



# RWSSP-WN Thinking Equal, Building Smart, Innovating for Change #WomensDay2019

## RWSSP-WN BRIEF 3-2019

### SUMMARY

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal Phase II (RWSSP-WN) as a bilateral programme by the governments of Nepal and Finland. This Brief was prepared for International Women's Day 2019 which theme is **"Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change"**.

RWSSP-WN has been mainstreaming gender equality from the beginning. This Brief takes Project's own *HRBA & GESI Strategy and Action Plan for Operationalizing Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI) Principles in the Water and Sanitation Sector* (2015) as the internal frame of reference. Using primary data, this Brief looks at the results both quantitative and qualitatively, particularly with respect to **GESI aspects**. Brief 4-2019 will focus more on **HRBA aspects**.



Photo 1: Public audit takes place during each monitoring visit as described in the Step-by-Step process. These monitoring visits are foundation for HRBA & GESI policy at the community level. Here female WUSC Treasurer explains the income and expenditure to the community, also presented as figures in the background (orange papers at back)

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal Phase II (RWSSP-WN II)

We are committed to the principles of rights, equality and diversity and aim to promote more equitable development processes in our project activities.

We take a rights-based perspective and adhere to the underlying principle that all human beings are equal.

We aim to create an environment in which all community members, including women, disadvantaged castes and ethnic minorities, the poor and socially excluded, have equitable opportunities to pursue meeting their basic needs and livelihoods.

This includes improving the status of women and other excluded groups and increasing their meaningful participation at the decision making level.

Prepared for the International Women's Day 2019 by Sanna-Leena Rautanen & Pamela White, March 8, 2019

Distribution: Public

## Operational tools

RWSSP-WN Phase II and RVWRMP Phase II developed the **HRBA & GESI STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN - Operationalizing Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI) Principles in the Water and Sanitation Sector** in 2014.

**RWSSP-WN Phase II sets targets for equal gender balance in WUSCs (and representative ethnic and caste balance). The WUSC is elected by the community and should represent interests of all members.** Each WUSC has 7, 9 or 11 members (depending on the size of the scheme).

Simply being a WUSC member doesn't ensure true participation. Strong facilitation is needed to ensure that shy community members can express their opinions. RWSSP-WN provides capacity building to WUSC members (following the Step-By-Step process) on their technical and administrative responsibilities, including financial administration. There is also targeted training for women WUSC members on leadership and confidence building. As seen in the bar (next page), this seems to have been effective.

RWSSP-WN Phase II also launched the **Step-by-Step approach** into water supply scheme planning and implementation, this approach being one the key operational tools for translating HRBA and GESI strategy into practice.

The related systematic monitoring that always includes public audit and community meeting is the key social accountability mechanism, and means that rights and GESI issues remain in continued agenda.

Nepal is a signatory to the *UN Declaration of the Right to Water and Sanitation* (2010).

## THINKING EQUAL: HRBA & GESI STRATEGY WORKS

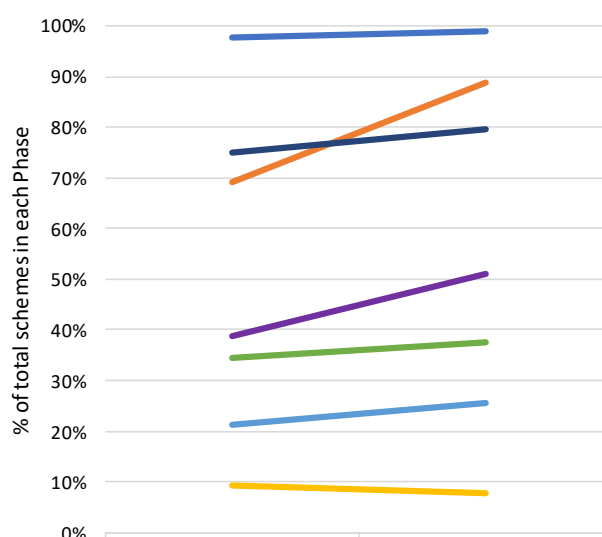
Water Users and Sanitation Committee (WUSC) is the main institution for scheme-specific decision making. Marginalised groups are consulted in the planning process through the public meetings and audits. It has proved difficult to consult people with disabilities due to access issues, particularly in the hill and mountain regions. This chapter compares how WUSCs and beneficiaries whose water systems were constructed after the 'HRBA & GESI Strategy' was launched (Phase II) with the comparison groups consisting of otherwise similar populations whose water system was completed earlier (Phase I) before the 'HRBA & GESI Strategy'.

