



FROM PRACTICAL TO STRATEGIC CHANGES: STRENGTHENING GENDER IN WASH

FINAL RESEARCH REPORT



2016

RESEARCH PARTNERS

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Cover photos: Pocket voting pilot activities in Đakrông District, ISF-UTS.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This research addressed a gap in the evidence base on achievement of strategic gender outcomes in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs. When women and men are equally involved in WASH programs, the programs are more effective and sustainable, and more importantly they can contribute to gender equality outcomes.¹ However, integrating gender strategies into WASH programs and monitoring progress towards genuine changes in power dynamics and increased gender equality can be a challenge.

This research examined the impact of the Gender and WASH Monitoring Tool (GWMT) on the achievement of strategic gender outcomes in Vietnam. Strategic gender outcomes, sometimes referred to as strategic gender interests, are those that move beyond practical changes in roles and relationships between women and men, to those that indicate a shift in power relations towards increased gender equality.² The GWMT is an innovative monitoring tool developed by Plan International Australia (PIA) and Plan Vietnam (including the engagement of consultants). The two aims of the GWMT are:

Aim 1: For project implementation staff (WASH staff and government partners) to develop their understanding of, and skills in, gender analysis and the role that WASH can play in promoting gender equality. To develop practical skills for gender monitoring (including monitoring changes in gender relations) and to collect sex-disaggregated information.

Aim 2: For communities, to raise awareness about gender roles and relationships in household and community WASH activities and to promote (aspirations for) gender equality by providing opportunities for women and men to discuss gender relations and to set their own agenda for change.

The research set out to determine whether the GWMT, above and beyond its two stated aims, directly contributed to the achievement of strategic gender outcomes. While, as a monitoring tool, the GWMT did not explicitly seek to bring about strategic gender outcomes, by creating a space for women and men to explore their own gender relations and opportunities for change, it has potential to result in strategic gender changes.

Research approach and methods

This research was designed to find out whether a link between strategic gender outcomes and the GWMT could be found in a sample of 7 villages in three central provinces of Vietnam. The research utilised a mixed methods and quasi-experimental design to compare experiences of different groups of people who had varying degrees of exposure to the GWMT. Semi-structured interviews with 48 people and participatory pocket voting activities with 139 people were used to uncover strategic gender changes as experienced by women and men of different ages and ethnicities, including people living with disabilities.

¹ See: Fisher, J. (2010) 'Women in water supply, sanitation and hygiene programmes', *Municipal Engineer*, 161 (ME4): 223–229; Ivens, S. (2008) 'Does Increased Water Access Empower Women?', *Development*, 51, pp63–67., 2008; O'Reilly, K. (2010) 'Combining sanitation and women's participation in water supply: an example from Rajasthan', *Development in Practice*, 20(1): 45 – 56.

² Moser, C.O.N. (1993) *Gender Planning and Development: theory, practice & training*, Routledge, London and New York.

Key findings

Occurrence of strategic gender outcomes

The research found that most participants (81 per cent) had experienced strategic gender outcomes. Across the sample groups there were only slight differences between the experiences of men and of women in the number of changes they reported. Similarly there were also differences between age and ethnic groups, although these differences were not significant. The research revealed that experiences of change in at household level were more common than those in the public sphere (i.e. at wider community level). The most commonly reported strategic gender outcome within households was communication for decision-making in households. The most commonly reported change at community level was an increase in women's self-confidence in a community context.

Links between strategic gender outcomes and the GWMT

Overall, the research has found that gender equality outcomes were experienced by most participants in the study, regardless of their exposure to Plan's GWMT. More specifically, the research did not find a link between the strategic gender outcomes experienced by research participants and the use of the GWMT. That is, research participants who had participated in GWMT did not report greater occurrence or depth of strategic gender outcomes as compared with those research participants who had not participated in GWMT activities, or those that lived in communities where GWMT had been used. Reasons why the research did not detect an impact of the GWMT on strategic gender outcomes likely stemmed from three sources. First, the infrequent use of the GWMT (once annually) may be insufficient to catalyse and achieve changes. Second, that Plan's WASH program itself was also contributing to strategic gender outcomes. And third, that gender relations in Vietnamese society are undergoing significant change with increasing awareness of gender rights and roles.

Reasons given for occurrence of strategic gender outcomes

A broad range of interlinking factors were described by participants as contributing to change in strategic gender outcomes. In total 31 per cent of all reported changes could be attributed to WASH programs, policies and outcomes which demonstrates the significant impact of WASH interventions on gender change. The research revealed that many changes came about through women accessing information and knowledge, either through formal education or meetings and discussions in the community. Confidence of women was seen to grow with more opportunities to participate in meetings and activities in the community. Where leaders or figures of authority may have provided an initial trigger for their participation, women then became comfortable to participate more often and more actively. Peer learning and example setting was also described as reinforcing change. This suggests that raising gender awareness of key individuals through meetings and activities can have a positive flow-on effect. The use of public information to contribute to awareness-raising about gender equality contributed to change. Individual values and attitudes also play an important role in change and it is clear that norms set either in a local setting or in broader media and society influence people's values and attitudes, even in the face of customs which can provide considerable barriers to change.

Conclusion and recommendations

The research did uncover considerable positive strategic gender change occurring in the sites where Plan is implementing WASH programming. It was clear that WASH programming contributed to the achievement of gender equality, evidenced by the links participants made to WASH programs, policies or outcomes. It was also clear that there is a range of other societal factors which brought about change. This broader societal context of changing gender relations needs to be taken into account by WASH practitioners in both their programming and their monitoring, in order to make the most of dynamic contexts such as those found in these research sites.

This research did not find a direct link between the achievement of strategic gender outcomes and the use of the GWMT. However, this does not necessarily suggest that the aims of the tool need to be revised, rather, that this research revealed that on its own the GWMT used on an annual basis cannot be expected to engender strategic gender outcomes.

This research has reiterated that change processes towards gender equality are complex, are not linear, are influenced by a range of factors and can require a range of stakeholders to catalyse and reinforce positive gender equality outcomes for these changes to take place.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This research addresses a gap in the evidence base around achievement of strategic gender outcomes in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs. Strategic gender outcomes, sometimes referred to as strategic gender interests, are those that move beyond practical changes in roles and relationships between women and men, to those that indicate a shift in power relations towards increased gender equality.³

When women and men are equally involved in (WASH) programs, the programs are more effective and sustainable, and more importantly they can contribute to gender equality outcomes.⁴ However, integrating gender strategies into WASH programs and monitoring their progress towards genuine changes in power dynamics and increased gender equality can be a challenge.

The **Gender and WASH Monitoring Tool (GWMT)** is an innovative monitoring tool developed by Plan International Australia (PIA) and Plan Vietnam that enables users to explore gendered relations through a facilitated community dialogue process. The GWMT is already in use in Plan's Civil Society WASH Fund projects in Vietnam and Indonesia; and in Plan's WASH projects in Laos. The aims of the tool are outlined fully in Section 2.2.

The GWMT is already in use in Plan's Civil Society WASH Fund projects in Vietnam and Indonesia; and in Plan's WASH projects in Laos.

In particular, this research explored the extent to which the GWMT process was able to contribute to strategic gender outcomes and changed gender relations when used as part of regular WASH project monitoring activities. Plan's GWMT supports non-specialist gender staff to understand and analyse these important areas. However, the impact of the use of the monitoring tool on gender equity outcomes was uncertain and this research aimed to fill that gap.

This research study was a partnership between the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology Sydney (ISF-UTS), Plan International Australia (PIA), Plan International Vietnam and The Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES) Vietnam National University. The research was carried out during 2016 with the main objective to examine the effect and impact of the GWMT in three central Provinces of Vietnam on the achievement of strategic gender outcomes.

The research project was supported through the Innovation and Impact (I&I) Fund, which encourages civil society organisations to trial new models and approaches that could have catalytic effects beyond the Civil Society WASH Fund (CS WASH Fund). The I&I Fund is an Australian Aid program initiative managed on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade by Palladium International Pty Ltd. The I&I Fund seeks to identify areas of potential innovation; provide evidence of the impact of innovative approaches and practices; and disseminate findings to improve the performance of the wider WASH sector. This research partnership is one of five grants awarded under the I&I Fund.

³ Moser, C.O.N. (1993) *Gender Planning and Development: theory, practice & training*, Routledge, London and New York.

⁴ See: Fisher, J. (2010) 'Women in water supply, sanitation and hygiene programmes', *Municipal Engineer*, 161 (ME4): 223–229; Ivens, S. (2008) 'Does Increased Water Access Empower Women?', *Development*, 51, pp63–67., 2008; O'Reilly, K. (2010) 'Combining sanitation and women's participation in water supply: an example from Rajasthan', *Development in Practice*, 20(1): 45 – 56.

This report is intended to be of interest to local (Vietnamese), regional and international practitioners in gender and WASH as well as development practitioners more broadly, donors, academics and governments interested in gender equality outcomes in WASH. The report is structured to provide a background to the strategic gender outcomes framework, the GWMT and the rationale for the research (Section 2); an outline of the approach and methods of the research including research limitations (Section 3); contextual information about the location of the research and the 7 research sites in Central Vietnam (Section 4); a discussion of the findings in relation to the two research questions (Section 5); and finally a conclusion and an outline of recommendations for monitoring gender outcomes in WASH, the use of the GWMT, and for research and evaluation (Section 6).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Strategic Gender Outcomes

This research builds on work done by ISF-UTS and International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) in 2009-2010 and subsequent effort led by ISF-UTS to develop and publish a conceptual framework for classifying gender equality changes associated with WASH programs.⁵ The framework aimed to assist practitioners and researchers in planning, identifying and documenting gender outcomes, recognising the lack of a comprehensive means of linking gender and WASH.

The ISF-UTS/IWDA strategic gender outcomes framework was informed by wider gender and development literature, WASH literature and empirical research in Fiji and Vanuatu. The framework made a clear distinction between practical needs, and strategic interests. Practical gender needs (e.g. accessible and safely managed water and sanitation facilities) refer to those that do not change underlying power dynamics or challenge social norms. Strategic gender outcomes (e.g. women having a greater voice and influence in decision making on water and sanitation issues) are about changing social norms, through changed status or changed power relations, particularly between women and men, as well as addressing causes of existing inequality rather the consequences alone.

As outlined by Carrard et. al. (2013), gender outcomes associated with WASH initiatives can relate to individual changes or changes in relationships, and can be experienced within the household sphere or in the wider 'public' arena. The public arena can be further broken down into the local realm (including social and community networks) and the broader public arena (including governance institutions and beyond).⁶

Table 1 outlines these dimensions. Full details of the framework can be found in Annex 7.1. A limited number of strategic level gender outcomes in the household sphere and in the local public arena (the community) were selected for this research on the basis that the GWMT would have most likely affected change in these particular outcome areas. Selected strategic gender outcomes examined in the research are provided below in Table 2.

The research presented in this report focuses on those outcomes that are strategic, in line with the aims of the GWMT detailed in the next Section.

⁵ Carrard, N.R., Crawford, J., Halcrow, G., Rowland, C. and Willetts, J.R. 2013, 'A framework for exploring gender equality outcomes from WASH programmes ', *Waterlines: international journal of water, sanitation and waste*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 315-333

⁶ Ibid

Table 1: Dimensions of strategic gender outcomes⁷

	Household sphere	Public arena	
	<i>Household and family networks</i>	Local public arena <i>Social and community networks</i>	Broader public arena <i>Governance institutions and beyond</i>
Changes in self/ individuals <i>Includes changes for women or men</i> <i>Includes changes relating to roles as well as self-perception and attitudes</i>	Changes in roles, self-perceptions and attitudes within the household sphere, related to family networks and household roles and responsibilities	Changes in roles, self-perceptions and attitudes within the local public arena including social networks, community and local institutions	Changes in roles, self-perceptions and attitudes within the broader public arena including national and sub-national government institutions, medium to large scale private sector actors
Changes in relationships <i>Includes changes in relationships between women/men and within gender groups</i>	Changes in relationships within the household sphere, related to family networks and household roles and responsibilities	Changes in relationships within the local public arena including social networks, community and local institutions	Changes in relationships within the broader public arena including national and sub-national government institutions, medium to large scale private sector actors

2.2 Gender and WASH Monitoring Tool

The Gender and WASH Monitoring Tool (GWMT)⁸ was developed by Plan International Australia and Plan Vietnam over the period of 2011 to 2014. It was designed to address a gap identified through Plan Vietnam’s previous WASH programming: that WASH monitoring was able to identify the changes that addressed practical gender needs for women and men but was not yet sufficient to monitor more strategic gender equality outcomes that change social norms, power relations and status between women and men. It was also found that other agencies working in WASH in Vietnam faced the same challenge and that there were no readily available or adaptable methodologies to support such monitoring.⁹

The tool combines a regular monitoring activity with active exploration of gendered relations through a facilitated community dialogue process and is underpinned by key principles for working effectively with women and men in WASH programs including:¹⁰ recognising and valuing different gendered contributions; ensuring meaningful contribution to decision making for women and men; and recognising that WASH programs can promote positive and respectful roles, opportunities, responsibility and relationships.

The GWMT has two aims:

Aim 1: For project implementation staff (WASH staff and government partners) to develop their understanding of, and skills in, gender analysis and the role that WASH can play in promoting gender equality. To develop practical skills for gender monitoring (including monitoring changes in gender relations) and to collect sex-disaggregated information.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ The GWMT publication can be found at <http://www.plan.org.au/Learn/Gender-and-WASH-Tool.aspx>

⁹ Thomas, E (2015), Review of the Gender WASH Monitoring Tool (GWMT), Final Report, Plan Vietnam and Plan Australia

¹⁰ Halcrow G, Rowland C, Willetts J, Crawford J and Carrard N (2010), Resource Guide: Working effectively with women and men in water, sanitation and hygiene programs, IWDA and ISF-UTS Available at www.genderinpacificwash.info

Aim 2: For communities, to raise awareness about gender roles and relationships in household and community WASH activities and to promote (aspirations for) gender equality by providing opportunities for women and men to discuss gender relations and to set their own agenda for change.

