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# PROTECTION, GENDER, AND, INCLUSION IN

water, sanitation, and hygiene

GUIDANCE NOTE

[www.redcross.org.ph](http://www.redcross.org.ph)



## Message of the Chairman

The Philippine Red Cross have always been at the forefront in responding to the needs of the Filipino people, may it be times of emergency and non-emergency. The work of the organization has inspired the nation and brought hope to the most vulnerable.

A valuable service provided by the organization is the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), wherein basic human right of every individual to have access to WASH facilities and other interventions alike are met. Since 2017, the PRC WASH Unit has been closing this gap and reaching more Filipinos regardless of age, gender, religion, ethnicity and physical, and mental capacities.

May we continue to uphold this service delivery, ensuring every individual has dignity, access, participation; and that humanitarian services are delivered within safety. I commend the efforts and contributions of PRC staff and volunteers; your work is reflected through the lives of communities you serve: a dignified and improved quality of living.

**Sen. Richard J. Gordon**  
CHAIRMAN AND CEO



## Message of the Secretary General

Empowering the most vulnerable creates a chain of opportunities for the poorest and communities in need. There is a sense of equality, which becomes possible for individuals to realize their full potential and establish their roles in the society. As the leading humanitarian organization in the country, the Philippine Red Cross continues to provide timely, relevant and appropriate services to communities in need, while preserving their life and dignity.

Our response to act in terms of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) has become at par in the fore running actions in the global scene. The immense efforts of staff, volunteers, and local counterparts have made this possible, and is apparent in the huge participation of communities in the projects and programs that are being developed to better fit their needs and ensure resiliency and sustainability.

We will continue to be the voice of the marginalized people; women, children, older people, and persons with disabilities; create opportunities and showcase how productive they are in the society. Among the WASH response, we are steadfast in our mandate to be **always first, always ready, always there.**

**Elizabeth S. Zavalla**  
SECRETARY GENERAL



## Acknowledgment

The Philippine Red Cross would like to give its sincerest gratitude and acknowledgement to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) for sharing their invaluable Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Guidance Note and for having featured one of the Philippine Red Cross' projects in its guidance note. The guidance note they've shared with the national societies have also served as the basis and foundation for this locally contextualized version of the Philippine Red Cross Protection, Gender, Inclusion (PGI) in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Guidance Note.

The Philippine Red Cross would also like to express its gratitude to Senator Richard J. Gordon, Chairman and CEO of the Philippine Red Cross, and our Secretary General Elizabeth S. Zavalla, for their unending guidance and encouragement that serve as the driving forces behind every humanitarian response that PRC continuously undertakes.

Utmost appreciation is also due to all Philippine Red Cross chapters, their staff and volunteers, who work tirelessly no matter when, where and what the circumstances are in pursuit of helping and preserving the life and dignity of those who are in need. PRC is also indebted to the local stakeholders - government and non-government units alike, who are always ready to provide assistance to PRC staff and volunteers in an effort to alleviate and improve any situation that puts the lives and dignity of their communities in jeopardy. The time, effort and resources they give were and will always be invaluable to achieve the humanitarian goals of PRC.

With everything that's said, PRC would not be able to achieve any of its humanitarian goals if not for the continuous support and participation of the local communities that it serves. Their unwavering trust with PRC is what keeps PRC motivated in delivering only what is appropriate and important.

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WASH or water, sanitation and hygiene is a public key health issue that encompasses a multitude of sectors, e.g. water access, resource and infrastructure, health and sanitation, disease management, and personal and menstrual hygiene management among others. It is the focus of the first two (2) targets of Sustainable Development Goals 6 of the United Nations.

It is therefore imperative to understand the importance of WASH in the development of a community. The implications of lack of water, sanitation and hygiene starts a chain of events that ultimately puts the affected community at risk.

The WASH Unit of the Philippine Red Cross is in charge of developing, implementing, and responding to priorities and needs presented, especially during emergency situations. It aims to promote hygiene, improve access to water, and sanitation facilities in a long-term programming.