Total 367 schemes were started in Phase I and 396 in Phase II. Those schemes that were carried over or improved in Phase II are counted in Phase I schemes as the GESI & HRBA Strategy did not influence these when WUSCs members were selected. The data stems from the scheme database, including all scheme technologies where WUSCs members were reported (for instance school-only systems do not have a WUSC as these are usually managed by the School Management Committee).

The Chart 1 below shows how the gender aspects have changed in WUSCs, the biggest changes being in 'Gender balance in WUSC (from 69% of schemes to 89%) and in cases where there are more women in WUSC than men (from 39% of schemes in Phase I to 51% in Phase II). Both Phase I and Phase II WUSCs had women, also ten schemes where all were women.

Out of Phase II WUSCs, 74% had both gender and ethnic representation, and 66% had *both* gender *and* ethnic/caste representation *and* women *or* disadvantaged ethnic/caste person also in the *WUSC key position*.

**CHART 1** Women in Water Users and Sanitation Committees  
New scheme in Phase I N-367  
New scheme in Phase II N-396



	Phase I	Phase II
Female in key position	98%	99%
Gender balance	69%	89%
More women than men	39%	51%
Female Chairperson	9%	8%
Female Vice-Chairperson	21%	26%
Female Secretary	34%	37%
Female Treasurer	75%	80%

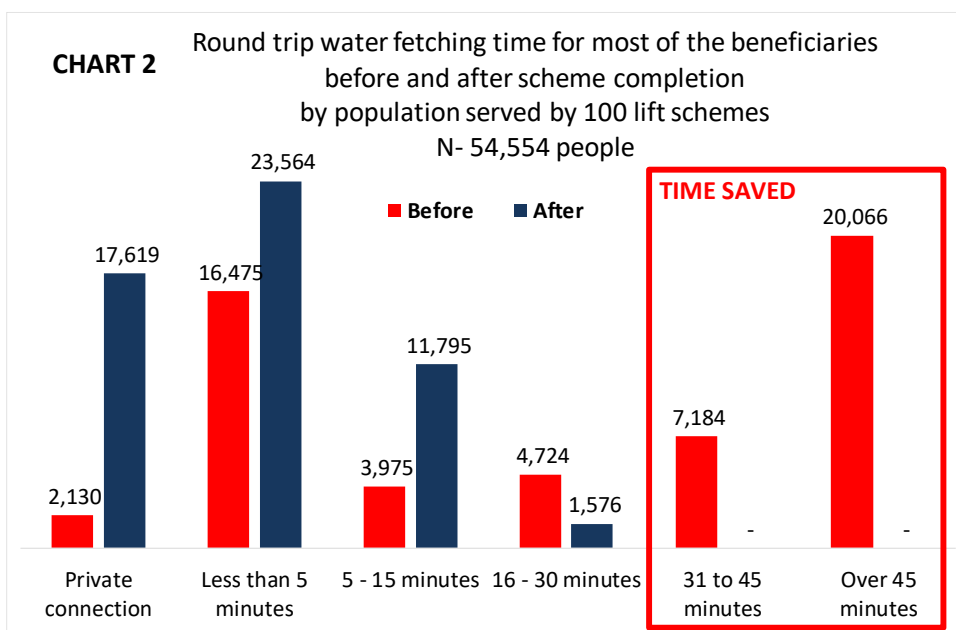
## INNOVATING FOR CHANGE: TIME SAVED IS WOMEN'S TIME

Another survey conducted in 2019 has total 1,252 household respondents (41% Phase I and 59% Phase II beneficiaries). In total there were 7,754 people living in these 1252 households located in three districts. Since the aim was to interview the one who is fetching water (or used to fetch), 99% of the respondents were female and 99% were the ones in charge of fetching water. Some results as of March 2019:

- ♀ 68% think that their family members' overall health has changed to better, with 31% stating no change.
- ♀ 89% state that they have less workload than earlier, before the water supply system was completed.
- ♀ 95% state that they have more time available now than before.
- ♀ 81% have more time for washing & cleaning at home.
- ♀ 67% spend more time in home gardening and this has improved their livelihoods, by earning income (selling vegetables) and making savings on purchases.
- ♀ 28% have more time for other income generating activities, such as more livestock or poultry raising, tailoring and shop keeping
- ♀ 42% have more time to spend with their children
- ♀ 76% have more leisure time than before.
- ♀ 15% have time for (self) study now.
- ♀ to the question "which of these changed most in your life when you didn't need to spend time in fetching water anymore?", 42% state "Home gardening/farming", 20% 'cleaning & washing at home' and 21% 'leisure/resting'.

