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Disability Inclusion in National WASH Policies

Retta Getachew, Executive Director,
Ethiopian Center for Disability and
Development (ECDD)



Background and the Problem

- Access to WASH is critical for health, education, productivity, and social development.
- A remarkable progress in WASH service coverage- but a huge gap in addressing the WASH needs of persons with disabilities.
- To ensure equal access to WASH services, policies and programmes need to specifically address those who are less well positioned-physically, socially, culturally, or economically.
- This is a matter of equity and inclusion!



Background and the Problem

- WASH is **critical for people with disabilities** because:
 - lack of WASH facilities will make them vulnerable to different **health risks**.
 - lack of disability friendly latrines at the school **discourages attendance**.
 - Its' role in preventing certain impairments like blindness caused by trachoma.
- In accessing WASH services & facilities, people with disabilities face:
 - **physical barriers** (steps, narrow entrances, and slippery floors),
 - **environmental barriers** (rough paths, long distances),
 - **social barriers** (prejudice, pity, isolation, and overprotection) and
 - **institutional barriers** (lack of policies, knowledge, skills, appropriate designs) which limit their access to WASH.
- To address these and other barriers to equitable and inclusive WASH, the **availability of inclusive policies and strategies is essential**.



Review of the Major WASH Policies

- *FDRE Constitution, 1995*
 - “to the extent the country’s resources permit, policies shall aim to provide **all Ethiopians access to public health** and education, **clean water**, housing, food and social security.”
 - “**All Persons have the right to a clean and healthy environment.**”
 - “Government shall endeavor to ensure that **all Ethiopians live in a clean and healthy environment.**”
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Review of the Major WASH Policies

- **GTP-2 National Plan for the WASH Sub-Sector (2015/16 – 2019/20), MoWIE**
 - Focus on the needs and empowerment of women
 - No mention at all about accessibility and disability friendliness of WASH services and facilities
- **Health Sector Transformation Plan (2015/16 - 2019/20), MOH**
 - The only reference made on Indicators and Targets for HSTP monitoring- Proportion of health institutions with gender and disability sensitive complete WASH package (60 health institutions in 5years)



Review of the Major WASH Policies

- **National Hygiene and Environmental Health Strategy (2016-2020), MOH- **STILL A DRAFT DOCUMENT****
 - One of the guiding principles on *Equity and inclusiveness*
 - Equity is a cross-cutting issue- “differently-able people” considered.
 - Standards to be developed for different types of facilities at different functions to give access to differently-abled...etc.
 - All public facilities including public toilets, showers, that are either under operation or under construction should be checked for safety for differently-able users.
 - Country-wide standards for facilities & services: hotels, bars, schools and health facilities should take note of safety for everyone but with special emphasis for differently-able- to be enforced by municipalities.



Review of the Major WASH Policies

- **Education Sector Development Programme V (ESDP V), (2015/16 - 2019/20), Ministry of Education**
 - Special needs & inclusive education given priority- cross-cutting issue
 - focus to ensure that schools have a basic set of accessibility in WASH facilities
 - standards for school WASH facilities to be in line with One WASH national strategy.
 - The basic package of accessibility facilities to be agreed upon in the first year of ESDP V and implemented thereafter.



WASH Sector Policies...cont.

- ***Ethiopian Water Resources Management Proclamation (2000)***
 - no reference on equity and inclusion
- **Ethiopian Water Resources Management Policy (Water Sector Policy 2001)**
 - Equity is mentioned in several places
 - Underlines the inclusion of pastoral communities in water programs and services
 - No mention of inclusion of persons with disabilities
- ***The Ethiopian Water Resources Management Regulation (2005)***
 - No mention of persons with disabilities and inclusion
 - Meaning- no mandatory requirement in the regulation



WASH Sector Policies...cont.

- ***National Hygiene and Sanitation Strategy (2005)***
 - Production of IEC materials that reaches vulnerable groups
 - Identified few groups (HIV/AIDS patients & Paraplegic individuals)
 - Acknowledges special needs and design requirements of pastoralists, **paraplegic people** and HIV/AIDS patients
 - recommends consultations with the groups to come up with appropriate solutions
- ***Design and Construction Manual for Water Supply and Sanitary Facilities in Primary Schools and in Health Institutions (2 Docs)***
 - also provide relatively modernized and tailored references to the issue of marginalization in WASH services.



WASH Sector Policies...*cont.*

- ***The WASH Implementation Framework (2011)***
 - Prepared for all WASH actors including the “disabled” - emphasized that the needs of the disabled be “addressed in all the steps of implementing the National WASH Program.”
 - A major responsibility of WASHCOs is developing “mechanism of addressing the disabled and marginalized groups of the community”.
 - WIF requires that the issue of “gender and social inclusion (disabled, disadvantaged, sick, etc...) is mainstreamed in all WASH training, learning and exposure, and in WASH policy and plans.”
 - **WIF by far is the most inclusive WASH policy document.**



Summary of Major Findings

- **No specific policy impeding** the inclusiveness of WASH services
- No **mandatory requirement** for service providers on inclusion
- Most of the policy documents ***aimed “all”*** - unpacked
- **Equity** is mentioned in several places- but not defined- no shared understanding either - equity is often understood only in terms of narrowing gender, regional and urban-rural disparities.
- Policies ***lack implementation and monitoring and evaluation framework*** to track the actual inclusion of persons with disabilities



Summary of Major Findings

- ***Lack of data*** and ***evidence*** on the situation of persons with disabilities in WASH programs and services.
- While women and pastoralists are fairly considered in policies, the WASH needs of **persons with disabilities remain largely ignored.**
- Lack of **structure/common platform** for the WASH sector and the disability movement to work together on WASH:
 - Inter-sectoral (MOLSA with MoWE for example) collaboration is required
 - In the MOLSA structure, WASH is considered as a safety and health issue of the labor sector and NOT in social welfare department.



Recommendations

- Develop **One WASH Disability Mainstreaming Guideline** for all WASH actions in Ethiopia
- Develop an **implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation framework** to guide the enforcement of the available policy provisions on disability inclusive WASH.
- Conduct **disability sensitization workshops and capacity building initiatives** to WASH actors at various levels.
- **Establish a common platform** for both actors (organizations working on disability and WASH actors) to work together.



Recommendations

- WASH Ministries (MOH, MOE and MoWIE) to be **broadened** to embrace other Ministries (such as MoLSA, Ministries of Women, Children & Youth, Federal Affairs).
- **Popularize** WASH policies & **sensitize** persons with disabilities (through DPOs) about their rights to access WASH facilities and services equally as non-disabled persons.
- Contextualized, low cost and replicable **Disability Inclusive Standards** for WASH facilities need to be developed and implemented.
- The whole issue surrounding Disability inclusion in WASH in the Ethiopian context needs to be **studied further** .





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