WASH Office ensures timely and efficient provision of support to disaster-affected communities.

## Guide for users



The Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Guidance Note contains useful information in integrating protection, gender and inclusion in the multiple WASH activities that humanitarian organizations like the Philippine Red Cross implements on the many, different at risk communities it serves.

Derived from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' version of PGI in WASH Guidance Note, translated and contextualized locally to suit the PRC chapters and local stakeholders needs, this guidance note explains what protection, gender and inclusion is and its relationship to WASH, the importance of ensuring that protection, gender and inclusion is integrated in WASH programme itself, starting from a WASH activity's inception and planning up to the point of evaluating a WASH programme's effectiveness or in turning over WASH items or infrastructures to the local community, and how program implementers can integrate protection, gender and inclusion in the WASH programme.

This guidance note also contains useful, practical examples of integrating protection, gender and inclusion in the WASH programme cycle, sample at risk groups and how protection, gender and inclusion in WASH affects them, as well as several guide questions to make it easier for program implementers to integrate PGI in WASH programmes.

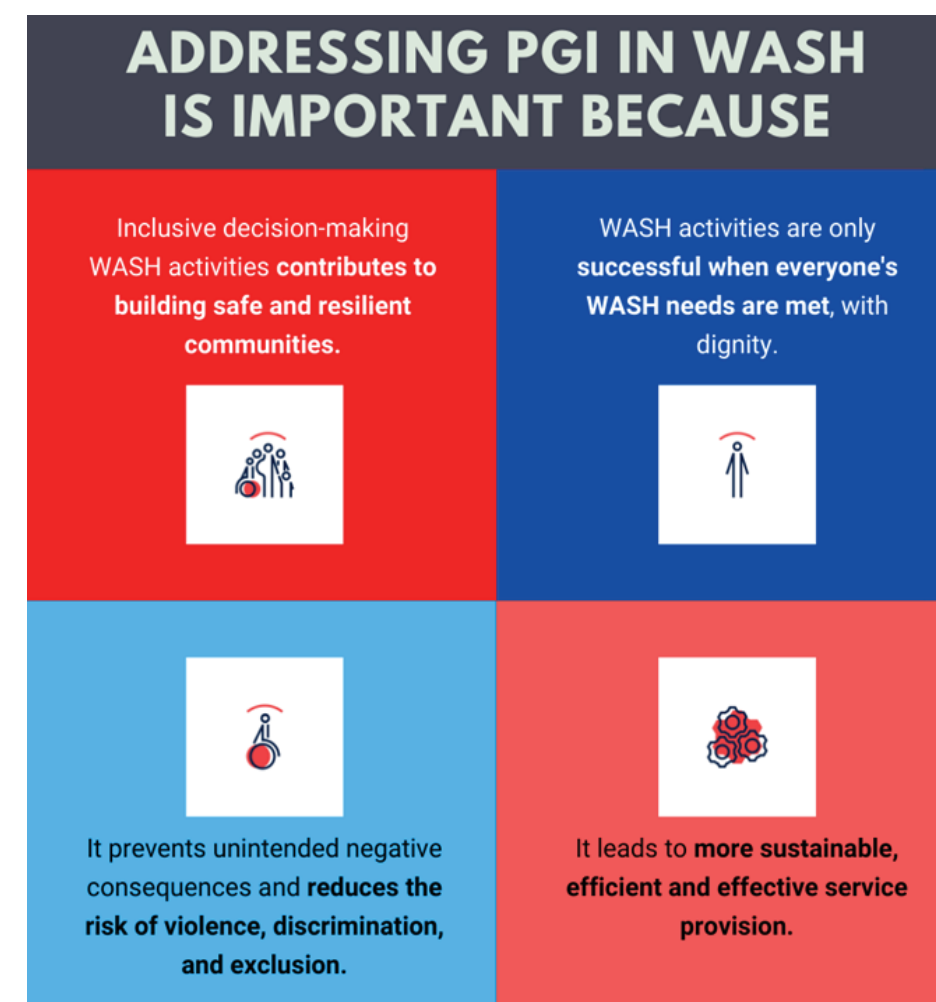
PRC chapter success stories can also be read at the near end of the guidance note to showcase how PRC chapters have been incorporating PGI in their WASH programmes, and to serve as a motivation to pursue even more effective WASH programmes for the continuous improvement of at-risk communities.