Chart 2 below shows findings from a survey on 100 lift water supply schemes (2018). If we assume 4 trips per household, and take average time from each fetching time category, and then compare the time before and after the lift water supply scheme was completed, total 16,200 hours EACH DAY are now saved. This is mostly women's time.

*With 16,200 hours now available for women every day,  
there is truly room to start innovating!*



## Water programmes can bring positive change

**Water programmes can bring positive change** in the social position of the poor and excluded in the society, creating a more equal and stable society where the needs of all are heard and fulfilled.

To realize the full potential, a strategy with **a meaningful action plan for do-able actions is needed**. Practical implementation of this strategy will ensure that the projects and their stakeholders adopt practices that lead to increased and equitable access to opportunities and resources and meaningful participation in decision making - particularly for women, the poor and socially excluded.

In many rural areas, these changes **should not be taken for granted** as an automatic result of simply providing water. Considerable hands-on work is needed to facilitate sustainable, equitable change.

**RWSSP-WN has targets for human rights and gender.** It The key challenges and opportunities for gender equality were identified and addressed as part of the expected results, including distribution and control of resources, gender roles, norms and values, participation and decision making power, discrimination and even gender based violence.

**Capacity building** is a major component. HRBA & GESI aspects are incorporated to trainings for rights holders & duty bearers. Actions on women's leadership & confidence building are included, and support for local government GESI strategies.

## How being a WUSC member benefits?

Total 139 WUSCs members participated in GESI survey as of 15.2.2019. These WUSCs serve 1252 households and their 7754 population in Baglung, Tanahun and Syangja districts of Western Nepal. Of these, 32% were WUSCs from Phase I and 68% from Phase II.

Total 70 were women and 69 were men, the age groups being equally divided in between 30 and 60 above. Out of all women, 30% had no schooling and were illiterate, compared to 14% of the men. 11% were Dalit, 53% Adibasi/Janajati and 36% 'Others', this being the advantaged group.

- ‡ 91% stated that they are now **more confident than at the time when they joined WUSC** (76% Phase I WUSC women compared to 92% in Phase II).
- ‡ 83% agreed that participating in the **trainings increased their self-confidence**.
- ‡ 79% considered that the **training provided was useful or very useful also in their life outside WUSC**.
- ‡ 59% of Phase I and 80% of Phase II respondents rated themselves as **'very confident' to express their opinions in WUSC meetings**; difference more evident for female: 41% of Phase I and 75% of Phase II women were 'very confident' to express their opinions.
- ‡ 52% of Phase I and 89% of Phase II respondents agreed that **women influence** the decisions made in WUSC.
- ‡ 45% of Phase I and 84% of Phase II respondents consider that **all caste/ethnic groups can influence** WUSC decision making equally.
- ‡ Total 10 women WUSC members had **run for a position in the local government elections**, compared to 17 men.

## BUILDING SMART: WOMEN IN PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, OPERATION & MAINTENANCE OF THEIR WATER SCHEMES

WUSCs have an important role to play in planning and implementing their water scheme. In RWSSP-WN this means procurement of materials, social mobilization for the local contributions, and a number of decisions that will result in very visible, tangible outcomes: piped water supply systems. In many cases this is the first time that the community is given all responsibilities (rather than the contractor, local government or project), and a membership in a WUSC is considered prestigious. Membership also brings benefits in personal skills and confidence, as seen in the findings to the left.

After the scheme is completed, the WUSC's role varies depending on the size and type of the scheme: a large piped water supply network with a solar or electric pump needs more continuous attention from the WUSC than a small gravity flow system without any pump.

This chapter presents the findings from the statistical analysis on whether there is any significant link in between having women in WUSC and in the functionality of the water system. The sample for this analysis was 607 water supply schemes including *lift, gravity and point-source improvements* where WUSC has a role to play after they have completed their construction task.

In this sample of 607 scheme, there are 5,476 WUSC members, of which 2,710 (49.5%) women and 2,766 (50.5%) men. Out of 607 WUSCs, 487 are defined as having a gender balance. A WUSC is defined as having gender balance if it has in between 42% and 72% women (ie. either 4 or 5 women out of 7; and similarly for 9 and 11 member WUSCs). The WUSC should also appoint women to one or more key leadership positions.

**A total of 593 WUSCs have a woman in a key position.** Out of these, 114 schemes were defined as not having gender balance, yet they do have at least one woman in a key position.

