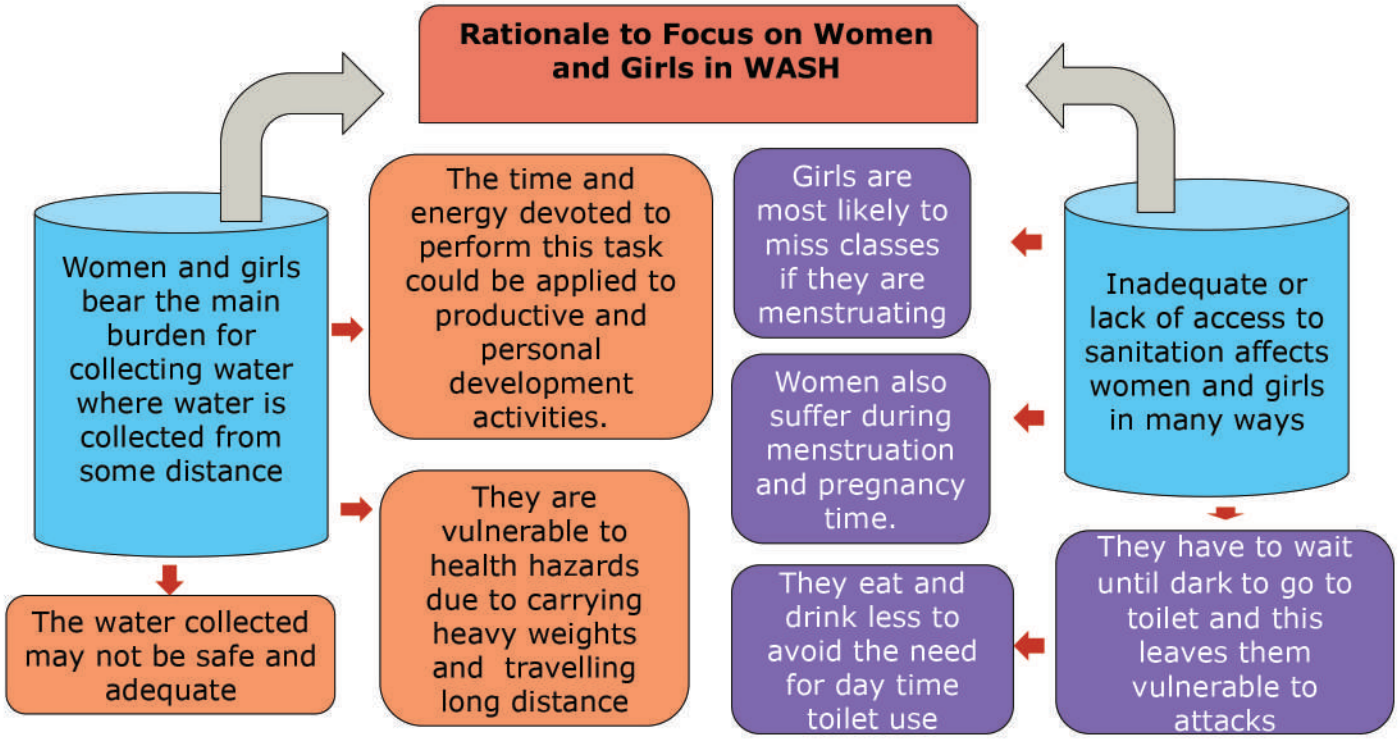
Disability Inclusive Community Water Supply



Hand dug well fitted with hand pump



Public tap from spring or borehole


Rationale to Focus on Women and Girls in WASH
Women and girls bear the main burden for collecting water where water is collected from some distance
The time and energy devoted to perform this task could be applied to productive and personal development activities.
They are vulnerable to health hazards due to carrying heavy weights and travelling long distance
The water collected may not be safe and adequate
Inadequate or lack of access to sanitation affects women and girls in many ways
Girls are most likely to miss classes if they are menstruating
Women also suffer during menstruation and pregnancy time.
They have to wait until dark to go to toilet and this leaves them vulnerable to attacks
They eat and drink less to avoid the need for day time toilet use