Implementation of the GWMT:

To date, Plan Vietnam and government partners have implemented the GWMT in over 120 communities in Ha Giang, Quang Ngai, Quang Binh, Quảng Trị and Kon Tum Provinces. It was initially planned that the GWMT be implemented on a 6 monthly basis, while in fact it has been implemented on a 12 monthly basis. The GWMT is facilitated in selected communities using 8 steps with data collected and recorded using the GWMT record sheets. Participants are selected from the community to ensure a representation of gender, age and ethnicity. Participants may or may not have been involved in Plan's other WASH programming.

Monitoring data from the tool is intended to inform on-going WASH program strategies to address gender issues and support gender equality outcomes, in particular changes in gender relations. The GWMT is designed to be integrated within the project's regular monitoring process. It is not designed as a stand-alone tool but rather as just one tool that can contribute to a project's overall approach to promoting and monitoring changes in gender relations in WASH.

This research did not focus on the first aim of the GWMT and although engagement of WASH staff and government partners in the tool and related training may have provided an important contribution in Vietnam, it was beyond the scope of this research to examine or assess this. It is nonetheless useful to outline that particular role of the tool, which uses a training/action learning component to prepare implementers in the use of a practical, simple method of collecting and analysing gender related monitoring data. Those implementing the tool may not have significant 'gender' expertise and the GWMT is an opportunity for them to strengthen their capacity and confidence in gender analysis and monitoring of outcomes in WASH.

A review of the GWMT conducted in 2015 found that the GWMT was effective in building skills and confidence in the use of the monitoring tool and in some instances catalysed a personal change process but that gender analysis skills remained limited. The review also found that the tool was not yet effectively being used for monitoring and gender planning processes and recommended that it be better adapted and contextualised to local settings and that data be better integrated into ongoing monitoring processes as well as collated, analysed and reported on more systematically.¹¹ Plan Vietnam is continuing to work to respond to these recommendations.

This research focused on understanding the impact of the GWMT on gender equality outcomes to determine whether the tool in itself contributes to change. Findings in relation to the links between this process and the achievement of strategic gender outcomes are outlined in Section 5.

¹¹ Thomas, E (2015), Review of the Gender WASH Monitoring Tool (GWMT), Final Report, Plan Vietnam and Plan Australia.

3 RESEARCH APPROACH

3.1 Purpose and scope of the research

The rationale of this research was that gender equality is recognised as important for enhanced development outcomes in general and is integral to effective, equitable and sustainable WASH outcomes, but despite this there has been a lack of focus on, and evidence for, strategic gender outcomes – those that address and change power relations between women and men. Plan's GWMT supports non-specialist gender staff to address these important areas. However the impact of the use of the monitoring tool on gender equity outcomes is currently unknown.

The research is intended to provide an evidence base on the contribution made by the GWMT to achieving strategic gender outcomes beyond those that might otherwise be achieved through normal WASH practice, with the aim of guiding how the GWMT is applied in practice within Plan, and across the WASH sector.

The research makes a contribution to the currently limited evidence base on strategic gender changes in WASH and how these are monitored. As mentioned above, it was beyond the scope of this research to investigate the effects of the tool on those that 'use' it in facilitating the process at community level.

The collaborative approach between the research partners was designed to ensure academic rigour, ethical approaches, research quality and integrity as well as relevance and ownership of the process and results by Plan practitioners and government partners in Vietnam who are well placed to influence, or set, policy and strategy. Collaboration was enhanced through regular communication between partners in Australia and between Australia and Vietnam and the use of virtual meetings as well as face-to-face meetings and workshops.

The research design included a capacity building process to build research skills of researchers and partners. This included formal training, 'learning-by-doing', remote support and mentoring and critical reflection to build skills in research ethics, quality and rigour in qualitative and quantitative data collection, data interrogation and analysis and mechanisms for research influence. In-country research workshops were held twice throughout the research cycle, to provide an opportunity for all partners to reflect, adapt and learn at key moments in the research process. The first research workshop held in Hue, Vietnam focussed on research tools and qualitative research practice and used a participatory process to practice and pilot the tools, before reviewing, modifying and improving these based on input from all partners. The second research workshop, held in Hanoi, Vietnam was a collaborative analysis process and presented initial quantitative and qualitative analysis, using participatory processes to encourage questioning, clarification and further development of the findings and key messages of the research.

Data collection was carried out by four CRES researchers, with remote support and supervision from ISF, following a pilot in which all partners were involved. Logistical support including participant recruitment, access to research sites and community liaison was provided by Plan Vietnam staff and partners. CRES collated and translated data collected in English within a template designed by ISF.

3.2 Hypothesis

This research was designed in relation to the hypothesis that: *If women and men are supported to explore their own gender relations and opportunities for changes (through the GWMT), then greater strategic gender outcomes within WASH programs are achieved than when this opportunity is not offered.*

3.3 Research questions and analytical framing

The research examined selected strategic gender outcomes in relation to the hypothesis above. A strategic gender outcome is a change that indicates a shift in power relations towards increased gender equality. The research design and the framework for analysis were based on these strategic gender outcomes, three of which occur at the household level and four at the community level or local public arena. Table 2 outlines the 7 selected strategic gender outcomes (SGO).

Table 2: Selected strategic gender outcomes examined in the research¹²

	Household sphere <i>Household and family networks</i>	Local public arena <i>Social and community networks</i>
Changes in self/ individuals <i>Includes changes for women or men</i> <i>Includes changes relating to roles as well as self-perception and attitudes</i>	SGO1-Changes in the distribution of household roles and labour between women and men SGO2-Changes in self-confidence , particularly for women	SGO4-Changes in the number of women occupying public and potentially influential roles in their community SGO5-Changes in self-confidence , including to participate in community meetings/forums, particularly for women
Changes in relationships <i>Includes changes in relationships between women/men and within gender groups</i>	SGO3-Changes in communication between household members with relation to influencing decision making	SGO6-Changes in solidarity within and between women and men groups SGO7-Changes in the extent to which women's perspectives are listened to at the community level.

In order to investigate the hypothesis outlined above, the research focussed on two main research questions:

Research Question 1: What is the difference in the occurrence and depth of selected strategic gender outcomes for men and women from three groups: (1) GWMT participants; (2) non-GWMT participants from a community where the GWMT has been used; (3) men and women from communities where the GWMT has not been used?

¹² Carrard, N.R., Crawford, J., Halcrow, G., Rowland, C. and Willetts, J.R. 2013, 'A framework for exploring gender equality outcomes from WASH programmes', *Waterlines: international journal of water, sanitation and waste*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 315-333

Research question 2: How do women and men link any strategic gender outcomes they have experienced with use of the GWMT or to changes in local WASH processes, policies and outcomes?

3.4 Methodology

The methodological approach was based on the research hypothesis and drew on impact evaluation literature.¹³ Methods were selected for their ability to explore differences between groups of people based on their exposure or not to the GWMT as well as causes of the changes experienced by participants. The approach combined a quasi-experimental design that included use of mixed-methods.¹⁴ A purely quantitative approach (with a larger sample size) was deemed indefensible given the complexity of the concept of gender equality and the potential for misunderstanding of questions or positive bias. Instead a predominantly qualitative approach was used, involving semi-structured interviews which were complemented by quantification of the gender outcomes recorded. A quantitative ‘pocket voting’ activity was also complemented by small focus group discussions of voting outcomes.

3.4.1 Quasi experimental design

The sample frame was designed to include five sites of GWMT implementation and two sites of non-implementation, in line with the quasi-experimental methodology. This ensured that a suitable level of comparability across groups, whilst the sampling strategy also ensured that a range of contexts were explored. Table 3 outlines the three sample groups.

Table 3: Sample groups

SAMPLE GROUP	INTERVIEWEES		POCKET VOTING PARTICIPANTS	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Sample group 1: participants who had taken part in Plan’s GWMT	15	12	52	48
Sample group 2: participants who had not taken part in Plan’s GWMT but who lived in villages where the GWMT was implemented	4	9		
Sample group 3: participants who lived in villages where Plan’s GWMT had not yet been implemented	4	4	20	19
		48		139

Utilising a mixed-methods approach within the available timeframe and resources meant that the quantitative comparisons across sample groups are not statistically significant and only

¹³ See for example, Rogers, P. J. et. al. (2012), ‘Introduction to Impact Evaluation’, Impact Evaluation Notes No. 1. March 2012, InterAction and The Rockefeller Foundation; White & Phillips (2012), ‘Addressing attribution of cause and effect in small n impact evaluations: towards an integrated framework’, Working Paper 15, Integrated Initiative for Impact Evaluation.

¹⁴ The need for a methodologically diverse approach to impact evaluation is outlined in Jones et. al. (2009), Improving impact evaluation production and use, ODI Working paper 300.

indicative of differences and similarities between groups based on their exposure to the GWMT. Comparisons obtained from the quantitative data were used in combination with in-depth qualitative data to address the research questions.

3.4.2 Location and research participants

In-depth research was conducted in a purposive sample of seven communities across three Central Provinces in Vietnam (see Section 4), covering villages where the GWMT both has, and has not been used and involving a purposive sample of 187 research participants. All villages are sites of Plan Vietnam’s WASH interventions and villages with varying rates of poverty and geographical characteristics were included.

Table 4 shows the seven villages and participants within these.

Table 4: Breakdown of locations and research participants

District	Commune	Village	GWMT site/not	Participants interviewed	Pocket voting participants
QUẢNG TRỊ PROVINCE					
Đak Rông	Đak Rông	Thôn Khe Ngài	no	4	19
	Đak Rông	Thôn Ta Lêng	yes	8	20
	Tà Long	Ly Tôn	yes	8	20
QUẢNG BÌNH PROVINCE					
Minh Hóa	Xuân Hóa	Cây Dầu	yes	8	20
	Thượng Hóa	Hát	yes	8	21
KON TUM PROVINCE					
Kon Plong	Đak Long	Kon Leng 2	no	4	20
	Măng Cảnh	Kon Chênh	yes	8	18
				48	139

3.4.3 Research tools and piloting

The research design consisted of two key research tools: semi-structured interviews and a pocket voting activity.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 48 persons across seven villages. These were designed to provide key open-ended questions that the interviewer could use as a basis for a conversation with the interviewee.

Questions focussed on any changes experienced by research participants in the management of water, sanitation and hygiene in the home and community which suggested a shift in gender relations. Participants were asked an open question to describe change with no instruction as to whether change was positive or negative. Probing questions were used to guide participants towards discussion and learning about changes experienced in relation to the seven strategic gender outcomes, reasons why the change happened and the value placed on the change by participants.

A specific question was asked to participants who had taken part in the GWMT (sample group 1), which asked them to rate ('not at all', 'a little' or 'a lot') the extent to which the GWMT contributed to the changes they had described in their interview. CRES interviewers first asked participants if they took part in the GWMT and if they could not recall their participation, they were prompted with memorable or unique details of sessions based on advice from Plan Vietnam staff who had implemented the tool or had been involved in its implementation.

Interviews took approximately 1.5 hours. All interviews were conducted in a one-on-one format and in a private place, mostly within participants' homes. Where possible, one CRES researcher conducted the interview and another CRES researcher took notes.

Pocket voting activity



Image 1: pocket voting activity with women in Quảng Trị Province. Picture: CRES.

Pocket voting was used as a participatory tool to explore and record people's perceptions of whether certain strategic gender outcomes were present in their homes and communities.

Pocket voting activities in each village included approximately 20 men and women, of different ages and included people who had and had not taken part in Plan's GWMT. Activities were held in an available space in the community, organised by Plan Vietnam staff and partners.

Pocket voting charts presented questions asking whether people had seen change in relation to six strategic gender outcomes 'a lot', 'a little', or 'not at all'. (The outcome, 'changes in solidarity within and between women and men groups' was not included in the voting activity). The gender outcomes were explained by CRES researchers, and examples of what these changes may look like were provided by the group. Participants voted in separate women and men groups, and votes were cast individually and secretly in all seven villages except one, where space did not permit a secret vote.

Following individual voting, voting results were used as a basis for focus group discussions in gendered groups to elicit examples of specific changes, reasons for change, the value placed on changes and whether they were seen as lasting. CRES researchers facilitated these discussions and took notes including points of consensus and points of disagreement. The final activity brought women and men together to compare the voting results and discuss possible reasons for difference and similarities in women and men's perceptions of change.

Pilot activities were carried out in two villages in Đakrông District of Quảng Trị Province in order to test the tools and the process of data collection.¹⁶ Learning based on the pilot and reflection then led to refinement of both the research tools and data collection practice. All partners agreed to finalisation of refined tools before re-translation into Vietnamese.

Analytical approach

Data was collected and analysed in relation to the two research questions and a range of analytical approaches were adopted. To address 'occurrence' of strategic gender outcomes, changes described by participants were categorised under each of the seven strategic gender outcomes and then counted within each sample group to show a comparison between the three sample groups described further below.

Although a range of examples of change were reported by participants in each sample group, the process of analysis ensured that a change was counted as a strategic gender outcome only if a shift in power dynamics between women and men was clear as opposed to a purely practical change in roles and relationships.

Depth was attributed to each change based on whether it reflected a clear shift in relations that suggested greater gender equality; whether it was considered by the participant to be an important and a lasting change and whether it was considered by the participant to have contributed to a change in another area of their lives (beyond the management of water, sanitation and hygiene in the home or community).

Data was disaggregated to reveal differences in experiences of strategic gender outcomes between participants according to their gender, age and ethnicity.

