

Water and Gender

Why Water Is Important...

Water is needed for drinking, food preparation, personal and family hygiene, washing, cleaning and caring for the sick.

Why Women and Girls Matter....

Women are most affected by lack of sanitation and safe water.

Almost half of the nearly 2 million deaths from diarrhea each year could be prevented through an understanding of basic hygiene.

Women are the ones who bear the burden of carrying water for up to 5 hours a day; women and girls are the “water haulers” of the world.

Hauling water over long distances can lead to physical damage to the back and neck (8lbs per gallon in weight).

According to the World Health Organization, 40 billion working hours are spent carrying water each year in Africa.

Fetching water takes time, time that is not spent in productive efforts that could raise money for the family.

Globally, more than 1 in 5 girls of primary school age are not in school. Also, girls that have reached menstrual age are less inclined to attend a school without proper sanitation facilities. In one school sanitation project the availability of separate facilities for boys and girls increased school attendance of girls by 11%.

With access to clean water and sanitation, there is significant improvement in gender equality, improvement in women’s livelihoods, the education and life chances of girls, and overall improvement in the health of a family.

How Water 1st is Addressing Gender and Why...

Although women have the main responsibility for water provisions, they are often overlooked in the planning and implementation of infrastructure development and water projects. Water 1st takes a different approach and only works with communities that have shown the willingness to allow women to be part of the entire process.

Women’s presence is critical to the sustainability of water and sanitation initiatives, particularly in management and technical roles, to ensure they contribute to decision-making processes. Building women into a project assures more sustainable outcomes.

