Measuring Impacts of WASH on Women’s Well-Being

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“At its root, poverty is caused by unequal power relations. Addressing the social inequality that underlies poverty, especially gender inequality, is indispensable in overcoming poverty.”

“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice.”

Nelson Mandela
We know that WASH affects women and girls

We often see introductory paragraphs like this:

“The collection of water, primarily the responsibility of women and children, represents an additional burden. Up to 6 hours each day may be spent in search of water to meet household needs. Time spent in search of water forces children to miss school and women to forgo potential opportunities to engage in small business endeavors....”

But WASH programs most often measure:

- Distance to an improved water source
- Household ownership of a latrine
- Presence of hand-washing infrastructure
- Simply health metrics

WASH programs don’t often seek to understand how WASH programs are affecting women’s lives and well-being in a wider sense.
CARE’s Impact of WASH on Women’s Experience Tool (IWWI)

A survey tool, with a simple index to estimate:

- Overall magnitude of impact of improved WASH on women’s well-being
- Impact of WASH on particular realms of women’s well-being

23 Total Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Impacts: 7 questions</th>
<th>Indirect Impacts: 13 questions</th>
<th>Overall Impact: 3 questions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of water collected</td>
<td>Personal safety and security</td>
<td>Day to day life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal hygiene</td>
<td>Control over household resources</td>
<td>Financially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent’s health</td>
<td>The ability of women to make decisions and voice opinions</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
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</table>
Sample question and index

‘In comparison with before the WASH program was implemented,
Women’s opportunities for education and training are…’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fewer than before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Not very different than before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A bit better than before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Significantly better than before</td>
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Capturing women’s experience in Mozambique

Survey of women in 72 communities: Cabo Delgado, Mozambique

Compared communities that had functioning water points to communities with broken water points

Communities with functioning water points: n= 59
With broken water points: n = 13
Overall findings

In total, women who live in communities with a functioning water point report significantly greater change than women who live in communities where the water point is no longer working.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Functioning</th>
<th>Non-functioning</th>
<th>P value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total impact score</td>
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<td>62.7</td>
<td>.0008</td>
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<tr>
<td>(of 92 possible points)</td>
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</table>
Some Expected Findings

Health
• 86% of women perceive that women’s health is significantly better

Safety and Security
• 90% of women felt their personal safety had significantly improved

Opportunities for Education*
• 71% of women felt their opportunities for education and training had improved (a bit or significantly)
More Nuanced Findings

Control over household resources
• 84% of women felt they had significantly greater control over their household resources
• 80% of women feel that they are significantly financially more secure

Women’s voices
• 79% felt that women’s ability to make decisions and have their voices heard had significantly improved

Household relationships and equality in the home
• 85% of women feel that their household relationships and equality within the household have improved, and 68% say they have greatly improved.
Where we didn’t see clear change…

- Women’s opportunities and roles in paid employment
- Women’s social groups and opportunities
- Women’s opportunities for education and training*
Why do women perceive these impacts in connection to WASH?

Follow up with a qualitative approach

Conducted IWWT with focus groups of women

Facilitated discussion around areas of significant change
All women reported responded that their personal safety and security when collecting water or going to the latrine has improved. 53 of 59 focus groups report their safety as ‘significantly better’

- Decreased exposure to strange men
- Decreased exposure to wild animals
- Decreased suspicion and conflict at home that leads to domestic conflict and violence

“Men would climb trees to watch us take baths, but now we can bathe at home. It’s much more private and safe.”

-FGD participant in Balama District
Control over household resources

84% of women felt they had significantly greater control over household resources after CARE’s WASH program

- Increased water availability made some homes more financially secure (due to increased crop yields)
- Decreased time spent collecting water allowed women more time to dedicate to agriculture and sale of crops
- Women are more aware of their rights, and more secure in speaking up within the household and in the community
Ability of women to make decisions and voice opinions

79% of women perceived significant improvement in their ability to make decisions and make their voices heard

- Women perceive increased dignity and respect, within their households, and within their communities
  - Decreased household conflict is intricately tied to perceptions of ‘respect’
  - Increased privacy and bodily autonomy
  - Perceptions of greater household equality

- Greater opportunities for education and employment

- Increased perception of women in leadership roles (WASH Committees)
Heterogeneity of women’s experience

Women’s experiences aren’t monolithic, and depend on:
• age
• role or position within the household/community
• wealth, etc.

From our work in Ethiopia:

Heads of household are more likely than young dependents or elderly to report an increase in dignity

Women in the poorest households are more likely to report an increase in leisure time than women of middle income
Conclusions and Implications

• Are WASH programs fully understanding wider impacts of their programs, for good and bad?
  • First, do no harm
  • What is the responsibility of implementers and programs?

• How do we effectively engage women?
  • In water management and service provision
  • In driving household and community sanitation and hygiene

• How does impact change if we include a purposive gender empowerment approach into our WASH programs?
A few findings: indirect impacts

86% of women felt their personal safety had significantly improved

84% of women felt they had significantly greater control over household resources after CARE’s WASH program

79% felt that women’s ability to make decisions and have their voices heard had significantly improved

76% felt that household production of vegetables, livestock, or goods for sale had significantly improved

71% of women felt their opportunities for education and training had improved (a bit or significantly)
A few findings

Improved household relationships
In communities with a functioning water point, 85% of women feel that their household relationships have improved, and 68% say they have greatly improved.
Why do women feel this way?

In 2014, used a qualitative approach
Conducted IWWT with focus groups of women
facilitated discussion around areas of significant change

Two brief examples
Personal Safety and Security

53 of 59 focus groups responded that their personal safety and security when collecting water or going to the latrine is ‘significantly better’

- Decreased exposure to strange men
- Decreased exposure to wild animals
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-FGD participant in Balama District
Control over household resources

84% of women felt they had significantly greater control over household resources after CARE’s WASH program.

Increased water availability made some homes more financially secure (due to increased crop yields).

Decreased time spent collecting water allowed women more time to dedicate to agriculture and sale of crops.

Women are more aware of their rights, and more secure in speaking up within the household and in the community.
What next?

Describing the nuance of improved WASH access:

Impact and experience among women and girls differs greatly at different stages of life, and in different situations

How does this inform our WASH programs?

How does this inform how we perceive of or measure impact of our programs?

What are we changing at the community level, and for whom?
Questions?

Resources:

The IWWT Tool:

CARE’s publications on women and water:
http://water.care2share.wikispaces.net/WOMEN+AND+WATER