The reasons people gave for changes occurring were analysed to determine links to WASH policies, programmes and outcomes. Thematic analysis was then used to explore in more depth the reasons people described to determine the breadth and the most and least common factors contributing to gender change in the research sites.

¹⁶ The two pilot villages were not included in the 7 final research sites.

3.4.4 Ethical research

A formal research ethics application approved through the ISF-UTS ethics process addressed key issues in ethical research including participant selection, informed consent, conducting research with people living with disabilities and privacy and data management. Processes and tools were developed by ISF, and partners involved in data collection on the ground were trained in the use of these. The first workshop held in Vietnam included the topic of ethical research and partners were trained in line with the *ACFID Principles for ethical research and evaluation in development*, including respect for human beings, research merit and integrity, beneficence and justice.¹⁷ An activity to identify ethical risks and mitigation strategies for this research was conducted with local researchers and partners and built into the research plan.

Tools to ensure ethical research were developed to obtain informed consent including a research information sheet to share with stakeholders; a formal participant invitation; interview and pocket voting introduction scripts; and clear steps for participant sampling and selection for in-country personnel to follow. These tools were employed as part of the in-country pilot activity and further refined for data collection activities. Plan Vietnam have also committed to feeding back the research findings to participants and their communities.

3.4.5 Limitations

It is helpful to note limitations of the research to inform interpretation of the research findings, and describe how these were mitigated to the extent possible. Several limitations have been identified by the researchers and partners relating to design, sampling and data collection.

The final interview sample differed from the designed sample for the three sample groups (outlined above in Table 3). Despite taking steps to ensure that participants were identified and invited to participate based on clear selection criteria, a number of factors led to changes in sampling. Largely due to communities being occupied with agricultural activities, pre-selected participants, including reserve participants in some villages, were not available to participate in interviews. The final sample maintained representativeness of gender, age and ethnicity, but not in terms of the three primary sample groups related to exposure to the GWMT. The need to replace participants in a short timeframe and the inability to verify those residents who had previously participated in Plan's GWMT, (due in part to a tendency to report that they had not taken part in the GWMT when in fact they had), meant that too many people who had taken part in the GWMT were included (sample group 1 = 27) compared to those who had not participated, but were living in villages where the GWMT had been implemented (sample group 2 = 13).

Inclusion of people living with disabilities was a stated intention of the research and the research design emphasised this. Due to research timeframe and resources, the design included the participation of people living with physical disabilities and was not able to make provisions to include people living with intellectual disabilities which significantly hindered communication, or people with hearing impairments. CRES researchers selected a specific number of people living with physical disabilities in the research sites based on population lists provided by local authorities. However, in many cases these participants or their families did not provide consent for them to participate due to illness or other reasons. Three persons living with disabilities were included in the final research sample which is too small a number

¹⁷ ACFID (2016) Principles and Guidelines for ethical research and evaluation in development. https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/Principles-for-Ethical-Research-and-Evaluation-in-Development2016.pdf

to be able to disaggregate data meaningfully and compare experiences of these participants with other participants.

The importance of interviewers and interviewees being of the same gender was recognised as important in the research design, however, the CRES research team, which consisted of three female and one male did not always manage to do this. Therefore, male participants were often interviewed by a female researcher. Risks associated with this, including potential for male participants to misrepresent their experiences of gender relations and changes, were mitigated by ensuring that most experienced CRES researcher interviewed male participants and cross-checked responses as much as possible.

Language barriers provided a challenge as reported by CRES researchers in Quảng Trị Province and Kon Tum Province, with people from the Vân Kiều and Mơ Nâm ethnic minority groups' who demonstrated a lack of confidence speaking the Vietnamese language. This was evident more commonly among women than men. CRES researchers used local interpreters where available and appropriate and if this was not possible, took more time for the interview and built rapport with participants to encourage them to communicate in the language less familiar to them. CRES researchers reported that the interpreters who were known to participants had a positive effect in encouraging participants to share their experiences and did not feel that interpreters influenced or interfered with the interviews. Language barriers often made it difficult for researchers to enquire into the reasons behind participants' opinions and experiences in great depth. Whereas participants were able to answer the main questions in the interview, the complex concept of gender change may not have been explored in as much depth as the design expected. CRES researchers also reported that an interview question which asked participants to describe whether they felt that a change in management of WASH had contributed to any changes in another area of their lives, was not always well understood by participants. This question was reviewed in the first research workshop held in Hanoi and refined after the research pilot. However, the concept of 'transference of change' was difficult to convey clearly and may not have elicited quality responses.

Finally, there were challenges faced during the analysis process. The seven strategic gender outcomes are distinct, yet interconnected and the decision to situate particular changes into one or another space was not always straight forward. For example, women's self confidence in the household was commonly reported in relation to communication and decision-making. Or some examples of women occupying public roles in the community may also have illustrated women's self-confidence to participate, or changes in solidarity between women and men's groups. This reflects the complexity of gender change and decisions to attribute change to one space or another were made in a consistent manner.

Despite the above limitations, the collaborative research approach involving engagement during both piloting and analysis with all partners ensures a sufficient degree of rigour to this research, and in this report where outcomes are uncertain, they are stated as such.

4 CONTEXT OF RESEARCH SITES

Research findings reflect dynamic change taking place in Vietnam more broadly and specifically within the seven villages. Vietnam has undergone considerable transformation from one of the poorest countries in the world in the 1980's to lower middle income status by the end of 2015 and is considered a development success story by the World Bank¹⁸

Although the poverty rate in Vietnam has dropped dramatically to 2.4 per cent¹⁹, ethnic minority groups who make up 15 per cent of the population account for more than 50 per cent of the country's poor.²⁰ Other development indicators have improved such as access to education, life expectancy, maternal mortality rate and access to infrastructure such as electricity, which is now available to almost all households. According to the World Bank, access to clean water and improved sanitation has risen to more than 75 per cent of all households in 2016.

Plan International Vietnam implements the CS WASH Fund Project incorporating several components across the 7 research sites. The sanitation component includes sanitation marketing using a community participation approach in order to increase the number of hygienic latrine coverage in schools and communities. The hygiene component applies community led total sanitation (CLTS) and school based sanitation approaches to behaviour change of people and children to stop open defecation. The water component includes water safety planning (WSP) at commune and village level to reduce the risks of contamination to water sources and to build capacity and ownership of local people in operation and maintenance.

The gender and social inclusion component of the CS WASH Fund Project involves use of the Gender and WASH Monitoring Tool (GWMT) and creating opportunities to access clean water and hygienic latrine for people living with disabilities. Additionally, there is explicit inclusion of gender equality in the project's design objectives and targets, formative research on gender and inclusion is conducted and there is a dedicated budget for gender-related activities. In terms of representation, in 349 committees and groups in the project there is 42 per cent female representation and 30 per cent of management or technical roles are held by women. Women make up between 31-52 per cent of all trainees in the project and 48 per cent of participants in community level meetings. Facilities in school WASH infrastructure are sex disaggregated and menstrual hygiene management sessions are conducted in schools. Project activities have engaged the Vietnam Women's Union and a formal Memorandum of Understanding will see Plan supporting trials of the GWMT in 6 Provinces, with a view to scaling up.

The seven research sites are located in three central provinces of Vietnam. It is important therefore to outline relevant context information regarding ethnicity, livelihoods, poverty, geographic location, as well as Plan International Vietnam's WASH programming and other programming for each. This information is included in Box 1.

¹⁸ See World Bank Vietnam Country Overview at <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/vietnam/overview>

¹⁹ This rate is calculated by UNDP based on 2014 figures. See UNDP Human Development Indicators for Viet Nam at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/VNM>

²⁰ World Bank *ibid.*

QUẢNG BÌNH PROVINCE

Hát Village, Thuong Hoa Commune

The GWMT was implemented in Hát village twice over 2014 and 2015. Hát village is located in a high mountain zone and is relatively remote. The village has a population of 252. All residents are Kinh people and Vietnamese is their first language.

The official poverty rate of Thuong Hoa Commune is 43 per cent. Hát has little land for wet rice cultivation and the main livelihood is growing cash crops of maize, pea nuts and cassava. Many men also work outside the village and in Laos.

A road connecting Hát with other villages was completed in 2013 which has enabled crops to gain higher profits leading to many in the village having more income and an increase in the number of televisions and telephones. The road has also allowed traders from outside to trade with Hát village and has led to more people from Hát going out to work as hired labour.

Almost all houses have wells or pipes which connect water from communal tanks to their homes. The area is prone to floods and landslides. In 2010, many households were forced to resettle. These household members often work as hired labour and rely on neighbours for access to water. Aside from Plan's WASH programming outlined above, Plan also implements a pro-poor participatory development project as well as a village savings and loans scheme.

Cây Dầu Village, Xuân Hoa Commune

The GWMT was implemented in Cây Dầu village twice over 2014 and 2015. Cây Dầu is located in a mountainous zone has a population of 269. The majority of residents are Kinh people and Vietnamese is their first language.

The official poverty rate of Xuân Hoa Commune is 12.66 per cent and this commune is considered among the poorest in the district. The main source of household income is from agricultural activity but also animal breeding and forestry. In the last few years, the commune promoted plantation of economic forests as a means of income generation. Programmes have also provided loans and technical training for beekeeping, raising deer, porcupine farming and pig raising. This has improved household wealth. Villagers are also actively participating in the Government's 'New Rural Development' programme under which they have set up credit/fund groups such as Farmers' Fund. Aside from Plan's WASH programming outlined above, Plan also implements a pro-poor participatory development project as well as a village savings and loans scheme in Cây Dầu.

From 2005, government support was used to build communal water tanks, a water pump station and to install water pipes. The water station also services two neighbouring villages.

QUẢNG TRỊ PROVINCE

Ta Lêng Village, Đakrông Commune

The GWMT was implemented three times over 2014 and 2015 in Ta Lêng village. The majority of the 462 residents of Ta Lêng belong to the Vân Kiều ethnic group and Vietnamese is not their first language. Women tend to be less fluent in Vietnamese compared to men.

This is a poor village located in a drought prone area. The commune poverty rate is 28.42 per cent and 80 per cent of household income is derived from agriculture. A lack of water means that swidden fields are not always productive.

Aside from WASH programming, Plan is implementing parenting, child protection, village savings and loans, disaster risk reduction and health programming in Ta Lêng.

Khe Ngòi Village, Đakrông Commune

The GWMT has not been implemented in Khe Ngòi village. The population of Khe Ngòi is 776 and all residents belong to the Vân Kiều ethnic group and Vietnamese is not their first language.

The official poverty rate of Đakrông Commune is 28.37 per cent. Residents engage in subsistence farming of rice and corn, extra corn is sold at markets for cash. Distance from markets means that women (who are mostly responsible for selling produce) need to make overnight trips to sell corn.

Khe Ngòi village is remotely located 3 kilometres from the nearest major road. The village is divided by Đakrông river and the terrain makes transportation difficult. Flooding during the wet season means the village is often cut off from services and small boats must be used as transport, including for women to give birth. Khe Ngòi gained access to electricity in 2012.

Aside from WASH programming, Plan has implemented parenting, child protection, village savings and loans and disaster risk reduction programming in Khe Ngòi.

Ly Tôn Village, Tà Long Commune

The GWMT was implemented in Ly Tôn village three times during 2014 and 2015. The majority of the population of 474 belong to the Vân Kiều ethnic group, Vietnamese is not their first language. The official poverty rate is 40 per cent.

The Krong Klang river runs through Ly Tôn village and served as the main water source until it became polluted from the discharge of illegal gold mines during the 1990s. The mines also caused landslides. Contaminated water led to intestinal infections and skin diseases and serious water shortages resulted. Women and children then had to walk many kilometres to the forest to get drinking water which they carried on their backs.

In 2004, water pipes were installed by a villager who had resigned from the army. This allowed the villagers to grow wet rice and cash crops, dig fishponds and raise fish. Men in the village still participate in gold mining.

Aside from WASH programming, Plan has implemented child protection, village savings and loans and disaster risk reduction programming in Ly Tôn.

KON TUM PROVINCE

Kon Chênh Village, Mang Canh Commune

The GWMT has been implemented twice in Kon Chênh village, in 2014 and 2015. This village is located in a mountainous area and the majority (95 per cent) of the 249 residents belong to the Mơ Nâm majority and speak Vietnamese as a second language. The poverty rate of the commune is 21 per cent.

The main livelihood is from cassava, coffee and rice crops. Many younger residents recently moved to live separately from their parents' households as per the village custom and given

small amounts of land by parents. Households cut forests in order to cultivate land. Until recently, men would often work in the forests, but logging is now prohibited which means they tend to stay at home.

A Government poverty reduction program recently supported road building and has enabled people to travel to the commune, district and city markets where their produce can fetch better prices. This has led to greater exposure to areas beyond the village and extra income has enabled purchase of new products and an increased ability to send children to school.

The village has 3 collective wells built from government budget, but these are dry and not in use. Water is mostly derived from streams and households form groups to protect their water source (various water holes). Households are required to send members to participate in public works. Women cut trees to make fences in order to manage pigs. Men clear leaves from the water holes.

Plan supported improved sanitation for more than 20 households in 2014. Aside from WASH programming, Plan supports parenting, child protection and health programs.

Kon Leang 2, Dak Long Commune

The GWMT has not been implemented in Kon Leang 2 village. It has a population of 210 and all residents belong to the M' Nâm ethnic group and speak Vietnamese as a second language. The poverty rate of Dak Long Commune is 50 per cent. Kon Leang is located close to the commune centre and is viewed as a 'model village' in Kon Tum Province, meaning many government and NGO programs are implemented there.

There is little land to cultivate on swidden fields which forces residents to clear land in other communes. This is usually done by men whilst women grow wet rice and raise livestock.

The village piped water system is broken and men use motorbikes to collect water if the house is far from the water source. Households pooled money to dig wells which are now dry.