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# Introduction



A necessity that often takes the backseat, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are fundamental for life, and for the dignity, health and wellbeing of everyone. Equitable access to WASH services and facilities is a human right – regardless of their age, disability, social status, gender identity, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

Inclusive, protective and gender-sensitive WASH programmes and activities lead to more equitable and safe outcomes for all. Planning and design which reduce the risk of discrimination and violence and promote meaningful participation of all persons, regardless of their gender, age, disability and background, can ensure that activities meet the diverse WASH needs of all and leave no one behind.



## Moving from one size fits all to **PEOPLE-CENTERED WASH**

- Put protection, gender and inclusion at the center of the WASH sector's work
- Recognize different and multiple barriers that people face - and their equal human rights to WASH
- Prioritize those who face the most difficulties related to their WASH needs, and ensuring do no harm in the process
- Involve people in their own solutions
- Improve effectiveness through building capacity, commitment and pride



## HOW DO WE DO IT?



## What is in this **Guidance Note** and Who is it for?



This version of the guidance note was adapted from the Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion: Guidance Note developed and released by The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). It is translated to local context to better suit the needs of the PRC local chapters, and is intended to guide the PRC chapter staff, volunteers, and external stakeholders who are committed to improve the WASH conditions in their local areas. It provides an overview of key protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) issues and practicalities to consider when assessing, designing and monitoring both long-term and humanitarian WASH programmes.

Multiple internal and external factors create barriers for people to efficiently access water, sanitation and hygiene. Inequalities, discrimination, violence, cultural stigma and taboos are prime examples, all of which makes it harder for several groups of people to effectively obtain their personal water, sanitation and hygiene requirements with dignity, in a safe and protected manner. In order to provide equal opportunities for women, girls, boys, men, people with disabilities, older people and other marginalized groups to access water, sanitation and hygiene programmes, and to address the lasting impacts of these barriers, they should be put at the forefront of discussions with decision makers, community and religious leaders, among others.



# What do we mean by Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI)

A closer look at the definition of protection, gender and inclusion helps provide a better understanding at how they integrate together, and what they mean to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

Protection is a person or thing that prevents someone or something from suffering harm or injury.<sup>1</sup> Protection is integral to all forms of humanitarian work. Individuals affected by disaster are vulnerable and exposed to harm and abuse, thus our humanitarian actions are guided by preventing further harm to our beneficiaries.

Gender has evolved from its usual meaning and the term is now used more broadly to denote a range of identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female.<sup>2</sup> Gender roles may or may not correspond to one's own gender identity, can vary significantly between cultures and can change over time (including over the course of an individual's lifetime).

Diversity refers to the different social backgrounds and identities that make up populations. It includes gender, ethnic origin, nationality or citizenship, age, disability, language, political opinions, religious beliefs, social background, sexual orientation, physical appearance and colour.

Inclusion is the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.<sup>3</sup> It is also defined as reducing inequalities linked to social backgrounds, identities, roles and power relations. The end goal for inclusion is the marked end of any form of exclusion, stigma and discrimination.

In the context of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) describes the approach and way of working to address the causes, risks and consequences of violence, discrimination and exclusion in an integrated way.

At the core of the PGI approach is an analysis and consideration of differences in gender, ethnic origin, age, disability, colour, religious beliefs, social background, sexual orientation and other factors which lead to different levels of vulnerability, exposure to violence, social roles, power, rights and access to resources.



<sup>1,2,3</sup> Definition from Oxford Languages.

# INTEGRATION OF PGI TO WASH

The IFRC has identified four principles which guide WASH programmes and activities in addressing protection, gender and inclusion (PGI). This includes dignity, access, participation and safety (DAPS).



