

## Tip Sheet: Addressing Gender-based Violence (GBV)-related Risks in WASH Assessments and Initial Programme Design

In emergency settings, the design of WASH programmes and facilities can have a major impact – either positive or negative – on the safety of the affected community, particularly in relation to sexual violence and other forms of GBV. When it comes to GBV risk mitigation, the GBV AoR recommends that the WASH cluster consider the following issues.

### Key linkages between WASH and GBV:

- Women and girls are often disproportionately affected by WASH issues.
- Bathing facilities and latrines located far from dwellings are often the site of sexual violence attacks, especially after nightfall in settings with insufficient or no lighting.
- Bathing facilities and latrines that lock from the inside and that are separated for females and males can mitigate GBV risk.
- Inadequate or inappropriate sanitary supplies or lack of access to appropriate ways to maintain/wash these materials may limit women's and girls' mobility and increase their vulnerability to GBV.

### GBV issues to examine in WASH assessments:

- What does the community report in terms of the gender and age divisions of responsibilities for water collection, water storage, water treatment, waste disposal, cleaning, taking care of children's hygiene and maintenance and management of WASH facilities? Is this confirmed through observation of WASH facilities?
- How often must women and girls collect water? What time of day? How many hours a day is spent traveling to and from water sources? Does this prevent girls from attending school?
- What concerns do women and girls have in relation to traveling to water collection points? How do women and girls feel about the route to be travelled to water and sanitation facilities? From their perspective, are the routes used safe for girls and women? How long does it take to walk there? Is the path well lit at night?
- How do women and girls feel about the water and sanitation facilities that they have access to? How likely are women and girls likely to use these water and sanitation facilities? What might keep a woman or girl from using the water and sanitation facilities?
- Do women and girls feel latrines accessible, located in safe areas and adequate in number? Are there separate facilities for males and females that are clearly marked and appropriate distances apart? Are there adequate disposal mechanisms for sanitary supplies in all female latrines?
- From the perspective of women and girls, are water and sanitation facilities secure and designed to ensure privacy? Is there sufficient lighting? Are latrines and bathing facilities equipped with doors that lock from the inside?

### Crucial points:

- Crucial to the design of any WASH intervention is a **gender-sensitive assessment that consults both males and females about their respective needs and roles** around water and sanitation. Extra steps may be necessary to ensure women's voices can be heard.
- WASH assessments **should not deliberately seek to identify specific incidents or individual survivors**. However, in the event a survivor chooses to disclose an incident of GBV, members of the assessment team must be aware of available GBV services and prepared to provide referrals in a safe, confidential and non-judgmental manner.
- If an assessor notices a **specific GBV-related concern**, rather than attempt to investigate further, the **appropriate response is to notify someone with experience working on a GBV** (e.g. GBV specialist/expert). If a GBV specialist is not available, the team should note in their findings that additional GBV expertise, resources and possibly a GBV-specific assessment are needed.

#### FROM THE SPHERE STANDARDS (2011)

"People require spaces where they can bathe in privacy and with dignity...The number, location, design, safety, appropriateness and convenience of facilities should be decided in consultation with the users, particularly women, adolescent girls and persons with disabilities. The location of facilities in central, accessible and well-lit areas with good visibility of the surrounding area can contribute to ensuring the safety of users."

"Inappropriate siting of toilets may make women and girls more vulnerable to attack, especially during the night. Ensure that women and girls feel safe when using the toilets provided."