

Making water and sanitation facilities more accessible to all

Introduction

Access to Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) is every person's right. The vulnerable groups of people are often technically excluded from accessing WASH facilities by the standard designs. The sector currently lacks standardized equity and inclusion technical guides for constructing WASH facilities. The scant guides available are not utilized by technicians and key stakeholders when providing WASH services.

In partnership with WaterAid and Leonard Cheshire Disability Centre (LCD), ATC is undertaking action research into equity and inclusion to accessing water and sanitation services. The research started with a baseline study in Katakwi and Amuria which identified existing gaps in the technical designs of both household and institutional water and sanitation facilities. This study was concretized with an accessibility audit carried out in four districts of Masindi, Pallisa, Hoima and Masaka. The audit took into consideration categories of vulnerable persons such as the physically disabled, the blind, the chronically sick, the little people, the elderly, pregnant women and children under 5 years. These people were given special interest because technically common designs exclude them from accessing water and sanitation facilities yet they have the same needs for the services as the able bodied people. The research is aimed at coming up with a standardized technical guide for both institutional and household water and sanitation facilities.

Identified barriers to access:

There are a number of barriers to access to both water and sanitation facilities. These barriers are both social and physical. The technical guide ATC is working on is intended to provide solutions to the physical barriers that can be addressed with improvements in technical designs.

Community water source



Point water source in Kikandwa model village

- Often communal sources are constructed without provisions to ease access by the vulnerable people without over reliance on external support.
- Boreholes are fitted with handle that are too hard to pump.
- The apron around the borehole is sealed off with no access for wheel chair users.
- Handle is too high for a crawling user to access

Sanitation facilities



Public toilet with barrier (steep steps)



Household hanging toilet and bath shelter with barrier (step)

Other identified barriers include; lack of space from the curtain wall and inside the toilet for a wheel chair to manoeuvre, toilet doors opening inside (further reducing internal space) , no support structures i.e., rails and landmarks for the visually impaired.

Some features of inclusive sanitation facilities



Initiative by NETWAS partner NGO in Kenya

Efforts to accelerate inclusive access to WASH services

- WaterAid through local organizations such as Church of Uganda (TEDDO) and Wera Development Association (WEDA) are implementing some inclusive designs. They are in the process of constructing inclusive household and public facilities in Amuria and Katakwi.
- World Vision is also championing equitable and inclusive access to WASH in their areas of operation.
- ATC is working with WaterAid to develop inclusive designs that can be used by implementing partners



Public toilet by HORIZONT 3000 at St. Joseph Hospital Kitgum

Features of Inclusive designs

A good design should reflect the diversity of people who use it. There are some basic features expected if a facility is to be considered inclusive. These include:

- Reduction of access distances to facilities
- A gently sloping ramp is used instead of steps
- Support structures for persons who cannot stand firmly or with weak arms and feet.
- For boreholes, the flash apron should enable access for wheel chairs users and crawling people.
- Guard rails for visually impaired people.
- Facilities should be spacious to allow wheel chair users turn with ease.
- Provide facilities for proper disposal of sanitary pads and bathrooms for girls.



Inclusive attempts by ATC in Kikandwa model village

Points of modifications in the above sanitation facilities:

- Provision of a seat pan
- Support rails
- Gently sloping ramp
- Door opening outside
- Ample space between the curtain wall and the toilet

Some modifications on water sources



Household tank by ATC in Kikandwa model village placed on a raised platform and the tap placed in an accessible position.



Design by WaterAid Zambia

Points of improvement on a communal water source:

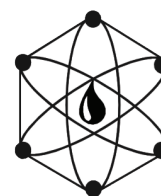
- Apron around the borehole modified for access by a wheel chair user
- Borehole handle elongated to allow easier use by crawling users
- Ample space for a wheel chair to manoeuvre

Recommendations

- There is need for sensitization of all stakeholders including policy makers on the issue of equity and inclusion in WASH service delivery.
- At household level, the District Health Inspector must take charge and ensure that households with vulnerable persons modify their sanitation and hygiene facilities to cater for their vulnerable family members.
- The policy on disabilities and special needs must be modified so that all future designs for WASH facilities must be approved basing on a standardized technical guide.
- All public institutions and schools should incorporate accessibility in the provision of water and sanitation facilities



Ministry of Water and Environment



NETWAS Uganda