**Makeshift comfort room**  
Brgy. Bacari, Paracelis, Mt. Province



**Remote locations poses interruptions to the delivery of WASH services**  
San Miguel Island, Tabaco, Albay



**Scarse water resources limit WASH practices**  
Brgy. San Roque, Malilipot, Albay

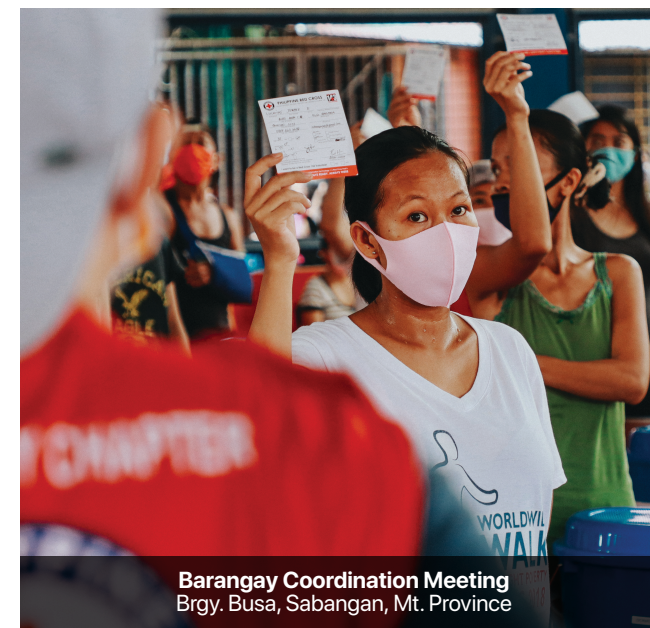
## DIGNITY

Dignity, respect for every human integrity should be present in every humanitarian response. Oftentimes barriers force marginalized people to use any resources available in order to immediately respond to their needs. Interventions may not support their personal preferences and wellbeing, may not be in accordance with their cultural context, and some may not even promote a dignified environment for an uninterrupted response. WASH interventions provided by the PRC are guided by the principle of dignity. Community and sub-group (e.g. women and girls, PWDs, older people) in the community are well represented in WASH intervention decision making and implementation. Providing just the adequate number of general WASH facilities/interventions becomes a band-aid solution if it would not address the multiple specific needs of different groups of people that also uphold their dignity when using them. WASH interventions become successful only when everyone's WASH needs are met, with dignity.

## ACCESS

Continued efforts don't stop at providing communities and households with WASH facilities. As defined by the IFRC, access for WASH means WASH facilities, services and information are designed and implemented in a way so that everyone can use them, understand them and benefit from them. Access to resources, public transportation and even water itself needs to be considered in all phases of WASH programmes. And even with these resolved, several factors can still pose struggles in accessing WASH interventions even if they are available, such as cultural stereotypes and norms around gender, age and disability. Language itself becomes a limiting factor in implementing hygiene promotions. These factors should be taken into consideration in every WASH programme implementation.

## PARTICIPATION



**Barangay Coordination Meeting**  
Brgy. Busa, Sabangan, Mt. Province

WASH programmes from humanitarian actors like the Philippine Red Cross have always been about the people and community, and how they can improve the current WASH situation at a given period in a given area. However, participation for WASH tackles beyond people actively using the WASH facilities provided to them, but also means giving all members of the community equal and meaningful involvement in decision making processes and activities that affect their lives, the people themselves are at the core of these WASH programmes. At the end of every WASH intervention as well, the sustainability and maintenance of the provided WASH facilities lies also at the policies established by the people in the community, so it's imperative that people participate in implementing WASH programmes every step of the way.

## SAFETY



**5-seater transitional toilets with PWD room, locks, ramps and railings**  
San Roque Evacuation Center, Malilipot, Albay.