Aside from WASH programming, Plan supports parenting, child protection and health programs in Kon Leang 2.

5 FINDINGS

The research set out to determine whether the GWMT, above and beyond its' two stated aims, directly contributed to the achievement of strategic gender outcomes. Overall, the research has found that gender equality outcomes were experienced by most participants in the study, regardless of their exposure to Plan's GWMT. There were only slight differences between experiences of men and women in the number of changes they reported. Similarly there were also differences between age and ethnic groups, though these differences were not significant. The research revealed that experiences of change are more common in the household sphere compared with communities, with the exception that the second most commonly reported change related to women's self-confidence in the community. The most commonly reported change outcome was in relation to communication for decision-making in households.

Strategic gender outcomes could not be linked directly back to the GWMT, however, one third of changes were linked to WASH programming. A variety of reasons were given for change towards gender equality taking place. The research revealed that most change came about through women accessing information and knowledge, either through formal education or through meetings and discussions in the community. Self-confidence of women was seen to grow with more exposure to opportunities to participate. Where leaders or figures of authority may have provided an initial trigger, women then became comfortable to participate more often and more actively. Peer learning and example setting was also described as something that reinforced change, suggesting that targeting some residents through meetings and activities can have a positive flow-on effect. The use of propaganda²¹ to contribute to awareness-raising about gender equality was also described by research participants. Recognising individual values and attitudes is important but it was also clear that examples set either in a local setting or in broader media and society influence people's values and attitudes, even in the face of customs which provide considerable barriers to change.

5.1 Experiences of and depth of strategic gender outcomes in relation to WASH

What is the difference in the occurrence and depth of selected strategic gender outcomes for men and women from three groups: (1) GWMT participants; (2) non-GWMT participants from a community where GWMT has been used; and 3) men and women from communities where the GWMT has not been used?

The research did not find a difference in the occurrence and depth of strategic gender equality outcomes in relation to WASH between the three groups examined and therefore did

²¹ 'Propaganda' was a term used commonly by participants (but is also used by state officials) to refer to various forms of public information which may have been issued by government and non-government sources, mostly in relation to gender equality programs.

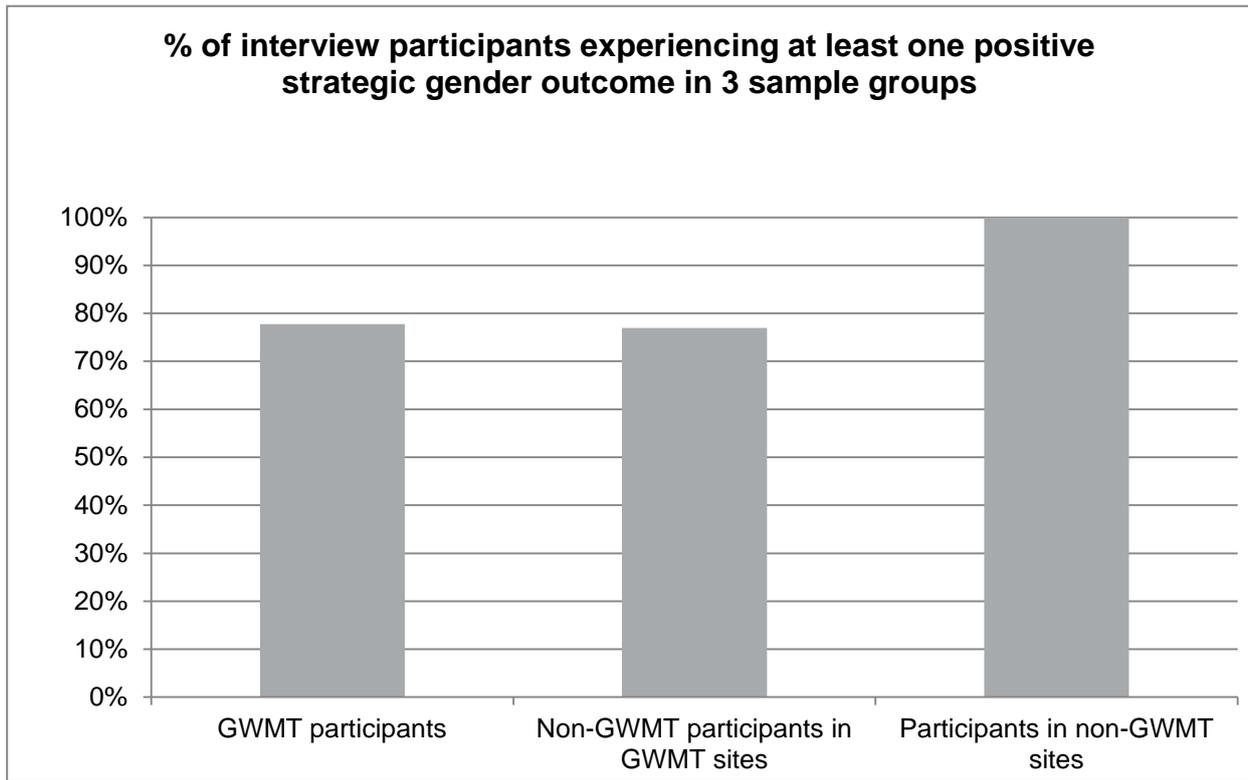
not confirm the hypothesis that the GWMT leads to greater strategic gender outcomes than when the tool is not used. Rather, strategic gender outcomes at household and community level were reported by research participants across all three sample groups, showing a high degree of change taking place in the research sites.

Overall, both the interview and pocket voting results show significant change taking place in gender relations between women and men in households and communities participating in the research. The majority of those interviewed (81 per cent or 39 of the 48 interview participants) reported at least one positive strategic gender outcome. Some participants also described negative changes as outlined in section 5.1.1.

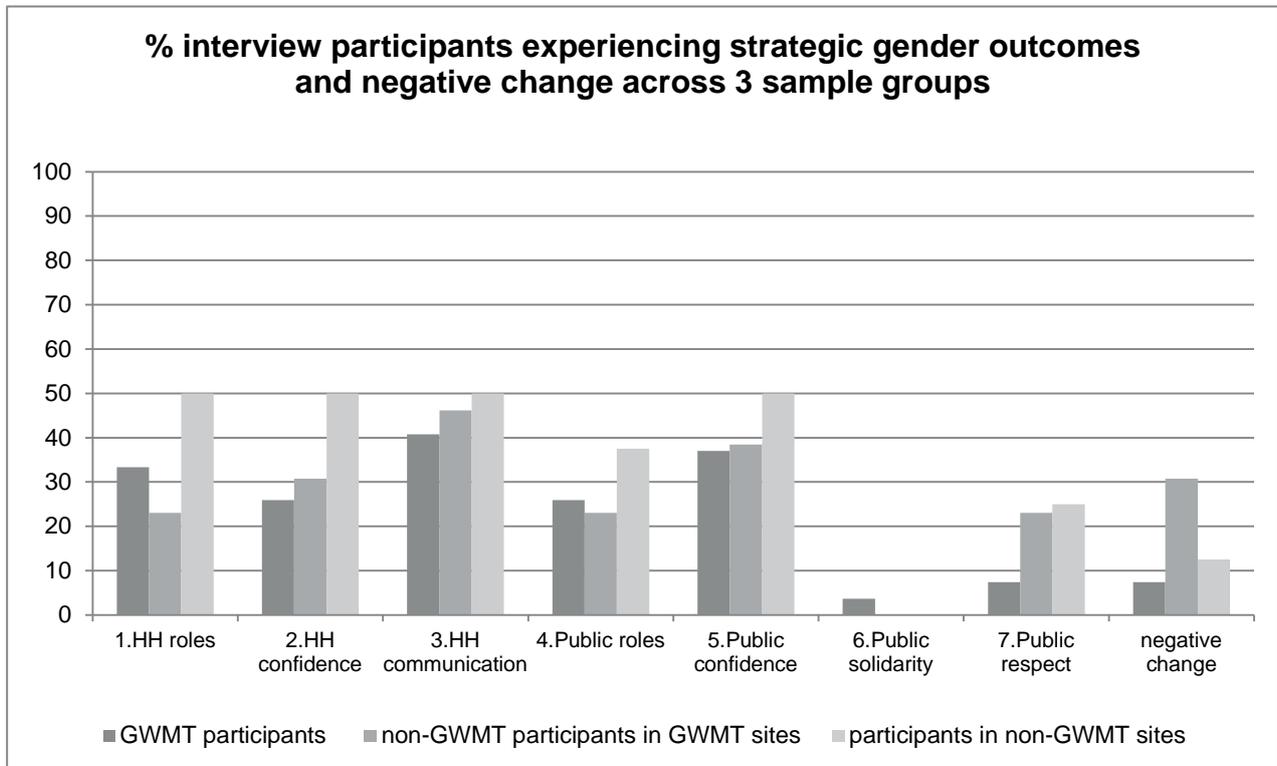
5.1.1 Occurrence of change

As illustrated in Graph 1, no clear difference was found between the three sample groups in the number of strategic gender outcomes experienced by women and men. Of participants who had taken part in the GWMT, 78 per cent (21 out of 27) experienced at least one positive strategic gender outcome in connection with management of WASH in the household or community. This compared with 77 per cent (10 out of 13) of participants who had not participated in the GWMT but who lived in villages where the tool was implemented and 100 per cent (8 out of 8) of participants who lived in villages where Plan has not yet implemented the GWMT. Graph 2 shows the number of changes reported in relation to each of the seven strategic gender outcomes for each of the three sample groups.

Graph 1: percentage of interview participants experiencing at least one strategic gender outcome

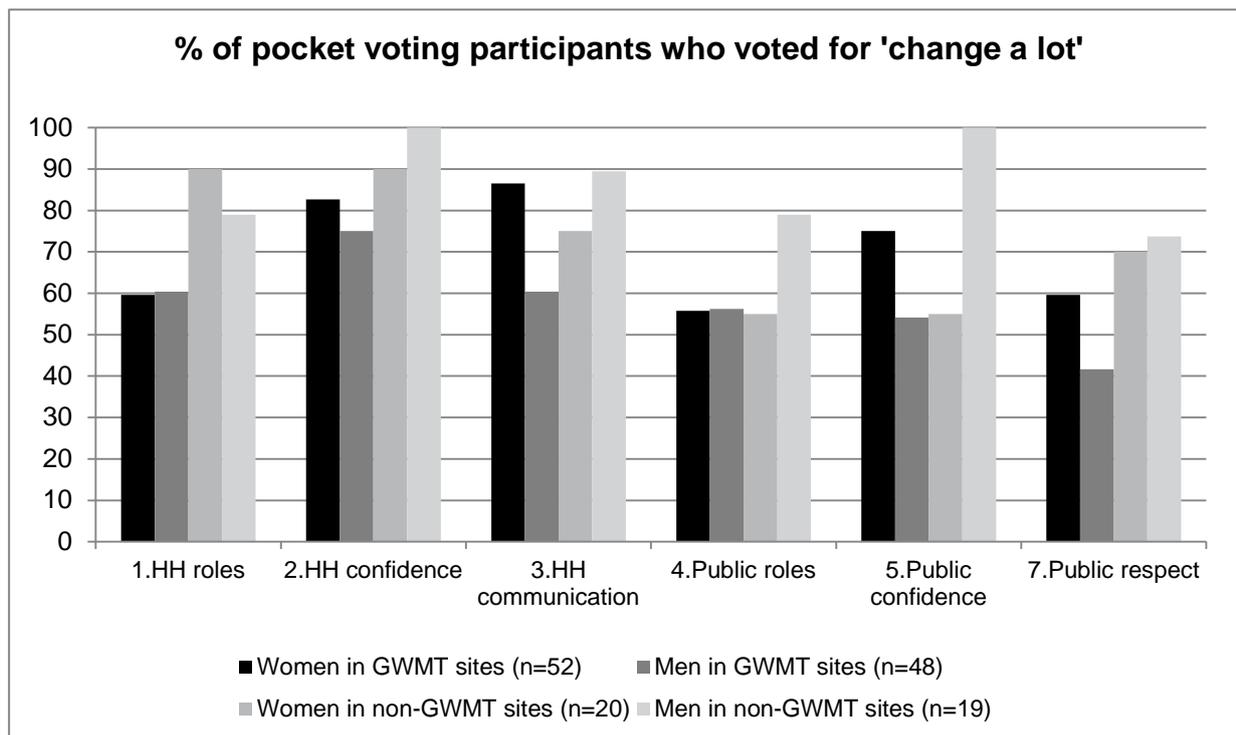


Graph 2: frequency of changes (strategic gender outcomes) in WASH experienced by 3 sample groups



Consistent with the data from interviews, pocket-voting results did not demonstrate major differences in communities where the GWMT was used and where it was not. Graph 3 shows the pocket voting results from 5 villages where Plan’s GWMT was used compared with two villages where Plan’s GWMT was not used. The results are based on participants’ votes for whether ‘a lot of change’ had taken place in connection with 6 strategic gender outcomes. Participants in pocket voting activities, comprising 100 men and women across all research seven sites, most commonly voted for ‘change a lot’ in relation to six strategic gender outcomes at household and community level.

Graph 3: Pocket votes for 'change a lot' for women and men in 5 GWMT sites and 2 non-GWMT sites



Overall, strategic gender outcomes at the household level were experienced more commonly than those at the community level, a finding demonstrated through both interview responses (59 per cent of outcomes were reported at household level compared with 40 per cent reported at community level) and pocket voting results (55% of all votes for ‘change a lot’ were for household level changes compared with 45% at the community level).

