

## WASH GESI ACCELERATOR FUND



## BY THE NUMBERS

**BUDGET:** \$1.4 million

**TARGETS:**

- Participants: 8,773
- PLWD infrastructure:
  - » 7 schools
  - » 2 health facilities
  - » 4 government offices
  - » 60 households
- Menstrual hygiene management infrastructure:
  - » 8 schools
  - » 4 health facilities
- Minor rehabilitation:
  - » 5 kindergartens



**DONOR:** Private donors from the U.S. and Taiwan

**LOCATION:** Kirkuk and Hawija Districts, Kirkuk Governorate, Iraq

**PROJECT TIME FRAME:** November 2021-November 2023

**PARTNERS:** Rozh Society, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education

## Overview

World Vision is accelerating access to equitable water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services for all by deepening our focus on the most vulnerable, especially in fragile and extremely fragile contexts. We have long been committed to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) within the WASH sector, recognizing the unique burdens that poor WASH services place on women, girls, and marginalized groups such as the elderly, indigenous groups, people living with disabilities (PLWDs), and people living in fragile contexts. Inadequate WASH services increase their risk of injury, illness, harassment, and violence, among other issues.

World Vision's past work has accommodated the needs of vulnerable groups, specifically considering their needs in infrastructure design. Our vision going forward is to provide transformative WASH services that appropriately respond to and reflect the choices and desires of the most vulnerable members of communities where we work. Beyond just access, equitable and inclusive WASH services empower meaningful participation of marginalized groups by removing barriers, enabling decision-making and personal agency, and reinforcing positive and equitable social norms.

The purpose of the GESI Accelerator Fund is to identify, refine, implement, and document cross-cutting approaches that elevate the roles of women and marginalized groups as WASH leaders. While World Vision's WASH Program emphasizes access and participation for women, girls, and PLWDs, the GESI WASH Accelerator Fund seeks to deepen our focus on these groups to test and document GESI-transformative WASH approaches (see page 3). Further, the Accelerator Fund will help develop and capture improved measurements of GESI outcomes related to WASH.

In Iraq, conflict, displacement, and the COVID-19 pandemic have taken a significant toll on the well-being of women and girls, who face 31% unemployment, and PLWDs, who make up 15% of the total population.<sup>1</sup> These existing stressors are further compounded by economic instability, overburdened infrastructure, and the inability to access gender and disability-friendly social services due to restrictive cultural and social norms.

A World Vision Iraq study in August 2021<sup>2</sup> examined barriers to women's empowerment and GESI, pointing to the following factors: limited access to basic services, displacement, low economic participation, harmful gender norms, and limited decision-making. The leading factors related to improved well-being of Iraqi children were attributed to the ability of their mothers to make household decisions, be protected from gender-based violence, and maintain good mental and emotional well-being. The study demonstrated that women's empowerment is critical for achieving child well-being, which requires gender-transformative interventions across sectors in partnership with power holders.

<sup>1</sup> Iraq Humanitarian Needs Overview (February 2021) - Iraq | ReliefWeb

<sup>2</sup> Empowered Women Empowered Children: Iraq | Iraq | World Vision International (wvi.org)

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### Objectives

The desired impact of this Accelerator Fund project is to strengthen equity and inclusivity in the WASH sector for women and PLWDs. This project is being implemented in partnership with the Rozh Society, an organization for PLWDs in Kirkuk.

Primary outcomes include:

1. Enhanced gender equality and social inclusion for women and PLWDs through improved access to WASH services and equitable WASH systems
2. Improved income-generating capacity for women and PLWDs through capacity building in WASH entrepreneurship
3. Increased GESI-transformative change for women and PLWDs through evidence-driven advocacy and evaluation

#### Year 1

Year 1 focuses on establishing a baseline understanding of GESI barriers within Hawija and Kirkuk districts, including an assessment of 60 households and 30 public facilities. Additionally, the partnership with the Rozh Society is key to working with PLWDs to obtain their insight into which public facilities have the greatest need for rehabilitation. In total, 13 public facilities were identified by PLWDs as priority facilities for rehabilitation in the first year. Facility management teams at these institutions will be trained on operation and maintenance of the updated facilities. Additionally, menstrual hygiene management (MHM) infrastructure, along with MHM supplies and basic hygiene education will be provided to eight schools and four health facilities. After facility rehabilitation, a more thorough GESI assessment will be administered with an external GESI consultant to assess deeper barriers, beliefs, and norms on which to focus hygiene promotion and education in Year 2.