Adamant to every humanitarian intervention, safety comes first hand. The same applies to WASH programmes. This is achieved by ensuring that WASH facilities and services promote a safe environment for usage, and that their design, location and operation mitigates any potential risks for harm or violence. In cases of WASH infrastructures, addition of door locks, proper lighting in the facilities as well as in the paths towards it, and suitable, comfortable spaces that lessens cases of overcrowding provide a layer of safety and give users peace of mind, and are examples of minimizing risks of harm or violence.



# At Risk Groups

and how the Philippine Red Cross responds to key PGI issues



## Older People

Older people are often neglected by society and have greater risk of harm and abuse. Setting a safe space for the vulnerable by providing appropriate critical WASH interventions. On November 6, 2020, Typhoon Rolly, internationally known as Typhoon Goni, heavily destroyed some areas in Bicol Region. PRC Albay-Legaspi Chapter responded to the challenge and reinforced the local government's WASH related interventions ensuring that all affected Bicolanos will not be left behind.



## Women and adolescent girls

When a magnitude 6.6 earthquake hit Mindanao last 2019, menstrual hygiene of women and girls was not in the top priority of needs. However, PRC Davao del Sur and North Cotabato Chapter took this opportunity to integrate menstrual hygiene management (MHM) sessions as part of the WASH activities they provided.



## Children

Schools are considered a child's second home, being reliant on their teachers or guardians for their WASH needs in school setting, children are often affected by water borne disease. The chapters of Quirino, Mt. Province, Ifugao and La Union recognized this gap. In 2015, Building Healthy and Resilient Schools (BHRS) project commenced in the northern Luzon chapters. The project focused mainly on hygiene promotion, disaster risk reduction, Red Cross Youth engagement and infrastructure investment activities on sixteen (16) participating schools in four (4) chapters to reduce children's vulnerabilities towards health and disaster risks.



## Persons with disabilities (PWD)

Persons with special needs are often stigmatized by the community and as such, they are not able to reach their full potential and engage in community led activities and decision making. An enabling environment creates a well managed space which reduces the person's risk of harm. On July 27, 2019, a magnitude 5.9 earthquake struck the island of Batanes. PRC Batanes Chapter responded to the disaster through provision of WASH interventions along with manpower and equipment reinforcement from Valenzuela, Batangas and Nueva Vizcaya chapters, ensuring that all affected Ivatan will not be left behind.





## How can we integrate PGI in the WASH Programme Cycle?

Safe and inclusive WASH responses require continuous monitoring and adjustment across the programme cycle to ensure dignity, access, participation and safety of everyone. See the following two examples:



The road to more inclusive WASH programmes can be a slippery slope. Although it's imperative to ensure that the needs of the smaller, marginalized groups of people are met, as in the two examples above, it can leave other target groups to feel frustrated and excluded from support. In other words, we have not addressed the very issue that we are trying to solve, and have only directed the problem somewhere else. Consequences such as misuse of WASH facilities, negative perceptions toward WASH activities, or withdrawal of their support on the WASH programme itself can happen. **Thus, it is imperative to facilitate proper discussions between different groups and to explain why certain people are receiving support and others have not.**

# Q Questions to ask yourself.

The RCRC Movement has also provided a set of questions that can serve as a reminder of key considerations when assessing, designing, implementing, evaluating and coordinating WASH programmes and activities. Bear in mind that these questions are not exhaustive nor a one-off checklist.