Challenges of Ethiopian women in fetching water

COWASH INTERVENTIONS STRIVE TO BENEFIT WOMEN AND MEN BOTH AT PRACTICAL AND STRATEGIC LEVELS

①

WASH interventions closer to home meet **practical needs** of women and girls related to

Improve Condition

- ✓ Menstrual hygiene management, reproductive and maternal health.
- ✓ Ease undertaking of tasks arising from their traditional role in care economy
- ✓ Reduce their risk of vulnerability to violence that could happen when collecting water from distance and practice open defecation.

Gender strategic needs concern the position of women and men in relation to each other in a given society that relate to

Improve Position

- ✓ Gender division of labor
- ✓ Access to and control over resources; and
- ✓ Decision making power at household and community level.

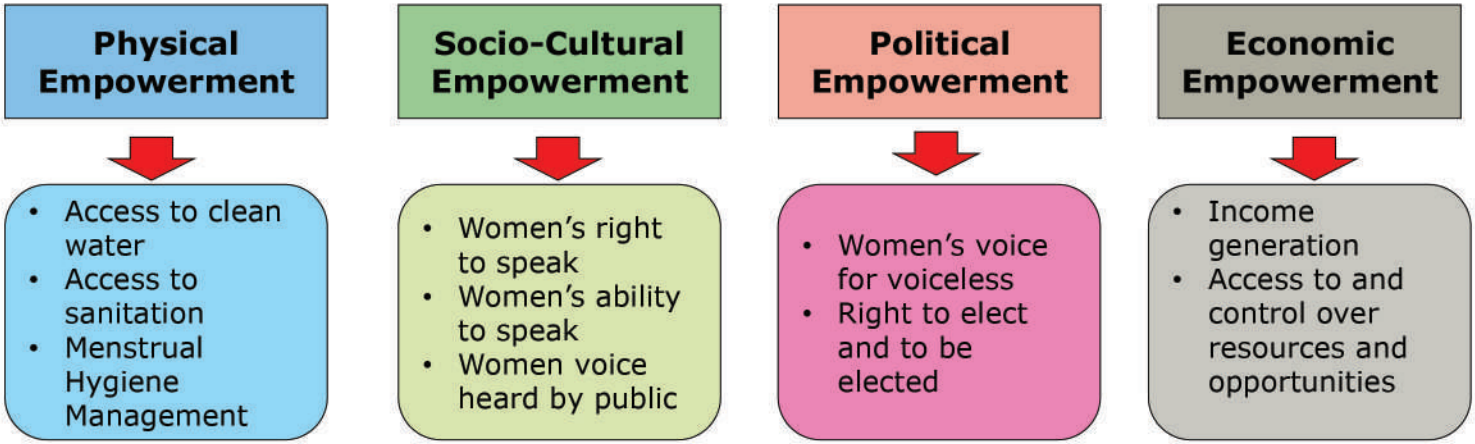
②

*Focusing on **gender transformative WASH programming**, COWASH strives to improve the social position of women, girls and people with disabilities beyond improving their condition through*

- ✓ *Empowering* marginalized women, girls and persons with disabilities to come into WASH services management*
- ✓ *Share their perspectives,*
- ✓ *Take on leadership roles, and*
- ✓ *Be effective in discharging their responsibilities of managerial positions*
- ✓ *Address issues related to intra-household inequalities.*

*"Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes." World Bank

Four Elements of Women Empowerment



- Reduced domestic violence
- Reduced sexual harassment
- Reduced water borne diseases

- Increased participation in decision-making
- Increased access to information
- Increased knowledge to make informed decisions
- Increased access to market, health care and education

- Increased participation in elections for government positions
- Exercising freedom of speech

- Increased access to credits
- Improved skills to compete on markets
- Reduced medical expenses

