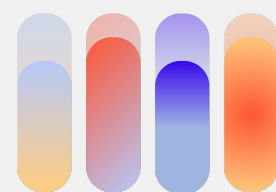# The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - Gender Equality Measure (WASH-GEM)

Tool Summary

December 2025

REVEALING RESILIENCE

Background

There are important connections between sectoral interventions such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions and gender equality and social inclusion. To support gender-transformative change, understanding these interconnections is important to inform effective implementation strategies.

Quantitative measurement tools like the WASH-GEM provide evidence on these interconnections. The WASH-GEM is a collection of WASH and social measures to track changes for both women and men. It was validated with 3056 respondents in Cambodia and Nepal.

While designed for initially for WASH, the social measures that are part of this tool have been validated and can be applied in other sectors. They are currently being tested for other sectors such as health, agriculture, nature-based solutions and climate adaptation.

Publications

Conceptual foundations Carrard et al. 2022

Tools in partnerships Gonzalez et al. 2022

Validation MacArthur et al. 2025

Gender-WASH monitoring Willetts et al. 2023

Defining gender-transformative WASH MacArthur et al. 2023

The (WASH-)GEM comprises five domains made up of 16 themes include four specific themes related to WASH. The quality of the measures for each theme is from fair (-) to very strong (+++) based on relevant statistical analysis. The GEM domains are Resources, Agency, Critical Consciousness, Structures and Wellbeing. These domains have been derived from a strong conceptual foundation, grounded in theory on gender equality and social inclusion.

	RESOURCES "I have access to…"	AGENCY "I feel able to…"	CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS "I believe…"	STRUCTURES "The norm in my community is…"	WELLBEING "I feel…"
WASH	WASH Access ++ access to and use of water, sanitation and hygiene	WASH Decisions ++ participating in WASH related decision-making		WASH Norms ++ perception of who should play different WASH roles	WASH Wellbeing ++ feelings of safety, privacy and non-stress related to WASH
Beyond WASH	Control over Resources - control over one's own time and financial resources	Household Influence + ability to shape goals for the entire household	Equality Awareness +++ personal beliefs about gender equality	Gender Norms +++ perception of who should play different societal roles	Life Satisfaction + subjective feelings of satisfaction with one's own life
	Social Capital + non-financial benefits of personal networks	Household Autonomy +++ motivations to action are voluntary and authentic		Mobility +++ freedom to move and travel due to societal norms	Physical Health - absence of injury or illness that prevents daily activities
		Self-efficacy +++ belief in one's own capacity to set goals and act on them			Mental Health - subjective feelings of happiness and low anxiety
		Collective Action ++ opportunities to work together for positive change			

Measure quality (robustness): +++ very strong, ++ strong, + moderate, - fair

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