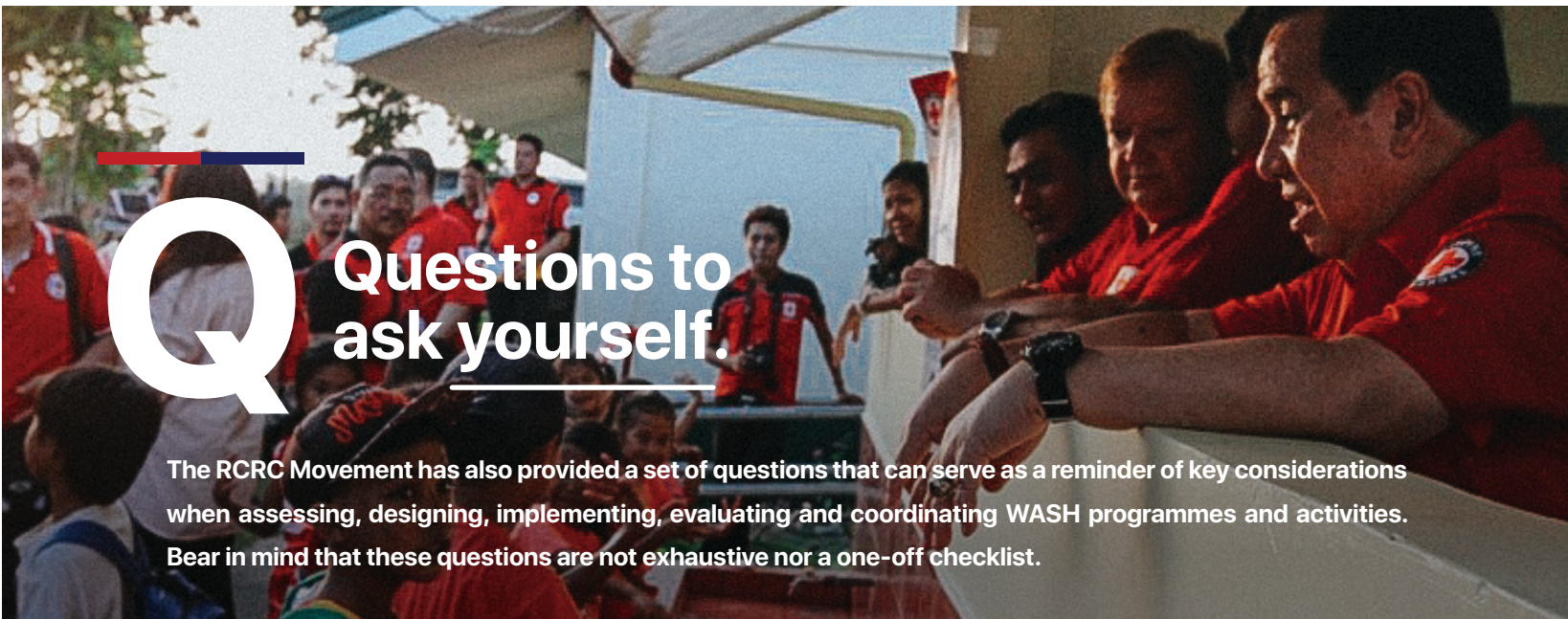
## ASSESSMENT

- Wherever possible, have you collected data disaggregated by sex, age and disability (SADD) and other context-specific variables?
- Have you used participatory data collection methods which promote participation of persons of all gender identities, disabilities, backgrounds and ages (including child-friendly approaches for children)?
- Which groups or individuals are at more risk of violence, stigma and marginalization and have less access to WASH facilities and services? Why?
- What are the roles, responsibilities, specific needs and priorities relating to water, sanitation and hygiene for women, men, girls, boys, people with disabilities etc.? Make sure you think about cultural and social traditions and perceptions, household decision-making, livelihoods such as agriculture and livestock raising etc.
- What are the barriers people face in accessing water points and sanitation and hygiene facilities, of all gender identities, ages, disabilities and backgrounds?
- What are the roles of women and girls, men and boys, people with disabilities etc. in collecting, handling, storing, and treating water?
- Who is involved in community decision-making for water and sanitation services, including technology selection and siting of facilities? How can everyone's voice be heard?
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## PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Has the WASH engineer collaborated with the hygiene team for the planning and design process?
- Have you adapted hygiene promotion messages and methods/channels for different ages, abilities, and genders? Do hygiene promotion methods promote dialogue?
- Have all groups had their voice heard during decision-making for operational and maintenance strategies of community water supplies and WASH facilities?
- Are communal latrines, bathing facilities and tap-stands or water distribution points usable by all, can everybody reach the taps and use the toilets (older persons, children, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities)?
- Can everyone, including people with disabilities, chronic illnesses and older people, access sufficient water for drinking, cooking and maintaining hygiene?
- Are ramps, handrails and dimensions of facilities suitable for people with mobility issues, or accompanying carers?
- Are WASH facilities secure and private (locks on the inside and lighting in and around), both by day and night?
- Do WASH facilities provide sufficient space, privacy and facilities for managing menstrual hygiene including washing, drying and disposal of hygiene items?
- Are the water and sanitation facilities and kits (or items) designed and provided culturally appropriate and based on user preferences?
- Are you coordinating with Protection Gender and Inclusion (PGI) and Relief teams regarding design and distribution of hygiene kits, menstrual hygiene management kits and dignity kits?