Across the three sample groups, the most common strategic gender outcomes experienced were ‘changes in communication between household members influencing decision making’ (SGO3) and ‘changes in self-confidence, including to participate in community meetings/forums, particularly for women’ (SGO5). The least common were ‘changes in solidarity within and between women and men’s groups in the community’ (SGO6) and ‘changes in the extent to which women’s perspectives are listened to at the community level’ (SGO7). This finding may suggest that gender change in relation to WASH is more obvious and readily reported in households, rather in communities. For example, women’s confidence to communicate assertively and influence decisions in the household may in turn increase self-confidence to attend and actively participate in community meetings and activities. This could also suggest that it is women who are most commonly driving change, as ‘increases in

solidarity', and 'women being listened to in the community' (the least commonly reported outcomes) depend on behaviour change in men.²²

Some negative changes were reported by participants during interviews. A change was determined to be negative if it showed a clear regression in the relationship of power between men and women. One woman reported a negative change about an increase in men's drinking, which has reduced their willingness to help their wives. This type of negative change was reported by 3 other female participants;

"When we just got married my husband was okay. He sometimes helped me to clean the toilet and did laundry as he was stronger...But he does not help any more...He drinks and get drunk all day. So he does not help with anything" (Ly Tôn village, non GWMT participant in GWMT site, female, 18-30 years, Vân kiều).

The low number of negative changes reported overall²³ doesn't alter the picture of considerable change towards improved gender equality, but it is important to recognise that change in communities is not a linear process. For example, 6 participants reported both positive and negative changes during their interviews.

Effects of age, ethnicity and gender on occurrence and depth of change

Data was disaggregated by age, ethnicity and sex to examine patterns across these stratifying variables. It is important to note that these findings are only indicative of patterns and there are a range of other social, economic and environmental factors which may determine a person's experience of change. The findings were as follows:

Age

Participants in the younger age group (18-30 years) more commonly reported strategic gender outcomes compared to those in the older age group (31 and older). Of participants 91 per cent (21 out of 23) in the younger age group reported change as compared to 72 per cent of participants (18 out of 25) in the older age group. One explanation might be that younger people in the two ethnic groups may be experiencing change for the first time and therefore talk openly about their experience. Younger people sometimes described change in relation to their parents or grandparents as a point of difference.

Ethnicity

Compared to the Kinh majority, participants in the Mờ Năm and Vân Kiều ethnic groups more commonly reported strategic gender outcomes. 92 per cent of Mờ Năm (11 out of 12) and 95 per cent (19 out of 20) of Vân Kiều participants reported at least one strategic gender outcome compared with 56 per cent (9 out of 16) of Kinh participants. Similarity with younger people, this may be due to the fact that change has been occurring more recently among

²² Gender studies point to various change pathways, and further research would be needed to verify this proposed explanation. Other studies have also highlighted alternative pathways, for example, Plan's Gender and Change study in Zimbabwe (2016) found that while more women were "allowed" to work outside the household in paid employment, the division of labour between men and women at the household level remained unequitable.

²³ Out of a total 101 changes reported, 8 examples of negative change were shared by 7 participants (4 women and 3 men) across the sample groups.

ethnic minority groups who are therefore able to recall and report more change within the three-year timeframe specified in the interviews.

Gender

Overall, there was not a significant difference in the number of reported strategic gender outcomes among women and among men. The majority (78 per cent) of women reported at least one strategic gender outcome as did the large majority (84 per cent) of men. Though there are a few exceptions worth pointing out.

For those who had taken part in Plan's GWMT, men and women experienced a more similar number of strategic gender outcomes compared to the other two sample groups.²⁴

Also, in three villages (two where the GWMT had been implemented and one where it had not), there were interesting differences in voting results between women and men, particularly in relation to self-confidence of women in the household and community. In Kon Leang 2 village, where the GWMT has not yet been implemented, women voted for less change than men regarding changes in women's self-confidence in the community. Women reported during the group discussion that they thought they still lacked confidence, whereas men reported that they think women are more confident and that in their view this was a good. In the same Province (Kon Tum), in Kon Chên village where the GWMT had been implemented, the group discussion revealed that women perceived themselves to be more confident due to propaganda programs, but men perceived less confidence in women and thought they were still dependent on their husbands. In Ly Tôn village in Quảng Trị Province, where the GWMT tool had been implemented, differences in voting were also explored with participants. The men's group suggested that they could see changes in women that the women had not yet recognised. These examples show a difference in perceptions or expectations of a woman's self-confidence which reinforces the idea that it is valuable to support men and women to explore their own gender relations and opportunities for changes to promote realistic ideas of change taking place.

Persons living with a disability

Overall, it was not clear that the experience of people living with a disability was significantly different to others in the sample. However as discussed in the methodology section (section 3.4), only a small number of people living with a disability (three) were included. Two were women, aged over 30 years, from the Vân Kiều ethnic group and both had taken part in Plan's GWMT.

One of these women, who was in a wheelchair and unable to walk, reported that a change in communication between men and women in the household was to show more care for each other. She also reported a number of reasons that change was not occurring in the village. The second woman did not report any change and the interviewer noted difficulty communicating with this participant.

The third participant was male, aged over 30 years, from the Vân Kiều ethnic group and lived in a village where the GWMT had not been implemented. The interviewer reported that he had lost two arms 30 years ago. He reported a change in self-confidence of women in the

²⁴ Refer to annex 7.2; graphs depicting number of changes experienced by women and men in each sample group.

community to participate in community meetings. He also reported a negative change, observing that men in the village had increased alcohol consumption due to an increased economic standard of living and no longer helped their wives with housework.

5.1.2 Depth of change

As well as looking at the *number* of strategic gender outcomes reported by participants, the research examined the *depth* of these outcomes.

Depth was attributed to each change based on (i) the extent to which it reflected changes in power relations and status that suggested greater gender equality; (ii) whether it was considered by the participant to be an important and lasting change and (iii) whether it was considered by the participant to have led to a change in another area of their lives (beyond the management of water, sanitation and hygiene in the home or community).

Examination of the depth of strategic gender outcomes in WASH through detailed qualitative analysis of data from interviews and pocket voting exercises revealed that participants who had taken part in Plan's GWMT did not experience significantly deeper gender change compared to those that had not.

Across the sample groups, a similar number of changes were viewed to be important and lasting. In relation to 'transference of change', i.e. whether participants considered that a change they experienced in relation to WASH had transferred to another area of their lives, more participants who had taken part in the GWMT reported this compared to the other two groups. 30 per cent of participants who had taken part in the GWMT reported 'transference of change', compared to 0 per cent of participants who had not taken part in the GWMT but were living in a site where the tool was used; and 13 per cent of participants in the sites where the GWMT has not been used. This finding stands in contrast to other findings which all suggest a similar occurrence of changes and depth of changes across the three sample groups.

Box 2 outlines illustrative examples of positive strategic gender changes experienced at the household level, as reported by interview participants. Box 3 outlines illustrative examples of positive strategic gender changes experienced at the community level, as reported by interview participants.

Box 2: Examples of strategic gender outcomes in the household

Strategic gender outcome 1 (SGO1) refers to changes in the distribution of household roles and labour between women and men. Changes reported were deemed strategic if they demonstrated an underlying shift in power relations rather than a purely practical change in labour and roles. Common outcomes included husbands taking on more housework duties due to recognising the need to share this labour with their wives. As one man reported; *“Before I rarely did house working for my wife, now my children are grown, I have to help her more often whenever I stay at home...I collect water for her or help her cook food”* (Ly Tôn village, non-GWMT participant in GWMT site, 18-30 years, Van Kieu).

Strategic gender outcome 2 (SGO2) refers to changes in self-confidence, particularly for women and common changes reported were those that show women more readily expressing opinions and negotiating household roles relating to WASH. As one woman reported; *“Compared with 3 or 4 years ago, I changed a lot, I am self-confident to talk out what I want or don’t want. I dare to ask my husband to sweep house or wash up, take a bath for babies whenever I am busy, and my husband is happy to do that”* (Ly Tôn village, GWMT participant, 18-30 years, Van Kieu).

Strategic gender outcome 3 (SGO3) refers to changes in communication between household members to influence decision making. Common changes reported included making decisions about division of housework, building a toilet, improving a water source or keeping water clean. One man reported; *“Before, making decision who work what in the family belonged to me, my wife do all houseworking, and cut grass near the house, husband go to the forest, field. Now, I and my wife discuss all works, sometime she makes the decision”* (Tà Lềng village, non-GWMT participant in GWMT site, 18-30 years, Kinh).

Box 3: examples of strategic gender outcomes in the community

Strategic gender outcome 4 (SGO4) refers to changes in the number of women occupying public and potentially influential roles in their community and may include participation in public activities, committees, meetings or other spaces where women potentially influence ideas and decisions. The most common example reported by participants was women attending meetings, with a small number of examples given of women in leadership roles. Many participants also mentioned women taking part in 'communal works' such as village cleaning or construction, cleaning and maintenance of public water sources. As reported by one woman; *"Before, the leader of clusters were mostly men, now, many cluster leaders are women. They mobilize the masses to clean up the village road and invite the men to participate. They give their ideas more."* (Cây Dầu village, GWMT participant, 30+ years, Kinh).

Strategic gender outcome 5 (SGO5) refers to changes in women's self-confidence in the community setting, including to participate in community meetings/forums, particularly for women. Participants commonly reported examples of women becoming more confident to attend and participate in meetings as well as having a stronger voice in the community generally. One woman reported that; *"Women have more self-confidence. They speak up more often. They were reluctant to speak up before because they were afraid of men criticizing. Women can say that men are wrong and ask for help. Recently they asked men in the village to fix water pipes because they are too tired to do it. They used to be too shy to talk to men. But now they meet and talk to men many times they are not shy anymore."* (Ly Tôn village, non-GWMT participant in GWMT site, 18-30 years, Van Kieu).

Strategic gender outcome 6 (SGO6) refers to changes in solidarity within and between women and men groups and interviewers reported that this domain was not well understood by participants. Only one change was reported in relation to SGO6; *"Since 3 or 4 years ago, every month, all the people in this village together sweep the village road, each family send one person to participate, no matter it is man or woman, no identification this area is for man and woman, all of us often talk each other during our work."* (Ly Tôn village, GWMT participant, 18-30 years, Van Kieu)

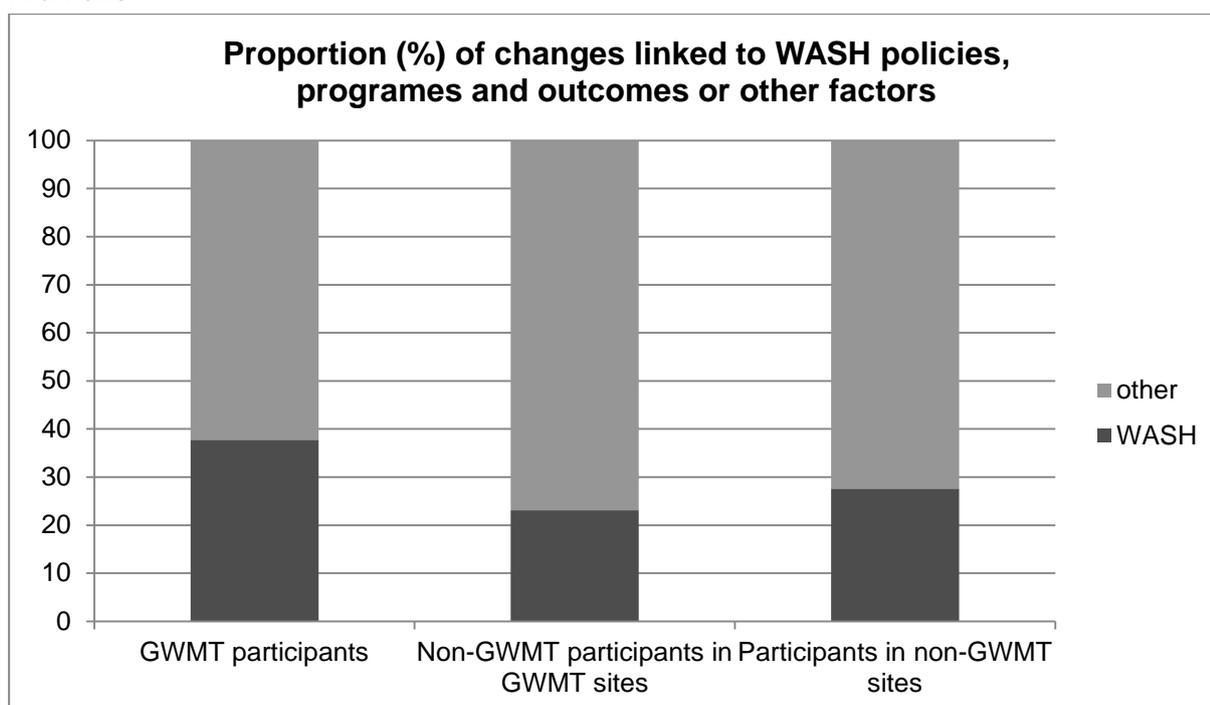
Strategic gender outcome 7 (SGO7) refers to changes in the extent to which women's perspectives are listened to at the community level. Several examples were reported by participants which commonly related to women's ideas being followed at meetings or in public spaces. One man reported; *"at the village meeting for choosing 20 households to receive support to build toilet, women point out which households do not have toilet. They also ask the village to send people to help the woman headed households because they don't have labour and skill. The village assigned youth to do the work."* (Kon Chenh village, non-GWMT participant in GWMT site, 30+ years, Mo Nam)

5.2 Reasons for change including links to GWMT and to WASH processes, policies or outcomes

How do women and men link any strategic gender outcomes they have experienced with use of the GWMT or to changes in local WASH processes, policies and outcomes?

The process of change towards gender equality is highly complex and is influenced by a range of social, cultural, environmental, economic and political factors. This assertion was validated by the diverse reasons participants in the research identified for gender equality outcomes taking place in households and communities – (31 per cent) of which linked to WASH processes, policies and outcomes although the majority (69 per cent) came about due to other factors. The proportion of changes described by participants in each sample group that were linked to WASH policies, programs or outcomes is presented in Graph 4 below. Results are based on the reasons participants gave for the gender outcomes they had experienced which had common themes, whether linked to WASH initiatives or not. These are described in full below and also summarised in Table 5 at the end of Section 0.

