



WASH: Disability Inclusion

World Vision is committed to pursuing the “sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable.” People with disabilities represent some of the most vulnerable in communities due to an inaccessibility to services and appropriate infrastructure, marginalisation, and discrimination. Since World Vision's first intervention in a community is often water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), we prioritise disability inclusion as essential to:

- achieve the basic human right to water and sanitation
- reach the most vulnerable
- set the tone for inclusion in other community-based projects
- achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6: Access to water and sanitation for all

As a child-focused organisation, we focus on assuring disability inclusion in all WASH projects. We recognise that households may have persons with disabilities of all ages, and how that can affect everyone in the household.

In WASH, disability inclusion is water, sanitation and hygiene that is available, affordable, dignified, and accessible to all persons with disabilities.

FAST FACTS

- Approximately 15 per cent of people on the planet have some kind of disability, making people with disabilities the largest minority group on the planet¹.
- 90 per cent of children with disabilities do not attend school in developing countries².
- Prevalence of disability is 60 per cent higher for females than for males³.
- One study in Ethiopia cited that 96.6 per cent of people with disabilities said they have difficulty in accessing basic water facilities⁴.

Importance

World Vision defines *disability* as the result of the limitations imposed on people with impairments by attitudinal, institutional, and environmental barriers to their participation in society. Disability inclusion, especially in WASH, is important because:

- Disability inclusive WASH at school helps children with disabilities attend and stay in school. Children with disabilities, girls especially, are often not able to attend school because they do not have access to a toilet, which makes it impossible to make it through a full school day – especially for girls who are menstruating.
- Disability inclusive WASH at home supports a child's acceptance in society. When a child is not able to care for his or her hygiene, the child is unlikely to be welcomed by peers or to participate in school. This can be a further marginalisation factor for a child with disabilities.
- Access to sanitation has important cultural and social implications for women, especially those with disabilities. Not having access to safe and adequate WASH facilities usually means women must navigate unsafe terrain, often alone and at night, to find a private place outdoors to take care of their sanitation needs, which puts them at risk.
- It is especially critical for WASH infrastructure at health care facilities to be accessible to people with disabilities, as this is a critical point of care for people with both temporary and permanent disabilities. Schools are also good demonstration points for what disability inclusive WASH infrastructure can be.
- Access to disability inclusive WASH supports opportunities for employment and self-sufficiency for people with disabilities.
- Disability inclusion focuses the ultimate removal of barriers—physical, environmental, attitudinal and institutional. Physical barriers are addressed through adaptations to infrastructure, such as ramps or assistive devices for toileting. The remaining barriers are addressed through community engagement, advocacy and training.





Going Beyond

World Vision’s disability inclusive WASH programming supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 for quality education and SDG 6 for clean water and sanitation. World Vision is building upon the ambitious SDG standards by prioritising disability inclusion. This includes ensuring that WASH facilities and latrines at schools and health care facilities are disability friendly. This includes a clear path to WASH facilities without stairs or steps, free of obstructions, and

with handrails for support where necessary. Sanitation facilities should also include the following: guiding handholds and rails for those with visual impairments; enough space inside for a wheelchair user to enter, turn, close the door and park by the toilet; a door wide enough for a wheelchair with enough space inside for wheelchair users to enter, turn close the door and park by the toilet; a door handle and seat that are within reach of children using wheelchairs or crutches/sticks.

Standards	Goal 4	Goal 6
Related SDG Target	4.A. Education facilities are built and upgraded that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all	6.2. Adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene is accessible for all, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations

Spotlight: World Vision + Messiah College

World Vision and Messiah College have created a flourishing and strategic partnership. They work together to provide disability inclusive latrines and water pumps. The award-winning documentary *Beyond the Margins*⁵ highlights some of the successes of this partnership in Ghana and tells of how persons with disabilities (PWD) were empowered and given the resources to become independent and provide for their families.

One such person, Abudu Alhassan, became disabled at the age of 6. He was forced to crawl until he received orthopaedic surgery as a teenager and relearned how to walk with crutches. Abudu is one of the founding members of the Tamale Association for the Disabled, an association where PWD can educate others on common misconceptions of PWD and work to destigmatise PWD. World Vision brought Abudu and the association to a local ration station to spread their message, and the association has made a unique and important impact.



Abudu Alhassan



Sources

World Vision 

¹World Health Organization (2013). *Disability and health*. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs352/en/>

²UNICEF (2014). *Disabilities:WASH:Water sanitation and hygiene*. Retrieved from http://www.unicef.org/disabilities/index_65839.html.

³WHO (2011). *World Report on Disability*. Retrieved from http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2011/9789240685215_eng.pdf.

⁴World Vision (2014). *Casting the net further: Disability inclusive WASH*. Retrieved from http://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Full%20Disability%20Inclusive%20WASH%20Report.FINAL_.pdf

⁵<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Wl0Jkfstgw>

World Vision is a global Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.