## Questions to ask yourself.

The RCRC Movement has also provided a set of questions that can serve as a reminder of key considerations when assessing, designing, implementing, evaluating and coordinating WASH programmes and activities. Bear in mind that these questions are not exhaustive nor a one-off checklist.

### IMPLEMENTATION

- Does the WASH team have balanced/fair representation of persons of all gender identities, ages, disabilities and backgrounds?
- Is an open, positive attitude to diversity and inclusion used as a criteria when recruiting WASH staff and volunteers?
- Have you recruited hygiene promotion volunteers from different backgrounds, including different ethnic groups and persons with disabilities? Can you actively recruit more diverse volunteers?
- Have WASH staff and volunteers been trained on PGI issues?
- Have hygiene promotion volunteers received training on discussing sensitive topics, how to communicate with people with disabilities (including their caregivers) and children?
- Have you linked with the PGI and/or Gender-based Violence (GBV) team so that WASH staff and volunteers know where to refer people in case of a disclosure of violence or abuse?
- Have you explored ways to partner with local or international specialist organizations (for example which work with children, or people with disabilities)?
- Do community WASH committees have diverse and meaningful representation?
- Are the government, partners and other stakeholders aware of WASH related PGI issues? If not, how will you advocate and encourage them to ensure that PGI is mainstreamed in their work?



### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Are WASH facilities and distributed items being used as planned by different groups and individuals?
- Are hygiene messages being understood and acted upon by women, girls, men, boys, people with disabilities, older people etc.? If behaviour change is not seen in some groups, why not, and what barriers are they facing?
- Are you collecting feedback in a participatory way from people of all gender identities, ages, disabilities and backgrounds throughout WASH programming (before, during and after implementation)?
- Is the complaint and feedback system accessible for persons of all gender identities, ages, disabilities and backgrounds? Have you coordinated with the Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) team and established responsibility for following up?
- Are WASH related facilities, distributions or services having any unforeseen impact or consequences (positive or negative) on any groups?



# Learning from Chapters:

PRC CHAPTER STORIES OF SUCCESS

## Empowering children through leadership and participation in WASH in School programming



Learners actively participate during hygiene promotion sessions in Tubod Elementary School, Iligan City, Lanao del Norte

Integrated child development programming through WASH and Red Cross Youth were implemented in five (5) chapters in Mindanao; namely Bukidnon, Compostela Valley, Davao del Sur, Iligan City and Zamboanga City. The project aimed to improve the health, gender equality and well-being of a minimum of 2,500 children in 8 schools across the region.

Formation of Red Cross Youth in every school is an avenue for learners to lead and instill humanitarian core values at a young age. Through the guidance

of the school head, parents, teachers and chapters, roles were carefully identified to establish sub-groups which will further enhance their leadership skills. Aside from the capacity building provided, access to safe, secured and appropriately designed WASH facilities were constructed to better fit the needs of school children.

A sub-group of learners with specialized skills in implementing WASH was formed; the WASH Committee facilitates participatory hygiene promotion sessions, and are engaged in the operations and maintenance of WASH facilities in their schools. As a result, learners gradually exhibit confidence, gain self esteem and accountability in WASH programming

## Improving quality of life through sustainable access to safe and clean water



Aeta, an indigenous group in Central Luzon displaced during the volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo 25 years ago. More than 20 years of unresolved and indefinite plans on the groups' access to safe and clean water.

