

Principles for Climate-Resilient Disability Inclusive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene



Citation:

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1. Climate-resilient WASH services and information are accessible to all people with disabilities before, during and after climatic events.

Suggested activities

Applying risk-informed processes and disaggregating data

- 1.1. Engage people with disabilities and their caregivers in climate risk assessments to understand their WASH experiences and behaviours before, during, and after climate events. Ensure data collection across impairment groups, genders, and ages.
- 1.2. Incorporate disability data disaggregation in planning, monitoring and evaluation systems using the Washington Group Short Set questions.

Climate-resilient disability inclusive WASH in public and private settings

- 1.3. Allocate budget for climate-resilient disability inclusive WASH facilities in households and public settings, including evacuation centres.
- 1.4. WASH infrastructure is planned, designed, and built using universal design principles and climate risk-based planning, ensuring accessibility, safety, and resilience to hazardous events. It incorporates the needs, experiences, and choices of women and men with disabilities and people with diverse impairments.
- 1.5. Provide supplementary and/or piped water supplies to households that include a person with disabilities and accessible information about how to maintain facilities and treat drinking water.
- 1.6. Promote accessible water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities and technologies at home (e.g. raised water resting stand at waterpoint, raised toilet seats, guide rope from the house to the toilet, seat in the bathing area, foot and hand operated handwashing facilities), assistive devices for WASH (e.g. bedpans, urinals, commodes, mattress cover etc) and equipment for caregivers (e.g. lifting devices) that are accessible before, during and after a climate event.
- 1.7. Promote movement aids (e.g., rubber knee and hand pads) to protect people from touching urine and faeces when using latrines.

Accessible and relevant information

- 1.8. Provide accessible information about how to modify WASH facilities, assistive devices for WASH and equipment for caregivers and where to buy them.

1.9. Provide all information in accessible formats (e.g. pictures, audio, captioned media, sign language interpretation, large font, etc).

Climate-resilient activities, disaster risk response and preparedness

1.10. Work with community leaders, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and Disability Service Providers to identify households that include person/s with disabilities and ensure they benefit from disaster risk response and preparedness activities.

1.11. Provide people with disabilities and their caregivers accessible climate risk information, including their rights during climate emergencies.

1.12. Support people with disabilities and caregivers to prepare for continued WASH during and after a disaster. For example, co-develop an emergency preparedness checklist with people with disabilities and caregivers. Include emergency contacts, the importance of storing water and soap, and items to take in an evacuation, including medical supplies, assistive devices and hygiene products.

1.13. Support the WASH requirements of people with disabilities and their families before, during and after a climatic event. Promote and distribute soap, cleaning products, affordable incontinence products, menstrual materials, commodes, bedpans etc.

Learning and innovation

1.14. Ensure that emerging climate-resilient WASH technologies and innovations follow universal design principles and meet the needs of people with disabilities by actively involving them throughout the development process. Leverage lessons from similar climate adaptation efforts in other contexts to inform disability inclusive solutions.

1.15. Develop, test and promote locally led innovations in reusable menstrual materials and incontinence products, providing accessible information on their hygienic reuse and environmentally sustainable disposal methods.

2. Caregivers can safely deliver hygienic care to people with disabilities before, during, and after climatic events.

Suggested activities

- 2.1 Include caregivers of persons with disabilities as a critical population in climate-resilient WASH activities. Support caregivers to participate in climate-resilient WASH planning for the household and community, ensuring that experiences, needs, and ideas are incorporated into solutions.
- 2.2 Elevate caregiver's social status by recognising their valuable role in promoting health and well-being in all communication materials.
- 2.3 Distribute commodes with lids, bedpans, urinals, incontinence products, gloves, and brushes for cleaning, along with information about how to use and clean the products and safely dispose of human waste.
- 2.4 Distribute lifting devices and information about making and using them safely.
- 2.5 Develop and implement a behaviour change campaign for caregivers, promoting safe, dignified, and hygienic care for people with disabilities before, during, and after climate events. The campaign should emphasise supporting individuals in maintaining hygiene as independently as possible, addressing menstrual hygiene, incontinence management, and cleaning assistive devices. Include guidance on creating and using lifting devices and bathing chairs, proper lifting techniques, and providing respectful and dignified care. Monitor progress and repeat the campaign regularly to encourage behaviour change.

3. People with disabilities do not face harm when accessing climate-resilient WASH service before, during and after climatic events.