Graph 4: links of changes to WASH or other factors across 3 sample groups as described during interviews



5.2.1 Direct links to GWMT

Very few participants linked changes they had experienced directly to their involvement in Plan's GWMT. The 27 participants who had taken part in Plan's GWMT were asked whether their participation had contributed to the changes 'a lot', 'a little' or 'not at all'. Only 19 per cent of participants (5 out of 27) stated that their participation had contributed to the changes they had described 'a lot' and 7 per cent (2 out of 27) of participants stated that their participation had not contributed at all to the changes they had described. Most participants, 74 per cent (20 out of 27) stated that they could not remember their participation in the

GWMT. As noted in section 3.4.3, this was despite concerted efforts by the researchers to increase recall of the GWMT using specific prompts about defining features of GWMT in their community (to distinguish it from other activities).

Those participants who reported that the GWMT contributed to change in their lives gave reasons for this including:

“Because of having more knowledge, more understanding, more confident” (Hát village, female participant, 30+ years, Kinh)

“Because Plan did many gender propagandise and do the essential things, familiar with the reality, especially, the things that seem so simple but have huge meaning for the society. The Plan staff are also friendly and nice” (Cây Dầu village, male participant, 18-30 years, Kinh)

“Because when taking part in the meetings, I understand more about women, and I respect women and want to help women more. I choose ‘change a little’ because I only take part in the training one time per year, if I have more trainings, I think I will change a lot” (Ly Tôn village, male participant, 18-30 years, Vân Kiều).

As suggested at the collaborative analysis workshop held in Hanoi, it is likely that participants couldn't remember their participation in the GWMT due to the number of other meetings taking place in villages and due to the fact that the GWMT is used once per year. This suggests the importance of ongoing and sustained dialogue around gender equality at the community level.

5.2.2 Impact of WASH programs, policies and outcomes on gender equality

The proportion of changes described by participants in each sample group that were linked to WASH policies, programs or outcomes is presented in Graph 4.

The research revealed that WASH programs, policies and outcomes played an important role in bringing about strategic gender outcomes in the research sites. Those changes that could be linked back to WASH (one third of all changes across three sample groups) are explored in more detail below to understand the particular programs, policies and outcomes that had the most impact.

WASH meetings and training

The WASH intervention that most commonly (mentioned 15 times) contributed to change across the sample groups was ‘WASH meetings and training’. Two participants mentioned Plan's GWMT and many others mentioned meetings, not exclusively Plan-initiated, on topics such as: how to build and maintain a toilet, a water tank or water pipes; the benefit of using soap in hand washing; clean water; and cleaning village roads. Responses indicated that the meetings enabled women to gain access to new information and provided a space for them to share ideas. This contributed to changes in communication in households; increased women's self-confidence in community; increased the number of women in public and influential roles in the community; and also contributed to women being listened to more at the community level. One woman reported the impact of Plan's meetings on women's self confidence in the community;

"The women now are more self-confident, they are so active in ordering people to participate in cleaning up village road, to keep it more clean. They dare to give more ideas at the meetings, when the men give ideas that they don't feel comfortable with, they will ask again. Before whenever the women's association had meetings, there were many women did not participate or they gave up the meeting when the meeting was not finished, because of the low education and poverty. [Change happened] because of the life style, before the women were not treated well, the life was so poor, they were hard working, now the living standard is better, the women are trained more, have more knowledge. 3 or 4 years ago, when Plan introduced the community to do WASH, they integrated to introduce the women know about the women's right, every house see each other to live better, every one more pay attention (wife has women association protect, husband has village leaders to blame if he beat his wife...)" (Hát village, GWMT participant, 30+ years, Kinh).

Another man reported that;

"Women are more self-confident. They often attend village meetings. They speak out their opinion at the meetings. For example they said the paddy lacks water, and they propose to make a water line to the paddy field. Women are more self-confident because of meetings. They learn and imitate each other" (Man, Kon Chênh village, GWMT participant, 18-30 years, Mò Nâm).

Women having access to WASH information

A pocket voting group discussion in Kon Chênh village illustrates that meetings alone may not necessarily bring about change, but that it is access to information and knowledge that is effective. One participant stated that;

"In this village, only 40% women attended village meetings which discussed toilet building. Only educated women attended because they had knowledge. When they talk, everyone listen to them" (Man, Kon Chênh village).

As a result of acquiring new information at meetings or training, women were more listened to in their households and communities and had greater influence over decisions than previously. Such instances, where women use accurate information about water, sanitation and hygiene related issues were mentioned 14 times during interviews. One woman explained that:

"My husband used to decide everything in our home. But he listened to me and built the toilet because I told him that it made it easy for all of us when it rains, and that I could tell him how to build a toilet" (Tà Lềng village, GWMT participant, 30+ years, Vân Kiều).

Another woman explained the impact of having access to new information as follows;

"3 years ago, I and my father-in-law joined training on how to build a toilet. At present, the old toilet is nearly damaged so I discussed with him to do a new one. He agreed, we will build a new one when we have free time. Last time I am often shy so my husband decided everything. Now, I am more confident, sometime he see that I tell right thing so he follow me" (Tà Lềng village, GWMT participant, 18-30 years, Vân Kiều).

Women's ability to gain access to information and knowledge was a key factor in leading to change. This related to WASH meetings and training but also to other educational processes such as women's access to study opportunities and more informal process such as sharing advice and information at the communal water tank or during communal village clean up.

Improvement of WASH infrastructure

Six changes described by participants during interviews came about from new access to WASH infrastructure. Positive changes included redistribution of roles in the household, an increase in women's self-confidence in the household and community and women being listened to more in the community. Sometimes these changes were more practical than strategic, such as water pipes, toilets and communal water tanks reducing women's workload, which may or may not have been accompanied by a change in power dynamics between women and men. However, one woman described an example which illustrated a change in self-confidence of women in the community as a result of new infrastructure;

"Last time, only men can join community meetings, women seldom participate in the meetings or only listen (if joining). Since having pure water tank, if the water was clogged, women will have men to fix. Women usually use water to have bath, wash their children so if I don't talk to my husband to get help, I must go to take water from river which is far and dirty" (Khe Ngai village, sample group 3, 18-30 years, Vân Kiều).

It is important to note that an improvement in WASH infrastructure can have a negative impact on gender equality. One change described which resulted from WASH infrastructure had a negative impact on gender equality. This man described the increased workload of his wife after they gained access to a water well;

"The difference is in the past everyone bathed at the stream and did their own clothes washing. Now when we have a water well, my wife do laundry for everyone. My wife does laundry for all at the same time for saving detergent." (Hát village, GWMT participant, male, 30+ years, Kinh).

Influence of leaders and figures of authority in WASH programming

The effect of leaders and figures of authority in WASH programs or strategies in influencing strategic gender outcomes was described by six participants. These actors were referred to as the 'cadre'²⁵, village leader or village head.²⁶ Some of the changes brought about by an authoritative order may not signal a genuine shift in gender relations, for example, one man reported that;

"In the past, only man go village meeting and participate in public activities. Now with WASH training, woman also join in. In my family, my daughter in-law also join in. My daughter in-law joined in the works because village head called" (Hát village, non GWMT participant in GWMT site, female, 30+ years, Kinh).

Reasons for change given by other participants suggest that initial participation of women can lead to more sustained participation as a result of growing confidence. This suggests that where figures of authority encourage (or demand) initial participation, this may lead to ongoing engagement of women. For example, one man observed that;

"[The] reason for more participation of woman is: a woman goes to a meeting, the woman gets to know others, so she is more self-confident. The more participation the more happy the

²⁵ This is a term commonly used by ethnic minority groups for officials (who are often Kinh).

²⁶ These actors may not have held positions of official authority, but may have been seen by participants as authoritative figures nonetheless. This is particularly true for Vân Kiều and Mơ Năm ethnic minorities who may attribute official authority to a range of government or non-government actors. [based on advice/explanation for CRES]

women are because they can talk more about works and business.” (Kon Leng 2 village, Participant in non-GWMT site, male, 18-30 years, Mờ Năm).

5.2.3 Impact of broader factors on gender equality outcomes

Almost 70 per cent of strategic gender outcomes mentioned by participants linked to a range of other factors and influences that were not related to WASH or GWMT. The main factors of change are outlined in this section, and it is important to note that many outcomes were attributed to more than one factor, illustrating a dynamic backdrop of social change in the research sites and the complexity and interconnectedness of gender equality changes.

For example, one man’s experience showed a number of such intersecting factors;

“The first time of married life, I rarely helped my wife do house working, now I help her more in washing, collecting water from the village water tank, sweeping the house, doing the field work with my wife. Before I was so shy to help my wife but time by time, I am not shy anymore, so I help her more. Now I love my children, my wife, and the household economy is more stable. Before when we were so poor, I had to plant acacia, and work far away from home so I did not have much time to help my wife. Moreover, I learn from my friends, people in the village, I have more understanding so I love my wife more, I want to have a happy family” (Ly Tôn village, non GWMT participant in GWMT site, male, 18-30 years, Vân Kiều).

Access to information and education

The most common reasons that gender outcomes were being achieved, mentioned more than 30 times during interviews, were related to information, knowledge and education. This referred to formal education and study or acquiring knowledge through non-formal processes (such as learning from peers) and other means of dissemination. A number of different forms of learning were mentioned including learning from propaganda, from peers and through the examples set by others. Attendance at various village meetings was mentioned as another means of accessing information and knowledge on a range of topics. Links were found between information, education and knowledge and all seven gender equality outcomes.

An illustrative example of the link between education and confidence was shared by one woman;

“Some years ago, only men participated in community meetings but now women can join the meetings. If husband is busy, wife can replace him and vice versa. I used to join the community of instructing how to build toilet and use pure water. Last time we were shy and have no condition to go to school so do not dare to communicate. Now we are educated more so we are not shy” (Ly Tôn village, GWMT participant, 30+ years, Vân Kiều).

The influence of education on confidence was reiterated in the pocket voting discussion in Cây Dầu village. One man explained; *“Woman are more and more self-confident because now both boys and girls go to school.”*

As noted in Section 5.2.2 regarding WASH interventions, it was found that if women have an informed opinion they are better placed to negotiate roles and make decisions in the household, their confidence grows and they are more frequently listened to in households and communities. Beyond WASH programs, this was mentioned 10 times during interviews.

One participant mentioned in his interview that;

“The husband is still the one to make decision because he wants to take responsibility for his wife. But he asked for his wife opinion because she also have some knowledge and often gives nice opinions” (Hát village, GWMT participant, male, 30+ years, Kinh).

Another example shared by a woman shows the impact of giving women access to information on changes in women’s self-confidence and numbers of women participating in public roles;

“Men in this village used to say that women did not understand what’s discussed in village meetings, thus we women/wives were not allowed (by husbands) to go to such meetings. But now we can tell husbands what was in the meetings. So men and husbands let us women attend more meetings” (Tà Lềng village, GWMT participant, female, 30+ years, Vân Kiều).

Some responses indicated that information, education and knowledge contributed to greater understanding of gender equality for men as well as women. Five participants mentioned gender propaganda specifically as something which has contributed to change. One woman shared her experience that;

“I found my husband often help me more in housework. Thanks to propaganda, my husband and son understand that they have to help me” (Kon Leng 2 village, participant in non-GWMT site, female, 18-30 years, Mơ Năm).

A woman in the pocket voting discussion in Cây Dầu village suggested that;

“If we are more propogandized, we will have more understanding. This change will last for long.”

Seven changes were reported by participants during interviews as coming about as a result of learning from each other and from the example provided by others in their community . This illustrates a process of change becoming replicated and accepted.

One woman reported;

“I am more self-confident because I learnt from my mother and others. I found they can do it [ask for husband’s help], so I also do it” (Khe Ngòi village, participant in non-GWMT site, female, 18-30 years, Vân Kiều).

During pocket voting discussions in Khe Ngòi village, a woman reported;

“In the past years, men never washed clothes. Especially, the women’s dress, men never touched it. They followed their parents and think that they did not need to do anything to help their wife with housework. Now men do laundry and washing at home. Because they learn from the Kinh people. And then they learn from each other” (Khe Ngòi village, female participant, pocket voting activity).

Individual attitudes and values

Participants gave reasons for change that reflected their individual attitudes and values 28 times during interviews. Examples given suggested men were willing to negotiate on decisions to avoid conflict or tension in the household; *“If I don’t discuss with my wife, it is easy to argue”* (Tà Lềng village, GWMT participant, male, 18-30 years, Vân Kiều). On the other hand, many examples were given of a willingness of men to communicate more with women and re-negotiate roles due to empathy, love and the couple becoming more familiar

with each other. Some of these indicated a personal conviction to act against custom and norms;

“Now I help my wife more than before. My wife does a lot of work (weeding, sweeping the house, cooking ...) so I wash clothes. Everybody here says that I'm afraid of my wife but I don't care. I help her because I love her” (Ly Tôn village, non GWMT participant in GWMT site, male, 30+ years, Vân Kiều).

There were also examples of women's courage or conviction prompting increased self-confidence in the community;

“...when the women recognize that the men's ideas are not correct, they will ask again the village leader...Women now are brave, they don't dare men like before” (Ly Tôn village, GWMT participant, female, 18-30 years, Vân Kiều).

Another example was shared by a woman in a group discussion in Cây Dầu village;

“Nowadays, women are not afraid of giving their ideas because they know that all of them have to contribute to make the commune stronger.”

This idea was reinforced by a man in the pocket voting discussion in Hát village;

“It's because they [women] fight for their families. For example, women from poor households are strongly pushing about giving charity rice to poor households only.” (Cây Dầu village, female participant, pocket voting activity).