#### Year 2

The priority of Year 2 is to build capacity of women and girls to become WASH leaders in their communities. The project will facilitate financial literacy and life skills training for 100 women (80 female university graduates and 20 women from vulnerable groups, in accordance with World Vision Iraq's standard vulnerability criteria), enrolling them in a water supply design program in partnership with academic institutions. Additionally, this project will facilitate business development, management, and entrepreneurship trainings and enable access to micro-grants and coaching for these 100 women to increase representation of female WASH entrepreneurs. Three new WASH committees will be established under the guidance and leadership of these women.

### GESI domains

#### Access & Well-Being

World Vision is partnering with the Rozh Society to identify PLWDs and incorporate them into the selection and design of inclusive WASH facilities in public institutions (schools, health facilities, and government offices). They will also educate women, men, girls, and boys on GESI principles and MHM. Following gender and disability assessments, advocacy will also take place to identify GESI barriers in WASH and promote government policies to improve well-being.



#### GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

GESI is a strategic focus across all sectors of World Vision programming. This cross-cutting theme is a priority of our 2021-2025 WASH Business Plan. The GESI Accelerator Fund project in Iraq draws upon the concepts defined through our GESI Theory of Change. This highlights the five GESI domains that help communities and vulnerable children experience life in its fullness: Access, Participation, Decision-Making, Systems, and Well-Being. This project seeks to address each of these domains to achieve the empowerment of women and girls and PLWDs, taking special note of the intersectionality of females living with disabilities.

In measuring our approach, World Vision also has developed a GESI Continuum which describes the degree of GESI responsiveness in programs (see page 3). All World Vision programs should be in the realm of GESI responsive, progressing from GESI accommodating to GESI transformative. This project is actively engaged in transforming gender and social inequalities in the long term to promote sustainable change, making this a GESI-transformative program.

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### Decision-Making & Participation

Following dialogue sessions and training for power holders and faith leaders, project participants will be supported to join the WASH workforce after receiving training on financial literacy, life skills, sexual- and gender-based violence prevention, entrepreneurship, and business development, including distribution of micro-grants, coaching, and mentorship.

### Systems

World Vision’s monitoring, evaluation, and learning team will pilot innovative approaches to measure evidence of GESI transformation, conduct project evaluations, and assess barriers for women and PLWDs to access services and employment in the WASH sector. This will directly inform evidence-driven advocacy and help leverage new funding to scale-up GESI programming and integrate it throughout existing and new WASH programs.



## Learning outcomes

Through this Accelerator Fund project, World Vision will develop innovative new assessment tools to determine barriers for women and PLWDs in the WASH sector. It will measure changes in attitudes toward menstruation and MHM. The project will also use the mWater platform to administer surveys and track WASH facilities. An innovative GESI monitoring framework will be piloted to detect GESI transformation throughout the project lifecycle and better equip World Vision to document methods and approaches that contribute to sustainable GESI transformation and other best practices.

Analysis of data collected from these assessments will be synthesized into a summary report and presentation for wide dissemination. Lessons learned will be shared both internally within the World Vision partnership and externally with key stakeholders and donors.

In addition to programmatic learnings, this project will build the capacity of World Vision Iraq staff to increase their awareness and accountability to GESI transformation within their programs and staffing. Accountability assessments will help determine the most effective system for gathering complaints of GESI-absent infrastructure or harmful WASH systems, to improve feedback mechanisms for communities.

World Vision' GESI Continuum		
Not GESI Responsive	<b>GESI Absent</b>	There is no consideration of gender norms and unequal power relations, or potential patterns of gender equality or social inclusion in the design or delivery of program activities. There is no discussion of the gendered or inclusive dimensions of the environment where programs may be operating and how this may affect interventions.
	<b>GESI Exploitative</b>	Reinforces, uses, and/or takes advantage of gender inequalities, social norms, and stereotypes.
	<b>GESI Insensitive</b>	Gender norms and social inequalities are acknowledged as key aspects of context but not brought into any aspects of program planning, delivery, or feedback.
GESI Responsive	<b>GESI Accommodating/Sensitive</b>	Acknowledges but works around gender, disability, or other social differences and inequalities to achieve project objectives. Interventions address practical needs of vulnerable groups but not the underlying causes of inequality or exclusion. There is a "missed opportunity" to shift norms that reinforce inequality and exclusion.
	<b>GESI Transformative</b>	Actively seeks to engage with and transform gender and social inequalities in the long term to achieve sustainable GESI change. Challenges or shifts gender norms, unequal power relations, stereotypes, and discriminatory practices. Promotes equitable systems.
<b>GOAL</b>   Better development outcomes for the most vulnerable.		