COWASH Entry Points for Women and Girls Empowerment

Gender Transformative Programming Approach

Strategic Undertakings

- Equity and inclusion in decision making of WASH implementation and WASH servces management
- Assign full time gender specialist and/or a gender focal point in the regional support unit office of COWASH
- Capacity strengthening: Prepare & disseminate training guidelines
- Use gender and disability status disaggregated data for monitoring, evaluation & reporting
- Award grass root level gender champions / best performing WASHCOs to inspire other WASHCOs
- Econtrol over WASH services among qual access to and user communities

Physical Empowerment

- Capacitate Woreda WASH experts and kebele WASH team members to expedite implementation
- Target both men and women on hygiene education to invest on and use improved sanitation facilities
- Sensitize user communities to consider economically poor households to benefit from improved WASH service
- Strengthen WASH clubs and girls' clubs at school to ensure proper utilization of school WASH facilities
- Target girls and women in the school and out of school system for MHM interventions

Socio cultural Empowerment

- Capacity development in gender mainstreaming targeting WASH sector staffs, and user communities
- Stimulate demand on gender empowerment among communities to ensure inclusion of marginalized groups
- Encompass relevant formal and informal institutions and strengthen partnership, networking and advocacy for gender programming in WASH sector
- Conduct WASH focused gender and disability inclusive researches and disseminate research findings

Political Empowerment

Encourage women to take up the chairperson position, beyond the quota system for the membership of women in WASHCO

Cascade women in leadership training up to WASHCO level to bring women members into managerial positions

Ensure convenient venue and time for women and people with disabilities while organizing community meetings on WASH

Both women and men participate in equitable manner and incorporate women's and men's knowledge in the process of availing WASH services

Economic Empowerment

Create conducive environment for women to be engaged in male-dominated productive activities such as artisanship, involve in women-led enterpirses



RESULT AND INDICATORS

Outcome: Sustainability and inclusivity of achieved WASH outcomes enhanced

Output: Women empowerment and disability inclusion in WASH management enhanced

Performance Monitoring Indicators:

- % of women who have the attitude and confidence to accept WASHCO leadership positions (Chair, Treasury, Secretary) in COWASH IV Woredas
- % of COWASH IV Community WPs WASHCOs having at least 50% women members
- % of COWASH IV Community WPs WASHCO leadership positions filled with women
- % of COWASH IV Community WPs WASHCOs having women in all three main management positions
- No. of members of COWASH IV Community WPs WASHCOs with some kind of disabilities (disaggregated by sex)
- No. of school girls (age 12+) attending school with safe water supply and having access to COWASH IV MHM facilities (disaggregated by disability)
- No. of school girls (age 12+) attending school in the FULL WASH SERVICES Package schools having access to the COWASH IV MHM facilities (disaggregated by disability)
- % of women-led profitable COWASH IV supported MSEs in COWASH IV woredas
- No. of people received different CMP management and related trainings (as per the standard) with the support of COWASH IV (disaggregated by sex & disability)



COWASH capacity building traininings for regional stakeholders

CALL TO ACTION

We recommend all WASH sector stakeholders at different tiers to join hands to promote women, girls and people with disabilities empowerment in WASH to transform the lives of rural women and girls. Potential areas to take up by WASH sector stakeholders include but not limited to:

- Leveraging human, financial, and material resources to advocate and implement women and girls empowerment.
- Contextualize issues to come up with evidence based women empowerment interventions.
- Sharing knowledge and experiences using various methods and channels to address women and girls empowerment issues.
- Scaling up of innovative strategies and best practices to empower women and girls
- Creating a space for the rural women and girls to voice pertinent issues that will enable them to solve the challenges they face.

COWASH endorses and call upon all WASH sectors to flag the motto of "Empowering women and girls is empowering the community".

COWASH is grateful for the federal and regional government and appreciates the support of the Embassy of Finland.





Disability inclusive improved latrines constructed in schools



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