Suggested activities

- 3.1 Identify and address specific climate-related risks of harm to people with disability (such as access to sanitation during/after flooding and the risk of direct contact with contaminated water), considering the different risks according to impairment experienced, age, gender and reliance on caregivers.
- 3.2 Incorporate gender-based violence risk mitigation for people with disabilities into the planning of WASH infrastructure, considering access and use before, during, and after climate events. Establish metrics to monitor the effectiveness of these risk mitigation activities.
- 3.3 Ensure WASH services at home, in public and disaster shelters, are climate-resilient, accessible, safe and private. Promote adaptations to make sanitation and hygiene facilities safe and private in consultation with women and men with disabilities, including bathing facilities and spaces where women change menstrual materials.
- 3.4 Promote empowering hygiene behaviour change approaches that foster positive social attitudes toward disability, emphasise mutual support, and strengthen community resilience to climate impacts. Collaborate with religious leaders to amplify these messages through diverse platforms and outreach channels.
- 3.5 Challenge gender inequalities by depicting men and boys supporting women, girls, men, and boys with disabilities in behaviour change messages and campaigns.
- 3.6 Raise awareness of how climate-related disasters heighten risks of abuse, accidents, and discrimination against people with disabilities.
- 3.7 Advocate for and ensure the safe evacuation of people with disabilities and their families to disaster shelters during climate emergencies.
- 3.8 Collaborate with local leaders, OPDs, Disability Service Providers, and other relevant organisations to develop and implement robust safeguarding measures, generally and specifically for climate emergencies. This must include rules for accessing alternative WASH facilities during water shortages and disasters to mitigate risks of conflict and exploitation. Establish accessible and responsive safeguarding complaint mechanisms and ensure these are widely publicised. Ensure that people with disabilities and their caregivers can easily access and understand how to use these mechanisms.
- 3.9 Partner with humanitarian organisations to provide post-disaster mental health and psychosocial support for people with disabilities and their caregivers.

4. Climate-resilient WASH services are affordable for all people with disabilities.

Suggested activities

- 4.1 Strengthen workforce support for people with disabilities in WASH by partnering with OPDs, disability service providers, and organisations focused on livelihoods and sustainable agriculture activities. This collaboration should focus on equipping individuals with disabilities to gain employment, enabling them to invest in climate-resilient and accessible adjustments to WASH facilities.
- 4.2 Collaboratively design and provide a pro-poor approach to tariffs for climate-resilient water and personal hygiene facilities for households with people with disabilities.
- 4.3 Utilise a pro-poor approach to provide subsidies to private sanitation businesses to incentivise accessible and climate-resilient designs which are appropriate and affordable for people with disabilities.
- 4.4 Advocate for the inclusion of disability in climate justice and finance for WASH.
- 4.5 Advocate for including subsidies and targeted WASH support for persons with disabilities to other actors and increased budget to support accessible WASH infrastructure, accessible information, and outreach to households with persons with disabilities before, during and after a climatic event.
- 4.6 Provide targeted WASH materials to people with disabilities in disaster response and recovery.
- 4.7 Pay the transport costs of people with disabilities and caregivers to attend WASH meetings.

5. Effective mechanisms exist to assure the right of people with disabilities to actively and meaningfully participate in developing climate-resilient WASH solutions.

Suggested activities

- 5.1 Ensure mechanisms are in place for the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities, including those with learning and psychosocial disabilities, throughout the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of climate change policies and initiatives relevant to WASH. Actively engage women and men with disabilities and caregivers, considering different impairments, ages, and genders, and implement supportive measures to enable their participation in climate-resilient WASH interventions.
- 5.2 Support people with disabilities to participate in climate-resilient WASH, disaster preparedness and management activities at the household and community levels.
- 5.3 Conduct house-to-house visits for people with disabilities and caregivers unable to leave home, repeat information shared in community meetings in ways everyone can access.
- 5.4 Ensure meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making across climate, WASH, climate justice, and finance initiatives at all levels—household, community, district, and national.
- 5.5 Collaborate with OPDs and Disability Service Providers at every stage of the climate-resilient WASH program to ensure it is disability inclusive.
- 5.6 Support OPDs and Disability Service Providers in engaging in climate-resilient WASH policy and practice meetings at national and sub-national levels, leading on disability rights within climate justice and finance.
- 5.7 Incorporate persons with disabilities into disaster preparedness committees to ensure their voices are heard in decision-making processes. Support OPDs in publicly leading and promoting universally accessible approaches during disaster response and reconstruction phases.

6. Government officials and service providers address the requirements of people with disabilities and their caregivers when providing WASH services that are resilient to climate change impacts.

Suggested activities

Training and skills development

- 6.1 Assess the capacity of government officials and service providers to understand and deliver the principles for climate-resilient disability inclusive WASH in policies and practices, including the ability to conduct climate risk assessments and communicate effectively with people with disabilities.
- 6.2 Invest in awareness-raising and skills development on climate-resilient, disability inclusive WASH for officials across health, agriculture, education, and WASH sectors, led by OPDs or Disability Service Providers. Focus training on climate risks and the needs of different impairment groups rather than general WASH and disability information
- 6.3 Train government officials and service providers on different kinds of vulnerability and the risks of gender-based violence faced by people with disabilities during climate disasters, safeguarding measures to mitigate these risks, and reporting and response mechanisms.

Governance processes and tools

- 6.4 Develop standardised guidelines for implementing climate-resilient, disability inclusive WASH principles within policies and programs, and create a comprehensive Development Project Proforma (DPP) template that prioritises these solutions while aligning with national development priorities and international climate change commitments.
- 6.5 Allocate a separate long-term budget for integrating these principles and activities into climate-resilient WASH policies and programmes, ensuring sustainability beyond the project life cycle. Include key performance indicators on disability inclusion in climate-resilient WASH policies and programmes.