**Functionality** was significantly different depending whether the scheme was a lift scheme or not, but only if '*needs minor repair*' schemes were not considered as 'Fully functional': Levene's test for equality of variances  $p=.000$  ( $<0.05$ ) and equal variances are not assumed;  $t(271.172)=3.384$ ;  $p=0.001$  ( $<0.005$ );  $d=0.036$ . If '*needs minor repair*' scheme is accepted as '*Fully functional*', Levene's test for equality of variances  $p=0.166$  ( $>0.05$ ) and equal variances are assumed;  $t(610)=0.686$ ;  $p=0.493$  ( $>0.005$ );  $d=0.024$ .

When giving the functionality more ranks from 1 for '*Well Functioning*' to 6 '*Needs Rehabilitation*', the relationship is even more significant with Levene's test for equality of variances  $p=.000$  ( $<0.05$ ) and equal variances not assumed;  $t(260.488)=-3.969$ ;  $p=.000$  ( $<0.005$ );  $d=0.123$ . The differences are also more pronounced when comparing means.

The following analysis on the women as WUSC members needs to be seen in this context: **technology and site-specific geo-hydrological and topographic realities do matter**. Point source improvement schemes need very little maintenance if initially well constructed. The same applies to a small gravity system while a large gravity system will need equal attention to a lift scheme. Obviously, also age of the system matters.

See more results in the next page.



## BUILDING SMART: WATER SCHEMES ARE MORE FUNCTIONAL IF A WUSC HAS MORE WOMEN MEMBERS

Results show that WUSC that have more women than men, are more likely to have fully functional scheme compared to WUSCs that have fewer women.

The t-test is significant with Levene's test for equality of variances  $p=.000$  ( $<0.05$ ) resulting in equal variances not assumed;  $t(259.433)= 3.714$ ;  $p=.000$  ( $<0.005$ );  $d= 0.045$ . Using the 'strict functionality' as grouping variable, WUSCs with more women ( $M=0.51$ ,  $SD=0.500$ ) compared with the WUSCs with less women ( $M=0.34$ ,  $SD=0.475$ ) stands out from the others.

For other variables, the t-test does not show statistically significant difference with regards to 'strict functionality' of the scheme and such as 'all WUSC members are women', 'WUSC has gender balance', or 'WUSC has a woman in a key position', or with any particular key position. All have  $p>0.05$ . This is explained by the fact that all schemes have women, practically all schemes, 99%, have at least one woman in a key position and 71% have gender balance. *Note that Chart 3 takes the 'strict' definition: if a scheme is classified as 'needs minor repair', it is in 'not fully functional' category. None of the schemes are closed but providing services to 243,344 people.*

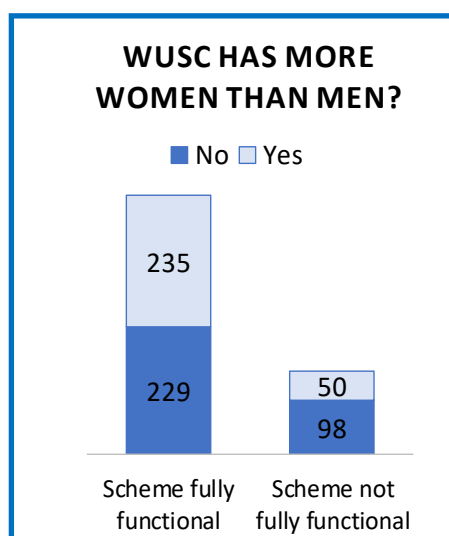
## A woman as a Vice-Chairperson also makes a difference

If we are not strict about functionality and accept that also the 'needs minor repairs' can be considered as 'fully functional', the figures change.

WUSCs with more women still make difference, but in that table also **woman as a Vice-Chairperson makes difference**: with Levene's test for equality of variances  $p=.000$  ( $<0.05$ ) resulting in equal variances not assumed;  $t(49.068)= 2.901$ ;  $p=.006$  ( $<0.005$ );  $d= 0.052$ .

Out of all schemes in this sample, 25% had a female Vice-Chairperson.

CHART 3



Group Statistics

	Functionality strict	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WUSC has all members women	Yes	464	.02	.130	.006
	No	148	.01	.082	.007
WUSC has gender balance	Yes	464	.72	.449	.021
	No	148	.67	.472	.039
WUSC has more women	Yes	464	.51	.500	.023
	No	148	.34	.475	.039
WUSC has women in key position	Yes	464	.98	.122	.006
	No	148	.99	.116	.010
WUSC Chairperson woman	Yes	464	.09	.284	.013
	No	148	.10	.303	.025
WUSC Vice-Chairperson woman	Yes	464	.25	.433	.020
	No	148	.23	.422	.035
WUSC Secretary woman	Yes	464	.38	.486	.023
	No	148	.33	.472	.039
WUSC Treasurer woman	Yes	464	.78	.413	.019
	No	148	.72	.449	.037