Through PRC Bataan Chapter and the funding support of IFRC, the chapter was able to implement Rural WASH. Improvement of WASH facilities were completed to ensure that the indigenous group gains access to safe and clean water. Prior

to the constructed facility, the community collects water for domestic and drinking purposes from a nearby river. Issues on water-borne diseases, safety and access had to be addressed. Community assemblies ascertain that group participation and inclusiveness were reflected in the infrastructure design down to its maintenance.

Likewise, to ensure that the community's access to infrastructure is complemented, the PRC Bataan Chapter implemented a series of hygiene promotion and awareness campaigns. The community-led Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) sessions supported the community's goal to change the hygiene behavior of the individuals wherein good their daily practices are inter-related with their health and well-being.

## Creating access to WASH assets and facilities through setting up strategically stationed WASH Hubs



According to the World Risk Report 2018, the Philippines ranked 3rd among countries with highest risk of disaster worldwide. With the country's 7,107 islands, responding to disasters pose a challenge if communities and regions are not capacitated. The Philippine Red Cross WASH Unit prepositions its WASH assets and capacitates chapters and partners with the local stakeholders and WASH actors to enable remote communities to immediately respond and gain access to WASH services in times of emergency.

The Philippine Red Cross has set up seventeen (17) regional WASH Hubs nationwide. These WASH Hubs

are located in Pangasinan, Nueva Vizcaya, Subic, Mandaluyong in Metro Manila, Batangas, Albay, Passi City, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Mandaue City, Cebu, Leyte, Zamboanga City, Iligan, Cagayan De Oro, Agusan Del Sur, and General Santos. Hubs are equipped with trained WASH staff and volunteers, water treatment units, hygiene promotion materials, and a number of hubs maintain water tankers to respond to WASH related emergencies. They are also utilized as training grounds during non-emergency times for preparedness courses of staff and volunteers. WASH hubs are strategically located in regions that can reach all barangays and municipalities of the country.

## Innovating WASH strategies in reaching individuals in times of pandemic



May 28 marks the annual celebration of Menstrual Hygiene Day, a global WASH event raising awareness on women and girls hygiene management during their menstruation. Due to the pandemic, the Philippine Red Cross has been celebrating this event for the past 2 years in a restricted or controlled environment. The PRC Cebu Chapter has stepped up and initiated strategies to reach out not only to women and girls but also targeted boys and men in order to raise awareness and stop period stigma. Creative social media postings were shown in the official page of the chapter and an estimated 180,000 individuals were reached.

The pandemic has shown the world that everybody is vulnerable, causing the community's most disadvantage at greater risk to have lesser access to basic human needs. Through WASH awareness campaigns, we are putting the spotlight on these basic needs that are often neglected and we put decision makers as well in the spotlight to take action and create policies and guidelines to ensure that no one is left behind.





The WASH Unit of Philippine Red Cross is an office that provides services associated with addressing the need for access to clean and safe water, sanitation facilities and hygiene education during non-emergency and emergency response. The unit is subdivided into three units.

● **Sustainable Development and Preparedness Programs**

- Urban WASH Programming
- Rural WASH Programming
- WASH in Schools
- Integrated WASH Programming
- Training and Skills Enhancement

● **Response and Recovery Program**

- WASH in Emergency Response
- Water Production and Distribution
- Distribution of WASH related kits and supplies
- Hygiene Promotion in Emergencies
- WASH Recovery

● **WASH Infrastructure Program**

- Installation/construction of WASH facilities
- Institutional Capacity Enhancement
- Operations and Maintenance of WASH facilities



**FORMULA**

**IN ACTION**

**VOLUNTEERS + LOGISTICS + INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY = A RED CROSS THAT IS  
ALWAYS FIRST ALWAYS READY ALWAYS THERE**



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