Necessity and practicality

Change triggered by necessity or due to practical needs was reported 18 times during interviews. Participants commonly reported men taking on more WASH-related household roles due to a woman becoming ill or elderly. This may have been accompanied by a change in attitudes and values as well. For example, one young man reported; *“I grow up, I can do those works. In the past my mother did it, but she is getting weak... I like changes in labour distribution in family because everyone splits work. Then neighbours gave compliments”* (Kon Chênh village, GWMT participant, male, 18-30 years, Mờ Nâm).

A common trigger was that a couple started to live independently, which for some, freed them from expectations and norms held by the wider family. One women reported her increased self-confidence;

“I came to live with his family first time and I was very afraid of his parents so I had to do everything (custom of Highland people). Four years ago, since I have moved to live independently, I was more forcible and less shy because we had common children and my husband must help to take care of the children. Our couple understands each other more so I am not afraid” (Khe Ngài village, participant in non-GWMT site, female, 18-30 years, Vân Kiều).

Leaders and figures of authority

As noted in section 5.2.2, engaging leaders and figures of authority in WASH programs was an effective strategy in bringing about gender changes. Beyond WASH programs or policies, such figures were mentioned 7 other times during interviews. One woman described how she gained more self-confidence as a result of an order from such a figure;

"I think I am not shy and I am more self-confident. I do tell my husband what I am thinking. Reasons that make me more self-confident is I learnt from cadre that man has to help wife and children" (Kon Leng 2 village, participant in non-GWMT site, female, 18-30 years, Mo Nâm).

In the Tà Lềng village pocket voting discussion, one man reported that;

"In the last years, only my wife washed clothes, cleaned the house. Now both of us do it. Society develops, the laws regulate that men and women are equal. Now we have to follow the laws."

Another man in the Kon Chênh village pocket voting discussion explained the incentive to follow the orders of village officials, in that;

"When village officials ask my wife to attend village meetings, if I don't let her go, it is not good (for my reputation). So I let her go. And she gets used to it. Now she is not afraid."

Broader social and economic change

The impact of broader changes in society on gender equality outcomes in the research sites was mentioned 14 times and examples referred to a range of factors: generational change; influences from outside the village; increased living standards; television and media; and the influence of social norms in wider society. This broader set of factors was reported as leading to changes in roles and decision making in households, changes in self-confidence of women in the community and the number of women in public roles.

One man described the impact of wider social norms on roles of women and men in the household and community;

"Many men go to work outside. They found men and women are equal there, and applied at home" (Hát village, GWMT participant, male, 30+ years, Kinh).

A man in Cây Dầu village pocket voting discussion also suggested that;

"Women in this village often strongly remind their husbands to help them with housework. Because it is the right thing to do. They learn that from society."

A man in Kon Leang 2 village suggested that;

"Now living in a modern society, women communicate with teachers, friends at school and get a lot of knowledge they become more self-confident."

One man described the impact of state policies on women's confidence and roles in the community;

"The women in this village more be listened at the community level. Because now, the state pays more attention to the women, they create more chance for the women go to the meetings, they are more self-confident" (Khe Ngài village, Participant in non-GWMT site, male, 18-30 years, Vân Kiều).

Another woman commented on broader social and political change;

"Before, the leaders of clusters mostly were men, now, many cluster leaders are women...Because the progress of the society, nowadays, women are given more power" (Cây Dầu village, GWMT participant, female, 30+ years, Kinh).

The role of media and television in influencing ideas can also lead to behaviour change. A woman in the Hát village pocket voting discussion explained that;

"In recent years, we watch television more often, we listened more, on television, we see the women wear beautiful clothes, go this place and other places, their husband do many things for them, we said to our husbands, 'why are those women so respected and why are we so miserable?' Time by time, our husbands also make us more happy, this house see that house to do."

A man in Tà Lềng village pocket voting discussion reported that;

"We watch lots of movies and we see that husbands and wives in the movies often talk and discuss family business together. We follow them and find that it makes us happy"

Increased standard of living or economic independence of women was mentioned four times as a reason for change. When asked why there had been a change in women's self-confidence, one woman in Cây Dầu village pocket voting discussion suggested that;

"Because the women now are different from the women before, they have more knowledge, and attend more trainings. They can support themselves and not totally rely on their husbands like before."

Another man suggested during his interview that;

"Nowadays, gender equality is more propagandized, the women now more participate in many fields, they can get more money and reduce dependence on men" (Cây Dầu village, GWMT participant, male, 18-30 years, Kinh).

5.2.4 Barriers to change

Some of the 'negative changes' described by participants across the 3 sample groups give a greater insight into the barriers that are preventing strategic gender outcomes from being achieved.

Participants described men drinking as a barrier and attributed this in some cases to an increase in living standards, which shows that an improvement in economic circumstances can also have a negative impact on gender equality outcomes.

"Before, the men in this village sometimes also helped their wife to do housework. Some years recently, they do nothing, they are so lazy, they only drink all the time with each other, they don't hear any advice. Because now, the living standard is better, they have condition to drink and they don't want to do anything else" (Khe Ngài village, participant in non-GWMT site, male, 30+ years, Vân Kiều).

Among the Vân Kiều ethnic group, barriers reported by several participants concerned customs. One was around washing clothes. One woman described this as;

"My husband helps with washing for the kids but never help washing my clothes as he does not want to be criticized as a "henpecked husband". As a women I do not have rights to ask my husband to do housework for me. It's up to him" (Tà Lềng village, GWMT participant, female, 30+ years, Vân Kiều).

Another man described that; *"...following my village custom, if I do clothes washing for my wife, it means that I am afraid of her, I fear people will mock me so I only wash clothes for my children" (Tà Lềng village, GWMT participant, male, 18-30 years, Vân Kiều).*

Table 5: summary of reason for changes

Key reasons for changes brought about by WASH (31 per cent of all changes)	Key other reasons for change, beyond WASH (69 per cent of all changes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WASH meetings and training: a space to learn, share ideas and gain confidence. • Women having access to WASH information: increasing confidence and the extent to which women are listened to. • Improvement in WASH infrastructure: reducing or re-distributing workloads. • Influence of leaders and figures of authority in WASH programming: encouraging (or demanding) participation of women in meetings and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and education: formal or non-formal channels, enabling woman to be informed and educating women and men (boys and girls) about gender equality. • Individual attitudes and values: personal convictions, empathy and love, desire to avoid conflict allowing change in power dynamics in families and greater confidence of women in communities. • Necessity or practicality: leading to change in roles or household composition, having a positive impact on gender equality. • Leaders and figures of authority: encourage equal gender relations through laws and orders. • Broader social and economic change: including generational change, economic wealth; outside influence, television and media; and the influence of social norms in wider society have triggered change.

6 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

International evidence about gender equality points to a range of influences and forces needed to bring about transformative gender changes rather than any single intervention or tool. This research has reiterated that change processes towards gender equality are complex, are not linear, are influenced by a range of factors and can require a range of stakeholders to catalyse and reinforce positive gender equality outcomes for these changes to take place.

This research did not confirm the hypothesis that the use of Plan's Gender and WASH Monitoring Tool (GWMT) in itself leads to greater strategic gender outcomes than when the tool is not used. Reasons why the research did not detect an impact of the GWMT on strategic gender outcomes likely stemmed from three sources: first, the infrequent use of the GWMT (once annually) may be insufficient to catalyse and achieve changes; second, that Plan's WASH program itself was also contributing to strategic gender outcomes and disaggregating the contribution made by the GWMT was not possible; and thirdly, that gender relations in Vietnamese society are undergoing significant change with increasing awareness of gender rights and roles. Whilst the hypothesis was not confirmed, the research findings more broadly reinforce the value of the types of methods and activities employed in the GWMT.

Occurrence and depth of change

With regards to the specific research questions, the research did not find a difference in the **occurrence** of strategic gender equality outcomes between the three groups who had varying exposure to the GWMT. Indeed, interview processes with 48 participants and pocket-voting methods with 139 participants both identified similar frequency of strategic gender outcomes across sample groups.

Equally, detailed qualitative analysis of participant responses found little difference in the **depth** of strategic gender outcomes across the three sample groups. Across the whole sample and within each of the three sample groups, the reported strategic gender outcomes did, however, vary in depth, with some indicating much clearer shifts in power relations and status between women and men than others. Amongst those who had participated in GWMT the large majority of participants were unable to link changes they described back to their participation in the GWMT and most did not remember their participation in it, despite prompting focused on the unique characteristics of GWMT activities. Whilst the hypothesis for this research was not proven, it was found that gender equality outcomes were widespread with 81 per cent of interview participants (39 of the 48) reporting at least one positive change. Pocket-voting results confirmed that strategic gender changes were not confined to interviewees, with most of the 139 participants who voted indicating they had seen a lot of change taking place.

Effects of age, ethnicity and gender

Strategic gender outcomes were experienced by most participants in the study, with minor differences detected amongst different stratifying variables. In general, younger participants experienced marginally more change than older participants, and participants from Vân Kiều and Mơ Nâm ethnic groups experienced slightly more change than those from the Kinh majority. Overall, a greater number of changes were reported at household level (59%) rather than community level (40%). Amongst the three categories of household level outcomes, the most commonly reported was 'communication between household members in relation to influencing decision making' followed by 'distribution of household roles and labour between women and men', and 'self-confidence, particularly for women'. Amongst the four categories of community-level outcomes, the most commonly reported was 'women's self-confidence in community settings, including to participate in meetings and discussions' followed by 'number of women occupying public and potentially influential roles'. Much less commonly reported were 'women's perspectives are listened to at the community level' and 'solidarity within and between women and men's groups in the community'.

This evidence suggests that strategies to address gender equality should consider incorporating specific approaches relevant for people of different ages and ethnicities in order to appropriately target all groups and ensure that all can benefit from positive gender outcomes. Additionally, since prompting change at the household level appears to be achieved more readily than at the community level, strategies should either work from such a basis by focusing promotion efforts at household level, or invest strongly in multi-pronged strategies to also address community level change.

Pocket voting results revealed some examples of different perceptions of change suggesting that there are varying expectations of change between women and men. One characteristic of the GWMT is its use of discussion time to raise awareness about gender roles and relationships in household and community WASH activities and to set shared agendas for change. The importance of providing women and men this space to reflect and dialogue about their experiences should not be underestimated. This research therefore reinforces the importance of providing such opportunities for discussion in order to normalise expectations of change for different gender, age and ethnicity groups according to the context and circumstances they are living in.

Reasons for change

Significant learning can be derived from the *reasons* research participants gave for the strategic gender outcomes (changes) they described. Approximately one third of changes (31 per cent) were linked to WASH programs, policies and outcomes, affirming the potential for WASH programs to act as a catalyst for gender equality change. However, the research also identified a wide range of factors beyond WASH that led to gender equality outcomes, and that these in fact served to explain the majority (69 per cent) of strategic gender outcomes. This finding also highlights that WASH actors are one of many that can reinforce and promote gender equality outcomes. In the context of Vietnam in 2016 and recognising the many societal changes underway, these findings align also with this dynamic context.

Of those strategic gender outcomes attributed to WASH-related factors, the most commonly reported reason was access to WASH-related information and knowledge, gained

predominantly through meetings and training. This had a particular impact on women, whose increased understanding and use of technical knowledge and information meant they were more likely to be listened to both in the household and community. In turn this contributed to an increase in women's self-confidence in the household and community. The use of leadership or authority figures in WASH programs to initiate change, for example, to encourage (or demand) that women attend meetings or activities, was also a commonly expressed reason for change. Several changes described by participants resulted from new access to WASH infrastructure (for example, a closer source of water or a new toilet). These changes were mostly positive but sometimes had a negative impact on gender equality, for example by increasing women's workloads. These findings suggest that to support positive strategic gender changes, WASH programs should: ensure women are targeted in provision of new WASH-related knowledge and information through training and meetings; work closely with authority figures to engender changes in dynamics at community level; and carefully monitor and mitigate potential for negative changes that adversely impact gender equality.

Beyond WASH-related reasons, a broad range of other interlinking factors were described by participants as contributing to change. The most common reason given for these changes was access to information and education, in a more general sense than the specifically WASH-related information described above. This included the provision of knowledge and information about gender equality to both women and men, through meetings, formal education, media and gender propaganda.²⁷ Other key factors of change included individual values and attitudes, learning from others' examples, the role of leaders and figures of authority (beyond those figures in WASH programmes described above), and broader societal change. Broader societal change factors included increased living standards, influences from outside the village, and the effect of exposure to television and media. Participants described the process of adopting behaviours or values they saw taking shape in wider society into their local context. All of this points to an opportunity for WASH programming to take into account the diverse and interlinking factors that influence change towards gender equality in sites of implementation, which can ensure that efforts to bring about strategic gender outcomes in WASH will have a greater chance of success. Monitoring by WASH practitioners of societies are in flux, such as is the case in Vietnam, in order to plan gender-related efforts within WASH can ensure that WASH programs capitalise on change dynamics and are less likely to operate in isolation of these.

Implications for the GWMT

The research demonstrated that the *processes* used in the GWMT are valid and important. These include specific efforts to include women in discussions, separating women and men for relevant activities by age to recognise the different experiences of younger and older people, targeting some households who can then set examples that have a positive flow-on effect, and helping people explore their perceptions and expectations of change. However,

²⁷ This finding is reinforced in another recent study conducted with Plan Zimbabwe which found that provision of gender rights and human rights information was a key factor effective in bringing about change towards gender equality. See Hunt, J., Mupeta, B., Bishop, A., Hogan, E. and the Plan International Zimbabwe Research Team. 2016. Abridged Report: Zimbabwe Gender Equality and Change Study. Plan International Australia. Melbourne.

since the research did not find that the annual use of the GWMT itself had a direct impact on achievement of strategic gender equality outcomes, due consideration needs to be given to an appropriate frequency of use of the tool and the context in which to integrate these processes. To catalyse changes in gender equality, these processes may be more effective when also a feature of the approaches used as part of wider WASH programming, or a monitoring tool such as the GWMT might require more frequent deployment to be effective in this respect.

