



**Women's Empowerment in
Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene
in COWASH Phase III**

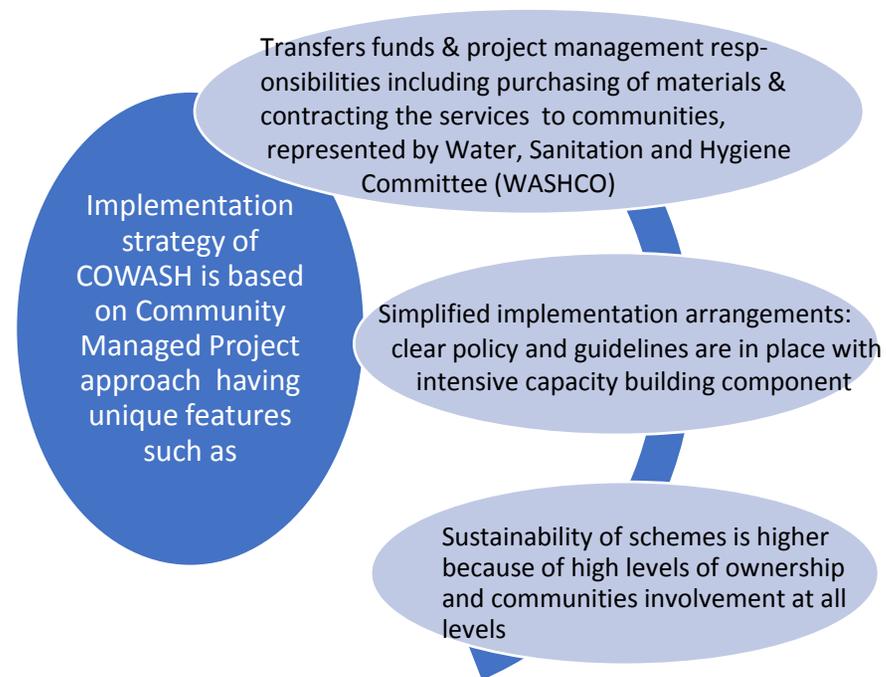
July 2018

Overview of COWASH

Community-led Accelerated WASH (COWASH) is a bilateral project between Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and Government of Finland (GoF) with three phases to date.



Currently, the project operates in 76 Woredas of 5 Regions (Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, SNNPR, and Tigray).



Rationale to focus on women in WASH – The gender dimension of Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene is critical. Women and girls bear the main burden for collecting water in households where water is collected from some distance. The time and energy devoted to perform this task is considerable that could be applied to productive and personal development activities. Inadequate or no access to sanitation affects women and girls in many ways: 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. IN the absence of water and sanitation facilities, girls are most likely to miss classes if they are menstruating. Women also suffer during menstruation and pregnancy time. Access to water and improved sanitation services enable women and girls to lead healthier and dignified life.

Women's Empowerment

As defined by European Institute for Gender Equality, empowerment of women is the process by which women gain power and control over their own lives and acquire the ability to make strategic choices.

As per definition of World Bank, 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.

Empowerment refers to increasing the economic, social, political, and physical strength of any individual or entity. From water, sanitation and hygiene intervention point of view, the four elements can be reflected in the life of women as follows.

Physical Empowerment

- Access to clean water and sanitation facilities
- Access to proper menstrual hygiene management

- Ability to resist violence (including domestic violence, and incidence of sexual harassment)
- Safety and security due to having water and sanitation facilities nearby
- Improved health due to reduction of water borne diseases



Socio-cultural Empowerment

- The right and ability to speak out in public and being heard such as in water resources management meeting
- Increased participation in decision making at household and community levels
- Access to information and knowledge to make informed decisions such as water tariff
- Improved social prestige and dignity
- Freedom from the risk of violence
- Self-confident
- Increased social bargaining power for equitable use of water, including for multiple use of water and sanitation services
- Increased mobility to access the market, for health care, personal, educational, and community need
- Increased school attendance / personal development

Political Empowerment

- Being a voice for the voiceless

COWASH Entry Points

- Recruit full time gender specialist in the regional support unit (RSU) or assign a gender focal point from RSU

- The right to elect and to be elected; such as in water, sanitation and hygiene committee
- Participation in political events and campaigns using relieved time from water collection



Economic Empowerment

- Engage in income generating activities and have a say on the spending of the income.
- Access to and control over economic resources and opportunities
- Access to credit
- Have skills to compete in markets
- Less medical expenses due to access to water and sanitation services

- Capacity development in gender mainstreaming targeting COWASH/Regional Support Unit staffs, government staffs, and user communities

- Prepare training guideline and cascade women in leadership training up to WASHCO level to bring women members into managerial positions
- Beyond the quota system for the membership of women in WASHCO, i.e at least 50%, encourage women to take up the chairperson position

Performance Indicator for the specific output:

Women's leadership as WASHCO members in COWASH Phase III woredas enhanced

☞ % of COWASH Phase III WASHCOs having at least 50% women members

☞ % of WASHCO leadership positions filled with women in COWASH Phase III (Note: Leadership/management positions are: chair, secretary and treasurer)

☞ % of COWASH Phase III WASHCOs having women in all three main management positions

- Stimulate demand among communities and ensure inclusion of marginalized groups, not as mere recipient, but make contributions in the area they feel comfortable.
- Sensitize user communities to consider economically poor households to benefit from the service without depriving them of their right and dignity.
- Target both men and women on hygiene education to invest on and use improved sanitation facilities
- Work on capacity development of woreda WASH experts and kebele WASH to expedite implementation using CMP approach.
- Strengthen WASH clubs as well as girls' clubs at school to ensure proper utilization of school WASH facilities and deepen sensitization on menstrual hygiene management among adolescent girls.
- Ensure the participation of both women and men in equitable manner and make use of women's and men's knowledge in the process of availing WASH services
- Ensure venue and time are convenient to women and other marginalized groups (including people with disability) while organizing community meetings on WASH.
- Encompass relevant formal and informal institutions and strengthen partnership, networking and advocacy for gender programming in WASH sector.
- Create conducive environment for women to be engaged in male-dominated productive activities such as artisanship
- Award grass root level gender champions / best performing WASHCOs to inspire other WASHCOs.
- Conduct WASH focused gender and disability inclusive qualitative and quantitative researches and disseminate the research findings to concerned organizations for subsequent use
- Ensure the use of gender disaggregated data for monitoring, evaluation and reporting.