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence	
									Lower	Upper
WUSC has all members women	Equal variances assumed	3.456	.064	.922	610	.357	.010	.011	-.012	.033
	Equal variances not assumed			1.156	396.283	.248	.010	.009	-.007	.028
WUSC has gender balance	Equal variances assumed	5.331	.021	1.237	610	.216	.053	.043	-.031	.137
	Equal variances not assumed			1.205	237.528	.230	.053	.044	-.034	.140
WUSC has more women	Equal variances assumed	53.893	.000	3.613	610	.000	.169	.047	.077	.260
	Equal variances not assumed			3.714	259.433	.000	.169	.045	.079	.258
WUSC has women in key position	Equal variances assumed	.077	.782	-.138	610	.890	-.002	.011	-.024	.021
	Equal variances not assumed			-.142	259.146	.887	-.002	.011	-.023	.020
WUSC Chairperson	Equal variances assumed	.895	.345	-.477	610	.634	-.013	.027	-.067	.041
	Equal variances not assumed			-.461	235.258	.645	-.013	.028	-.068	.043
WUSC Vice-Chairperson	Equal variances assumed	1.036	.309	.498	610	.618	.020	.041	-.060	.100
	Equal variances not assumed			.505	253.437	.614	.020	.040	-.059	.099
WUSC Secretary woman	Equal variances assumed	5.286	.022	1.059	610	.290	.048	.046	-.041	.138
	Equal variances not assumed			1.074	253.797	.284	.048	.045	-.040	.137
WUSC Treasurer woman	Equal variances assumed	7.922	.005	1.490	610	.137	.059	.040	-.019	.138
	Equal variances not assumed			1.427	231.717	.155	.059	.042	-.023	.141

## RWSSP-WN has found that:

- ✓ Applying a HRBA&GESI Strategy ensures a more representative WUSC
- ✓ Rural water supply schemes save time in water collection (usually women's time), which is used for productive and social benefits
- ✓ Water schemes are more functional if a WUSC has more women members; and having a woman as a leader makes a difference
- ✓ GESI target setting and participation allows women to learn new skills and gain confidence (which can spill into other areas of their lives).

The key elements to ensuring women and disadvantaged groups have more equal participation and greater benefits are:

- ✓ Developing and implementing an HRBA & GESI Strategy and Action Plan
- ✓ Providing strong technical support and facilitation
- ✓ Capacity building to ensure both women and men have the skills, knowledge and attitudes to fully participate in implementation and maintenance of their scheme - as WUSC member or Village Maintenance Worker
- ✓ Supporting local government to develop GESI-friendly policies and strategies

**RWSSP-WN is thinking equal, building smart and innovating for change.**



Photo: The water schemes can be large and complex technical and social systems such as this one in Musikot Rural Municipality, Gulmi district. Here water is lifted up (291 meters vertical head), and distributed through over 10 km of pipeline to serve 928 people, one school with 315 students, one Health Post and one public office.

**Out of all 243,344 people served by improved water supply in RWSSP-WN, 38% benefit from solar or electric lift schemes like this one.**

## REFERENCES

HRBA & GESI Strategy and Action Plan for Operationalizing Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI) Principles in the Water and Sanitation Sector (2015), Rural Village Water Resources Management Project Phase II (RVWRMP II) and Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal Completion Phase (RWSSP-WN II), published by Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR), MoFaGa, Nepal. Available at: <http://www.rwsspwn.org.np/phase-ii-publications>

Mommen, Humphries-Waa & Gwavuya (2017) Does women's participation in water committees affect management and water system performance in rural Vanuatu? *Waterlines* 36(3): 216-232, <https://doi.org/10.3362/1756-3488.16-00026>

## RESULTS INDICATORS FOR RWSSP-WN II

*This Brief contributes to the RWSSP-WN II Overall objective: Improved health and fulfilment of the equal right to water and sanitation for the inhabitants of the Project area.*

Result 1: Access to sanitation and hygiene for all achieved and sustained in the project working municipalities.

Result 2: Access to safe, functional and inclusive water supply services for all achieved and sustained in the project working Municipalities

Result 3: Strengthened institutional capacity of government bodies to plan, coordinate, support and monitor



**FCG** ●

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Western Nepal Phase II is a bilateral development cooperation project funded by the governments of Nepal and Finland, and implemented through local governments and users' groups under the Department of Local Infrastructure DoLI), Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration. RWSSP-WN II worked in 14 districts in two Provinces of Western and Mid-Western development regions in Nepal, thorough municipality WASH programmes.

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