In terms of the GWMT itself, the research pointed to two key considerations. Firstly, that the GWMT can be used to better understand and monitor gender equality outcomes within a dynamic backdrop of change. Effective monitoring can improve planning and implementation and therefore contribute to bringing about greater gender equality outcomes in WASH. Secondly, that to enable this process, more effort and resources were required to ensure that monitoring information generated from the GWMT is analysed, communicated and reflected upon. Whilst not the subject of this research it was evident from discussions with research partners that this practice currently needs strengthening to support the GWMT to reach its potential as a monitoring tool.

Summary

In summary, this research did not find a direct link between the achievement of strategic gender outcomes and the use of the GWMT. However, the research did uncover considerable positive strategic gender change occurring in the sites where Plan was implementing its' WASH programming. It is clear that WASH programming had an impact on the achievement of gender equality, evidenced by the links participants made back to WASH programs, policies or outcomes. It is also clear that there are a range of other societal factors which are bringing about change, which need to be taken account of by WASH practitioners, through the use of effective monitoring, in order to make the most of a dynamic background of change such as in these research sites.

6.2 Recommendations

Recommendations from the research are grouped into three parts: firstly, and core to this research report, are recommendations for the use of GWMT in the context of wider WASH programming; secondly are recommendations for the use of the tool by Plan; and finally ideas are presented for researchers interested in the investigation and analysis of gender and WASH.

6.2.1 For the use of the GWMT in the context of wider WASH programming.

Plan has used the GWMT as a means to orient and build capacity of key staff and government partners in issues related to gender equality. A review in 2015 found that it is serving this purpose.²⁸ A secondary aim of the tool is to raise awareness about gender roles and relationships in household and community WASH activities and promote (aspirations for) gender equality by providing opportunities for women and men to discuss gender relations and to set their own agenda for change. On the latter aim, this research raises a question as to whether this aspect of the tool is being fully satisfied as it is currently deployed, given the finding that most research participants could not recall their involvement in GWMT activities. Indeed, the research was not able to link strategic gender equality outcomes directly to current use of the GWMT. However, this does not necessarily suggest that the aims of the tool need to be revised, rather that on its own, the GWMT, used on an annual basis, cannot be expected to engender strategic gender outcomes at the community level.

1. In making decisions about how to monitor and reinforce gender equality outcomes, and where and how use of a tool such as GWMT might play a role WASH, practitioners should take a range of factors into account:

- a) **It is important for WASH practitioners to consider where best to situate processes which support women and men to explore gender relations and aspirations for change towards gender equality**, whether as part of a monitoring tool, or part of wider WASH programming approaches, or both. WASH programming offers a significant opportunity to influence gender relations (reinforced by this research) and hence the importance of making the most of this opportunity.
- b) **Tools designed primarily to *monitor* strategic gender outcomes in WASH programs may *reinforce* strategic gender outcomes if good participatory processes are used, but these two aims need to be appropriately balanced.** Over-emphasising an aim of catalysing or promoting gender equality outcomes in a monitoring tool carries a risk of overloading such a tool. For example, by needing to use it frequently enough to make an impact, or needing to add additional methods into the tool such as orientation about gender rights. Over-emphasising this aim also risks practitioners assuming that gender equality can

²⁸ Thomas, E (2015), Review of the Gender WASH Monitoring Tool (GWMT), Final Report, Plan Vietnam and Plan Australia

be addressed simply by use of a gender-related tool, rather than investing explicitly in the integration of gender equality concerns into wider WASH programming activities.

- c) Reflecting good development practice, **monitoring tools used to assess strategic gender outcomes should utilise a participatory process, as is seen in the GWMT.** Whilst ensuring that the tool is relatively simple to implement, the 'space' given to women and men to explore gender relations can be of benefit to participants if well facilitated. This benefit can be maximised through the effective use of data and analysis generated by the tool to feed back into WASH program review and planning and integration of efforts to address gender equality within these.

2. **Efforts by WASH practitioners to have positive impacts on gender equality outcomes in this context (Central Vietnam, and potentially Vietnam more broadly) by WASH practitioners should make the most of the following processes which were found to positively affect gender equality:**

- a) **Equipping women with information and knowledge**, particularly technical knowledge, to enable them to have a voice in decision-making in homes and communities. This research found that meetings are an effective avenue of dissemination, but that peer to peer learning is also useful. This suggests that targeting some community members through meetings and activities can have a positive flow-on effect to the rest of the community.
- b) **Engaging figures of authority in WASH programing** who can encourage equal participation of women and men in WASH activities (including meetings) and who can raise awareness of gender equality in communities.
- c) **The use of public education (propaganda)** to contribute to awareness-raising about gender equality can also have a positive effect.
- d) **Identifying cultural and customary barriers to achieving gender equality outcomes** and recognising the nuances in these is important in order to appropriately target efforts to increase gender equality. However, the research found that the values underpinning customs can be challenged in the face of broader societal changes and through examples set by peers.
- e) **Mitigating unintended negative impacts on gender equality outcomes as a result of improving access to WASH infrastructure through** other processes, such as community meetings and discussions, to ensure that women do not shoulder the burden of additional workloads.

6.2.2 For Plan International Australia and Plan Vietnam in regard to the use of the GWMT.

These recommendations, whilst directed specifically to Plan, can also be drawn on by any other agencies looking to measure strategic gender outcomes in WASH programmes:

1. **Review and planning of WASH programs can be enhanced if emphasis is given to learning more about nuances in gender dynamics at the community level.** The GWMT initiates dialogue on gender issues and gender relations at the household and at the community level between women and men. This function is valuable to assist WASH practitioners to recognise that societies are in flux, such as is the case in Vietnam. Data collected through the GWMT can help practitioners to understand how gender change happens, and should be used to the maximum extent possible, in order to plan well-contextualised gender-related efforts within WASH.
2. **Gaps in the application of the GWMT as a monitoring tool need to be addressed, to increase its potential to support strategic gender outcomes.** The GWMT is designed to conduct gender sensitive monitoring and utilise monitoring data to inform and strengthen gender aspects in ongoing program implementation. A 2015 review²⁹ of the tool found underutilisation of monitoring data and this was supported in discussions with Plan and partner participant about this matter at the collaborative analysis workshop. Strategies needed to improve the GWMT's function include:
 - a) **Systematic analysis of qualitative as well as quantitative monitoring data** to allow for better insights into the factors, actions and activities that genuinely help or hinder change towards gender equality. This analysis can be used both to inform WASH programming and to improve potential for targeting subsequent GWMT discussions.
 - b) **Adaptation of the tool to each site is necessary.** The research found some difference in experiences of change between different ethnic groups. Improved awareness by GWMT facilitators of cultural differences in relation to gender roles, status and power relations in different ethnic groups would underpin this. Reviewing monitoring data from the GWMT sessions prior to subsequent sessions at village level would help build facilitators' awareness of these contextual factors.

²⁹ Thomas, E (2015), Review of the Gender WASH Monitoring Tool (GWMT), Final Report, Plan Vietnam and Plan Australia.

6.2.4 For measuring the contribution of tools such as the GWMT (implications for research and evaluation):

Establishing clear links between gender outcomes and a specific intervention in a dynamic context is possible but challenging. Challenges related to the difficulty of attributing cause and effect in such a context and in a complex area of inquiry (gender change). It also requires considerable skill to gain rich insights into experiences of gender change given that the concept of change is understood to varying degrees in relation to cultural and linguistic nuances. In light of these challenges, some useful approaches include:

1. **Sufficiently resourced, a quasi-experimental design is useful as an approach which can generate insight into the many factors that may be simultaneously influencing change.** Adequate time and resources can allow provision to be made for persons with a number of different disabilities (communication, intellectual impairments etc.) to be effectively included in the research. Complementarity of quantitative and qualitative research methods enhances ability to investigate a complex area of inquiry such as gender equality.
2. Research projects of this nature conducted in a developing country context should take a **collaborative research approach** to the maximum extent possible, as was done in this research, to support appropriate adaptation of tools and to ensure integrity in the analytical process by involving multiple perspectives, including those closest to the research participant context. Where resources allow, this should be complemented by a **capacity development approach** which aims to ensure quality in research practice and provide skills development opportunities to local research partners where appropriate.
3. Using participatory methods such as pocket voting can be useful. In this research this methodology provided an opportunity for researchers to gain insights into the different perceptions of and expectations for change between women and men and should be considered a useful method for similar studies. **Consideration of the use of pocket voting should take into account** the need to facilitate private 'anonymous' voting, whether voting topics can be clearly communicated to the group without using 'leading' examples and the need for thorough facilitated discussion to effectively elicit the qualitative information to make sense of the quantitative figures generated by the voting.
4. Beyond responding to the research hypothesis, the mixed method quantitative and qualitative research design supported several other important findings to emerge that can inform improved ways to address gender equality in WASH programming. **The data could be further mined and analysed to consider a range of other related research questions.**

7 ANNEXES

7.1 Strategic Gender Outcomes – complete framework ³⁰

	Household sphere	Public arena	
	<i>Household and family networks</i>	Local public arena <i>Social and community networks</i>	Broader public arena <i>Governance institutions and beyond</i>
<p>Changes in self/ individuals</p> <p><i>Includes changes for women or men</i></p> <p><i>Includes changes relating to roles as well as self-perception and attitudes</i></p>	<p>Changes in access and usage of water, sanitation and hygiene services</p> <p>Changes in attitudes about gendered household roles and responsibilities</p> <p><u>Changes in the distribution of household roles and labour</u> between women and men</p> <p>Changes in total hours worked, taking into account paid and unpaid work</p> <p>Changes in discretionary time</p> <p><u>Changes in self-confidence, particularly for women</u></p> <p>Changes in self-awareness around gender roles and relationships including possibilities, opportunities and negotiating power</p> <p>Changes in levels of mobility and/or seclusion for women</p> <p>Outcomes relating to increasing and/or diversifying income opportunities and skills for women and men</p>	<p><u>Changes in self-confidence, particularly for women</u></p> <p>Educational outcomes, relating to girls' education and literacy</p> <p>Change in awareness of women's rights by men and women</p> <p><u>Changes in the number of women occupying public and potentially influential roles in their community</u></p> <p>Changes in the extent to which women are voicing their expectations and demands relating to community governance</p> <p>Changes in levels of mobility and/or seclusion for women</p> <p>Changes in personal safety for women</p> <p>Outcomes relating to increasing and/or diversifying income opportunities and skills for women and men, including opportunity to take up non-traditional roles</p>	<p>Changes in the number of women occupying potentially influential roles in government and private sector institutions</p> <p>Changes in the number of women occupying technical roles in government and private sector institutions</p> <p>Changes in the extent to which women are voicing their expectations and exerting influence within higher levels of government (e.g. provincial, national)</p> <p>Changes in women's leadership on WASH issues at larger scale (beyond their local community)</p>
<p>Changes in relationships</p> <p><i>Includes changes in relationships between women/men and within</i></p>	<p>Changes in negotiating power in household relationships</p> <p>Changes in financial status and power including control over household resources and assets</p> <p><u>Changes in communication between husbands and</u></p>	<p>Changes in the status of women in the community life</p> <p>Changes in the level of trust and respect afforded to women in the community</p> <p>Changes in the ways in which women and men cooperate and work together in the</p>	<p>Changes in the status of women in public life</p> <p>Shifting of traditional social norms, including the diversity of roles available and acceptable for women in the public and private sectors</p> <p>Changes in the level of trust</p>

³⁰ Carrard, N.R., Crawford, J., Halcrow, G., Rowland, C. and Willetts, J.R. 2013, 'A framework for exploring gender equality outcomes from WASH programmes', *Waterlines: international journal of water, sanitation and waste*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 315-333

	Household sphere	Public arena	
	<i>Household and family networks</i>	Local public arena <i>Social and community networks</i>	Broader public arena <i>Governance institutions and beyond</i>
<i>gender groups</i>	<p><u>wives</u></p> <p>Changes in the ways decisions are made, including who is involved and consulted</p> <p>Changes in levels of respect between men and women in the household</p> <p>Changes in levels of conflict and harmony (including gender-based violence) within households</p>	<p>community</p> <p><u>Changes in solidarity within and between gender groups</u></p> <p>Shifting of traditional social norms, including the diversity of roles available for women at the community level</p> <p>Shifting of restrictive/harmful social attitudes/ practices/ exclusion/ taboos associated with menstruation and child birth</p> <p><u>Changes in the extent to which women's perspectives are listened to and inform decision making at the community level</u></p> <p>Change in recognition of women's rights by men and women</p> <p>Outcomes relating to women and men becoming positive gender role models in their community</p>	<p>and respect afforded to women in influential and technical roles in government and private sector institutions</p> <p>Changes in policies and programs that support equal participation of women and men in influential and/or technical roles in government and private sector institutions</p> <p>Outcomes relating to women and men becoming positive gender role models in their district, province or nation</p> <p>Changes in priority given to WASH investments relevant to advancing gender equality, as reflected in budget allocations at this scale</p> <p>Changes in media and public debate about WASH investments and gender equality</p> <p>Changes in the representation of female and male water users on consultative bodies, advisory groups and boards established by water utilities</p> <p>Changes in national, regional or international WASH commitments relevant to gender equality (e.g. recognition of the right to sanitation, policy commitments about provisioning for separate facilities for girls in school)</p>

7.2 Graphs showing occurrence of change by gender

These graphs show the percentage of female and male participants experiencing each strategic gender outcome (SGO) across 3 sample groups:

