

# sustainable sanitation alliance

## Scope and Focus of Working Group 7

### Sustainable WASH in Institutions and Gender Equality

*Leave No One Behind – in communities, schools and other institutions*

#### 1 Objectives

Working Group (WG) 7 has two goals:

- a. To strengthen water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in schools and other institutions within community structures.  
To learn more about the work of WG 7 in the field of WASH in schools, see [Factsheet 7a “Sustainable Sanitation for school”](#) (2012, currently under revision).
- b. The mainstreaming of gender into sanitation programmes and the involvement of men and women into sanitation projects.  
To learn more about the work of WG 7 in the field of gender equality, see [Factsheet 7b “Integrating a gender perspective in sustainable sanitation”](#) (2012).

#### 2 Why focus on WASH in institutions?

Basic WASH services in settings like schools, health care facilities and workplaces are critical to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets on education and health. Aligning the work of WG 7 with the SDGs, it is therefore a logical step for WG 7 to extend its focus to WASH in institutions (i.e. schools, healthcare facilities, workplaces, religious settings, prisons) with the goal of strengthening water, sanitation, and hygiene in schools and other institutions within community structures.

Doing so, WG 7 can build on its past activities in the area of WASH in schools, which as of now will remain the focus of its work. The Three Star Approach to WASH in Schools (UNICEF/GIZ 2013), for example, even though conceived and implemented long before the adoption of the Agenda 2030, addresses a number of SDGs and brings them to life in an integrated, yet simple framework.

In order to delve into other institutional settings, it is suggested that experts from the health sector are invited as observers to the next SuSanA meetings (SuSanA Anniversary, WG Meeting Minutes, 01/2017).

#### 3 Why focus on gender equality?

Taking gender aspects into account is essential for sustainable sanitation and hygiene. Targets 6.1. and 6.2 (“equitable access”, “equitable sanitation and hygiene”) are

prerequisites for wider improvements in gender equality (SDG 5). In turn, gender inequality becomes particularly apparent when looking at water, sanitation and hygiene issues in developing countries.

The provision of hygiene and sanitation is often considered a woman’s task. Women’s hygienic needs are often silenced or ignored: menstruation, for instance, is considered a taboo in many societies, resulting in insufficient menstrual hygiene management (MHM). Moreover, women are non- or at best underrepresented in decision-making processes regarding toilets, sanitation programs or projects which oftentimes results in female concerns with regard to sanitation practices being rarely addressed. Yet in order to achieve SDG 6 (as well as SDG 4 and 5), the needs of half the population cannot be ignored.

The goal of WG 7 is therefore the mainstreaming of gender into sanitation programs and the involvement of men and women into sanitation projects.

#### 4 Working Group 7 in the SDG context

Working Group (WG) 7, previously entitled “Community, rural and schools (with gender and social aspects)”, has sharpened its focus to specifically address a set of targets that is spread over Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4, 5, and 6 and that is moving beyond the household level.

This adjustment is in line with both the Agenda 2030 as well as the SuSanA Vision 2030 document. Given the crucial importance of aligning the work of WG 7 with the SDGs, the adjusted scope and focus also credits the holistic approach of the SDGs with their many interlinkages.

#### 5 SDG indicators: Global monitoring beyond the household level

Globally monitoring access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, the focus to date has been on the household level. This remains in part true for SDG global indicators: Global indicator 6.2.1, for instance, limits tracking of safely managed sanitation services and basic handwashing facilities to “in the home” and “at the household level”, respectively.

The SDGs ask for universal access to WASH, health, and education. The language of SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2 referring to “universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all” and “access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all” emphasizes the importance of WASH in all settings. International consultations recommended that future monitoring should also extend to institutional settings, such as schools, health care facilities and workplaces, where lack of access to WASH has a

significant impact on the health, welfare and productivity of populations.

The shift from the MDGs to the SDGs and the development of indicators shows the more holistic approach of the SDGs to achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all. Where the MDGs included only three indicators on water and sanitation, the SDGs include 11 and where the MDG indicators were monitored primarily through household surveys, SDG 6 monitoring will inevitably involve many national authorities from different sectors.

Given the extended indicators for the SDGs and given the fact that responsibility for monitoring remains primarily at the country-level, there is the need to strengthen national capacity and resources for monitoring. Increasing technical assistance in developing methodologies, in designing monitoring structures compatible with existing technical and institutional capacities, and in implementing monitoring processes is therefore part of the SuSanA Vision 2030.

## 6 Achieving the SDGs through holistic approaches

Looking beyond the household level becomes essential to achieve the Agenda 2030 marked by various interlinkages between the different SDGs. For instance, there are clear interlinkages between SDG 4 (“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”), SDG 5 (“Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”) and SDG 6. Lower incidence of sanitation related diseases, means fewer lost school days. Similarly, poor menstrual hygiene management in schools and at home prevents the full participation of girls in education and consequently gender equality and women’s and girl’s empowerment.

SDG 17 calls for a stronger commitment to partnerships and collaborations in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This has also been acknowledged by SuSanA and the SuSanA Vision 2030 document. As is stated in the SuSanA Vision 2030, the many linkages between sanitation and targets across all SDGs offer new opportunities for SuSanA to reach out to and cooperate with other sectors. WASH in schools is one example of such a multi-sector approach and can serve as role model for the successful cooperation with other sectors.

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Figure 1: Sustainable Sanitation interlinkages across the other SDGs, SuSanA Vision 2030, p.3