



How can you support people in living healthy lives? One way is to ensure that they have access to enough clean water. Another is to support them in building proper sanitary facilities. Or to increase awareness of good hygiene practices.

The Dutch WASH Alliance aims to realise and embed these conditions around the world. To ensure that it is done in the most sustainable manner possible, the Dutch WASH Alliance follows a unique strategy called 'FIETS'. This factsheet explains part of the strategy: the focus on social sustainability.

The Dutch WASH Alliance

... is active in the fields of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Africa and Asia. We always work in partnership with local parties: from local community and governments to businesses and civil society organisations. The solutions vary from hygiene awareness campaigns to business support programmes and from training courses for WASH committees to the construction of water systems or sanitary facilities. Our work is always focused on achieving sustainable results. In order to realise these goals, we follow the 'FIETS' strategy. 'FIETS' stands for Financial, Institutional, Environmental, Technological and Social sustainability of WASH interventions.

Social sustainability challenges

WASH projects are socially sustainable when all people - disregarding gender, age, economic status, social position, religion or culture - are able to access WASH services and are willing to use them for an unlimited period of time. The Dutch WASH Alliance aims to create access to WASH for everyone, forever. *Everyone* means including the vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded groups, but not focussing on these groups only. To realise 100% WASH, less marginalised groups need to be addressed and involved as well. *Forever* refers to the sustainability of WASH services on the long term. The guiding principle here is that people themselves need to demand WASH services. Only then, will the WASH products and services be used for an unlimited period of time.

To realise this, the social sustainable interventions of the Dutch WASH Alliance are demand-driven, inclusive (equity), gender equal, culturally sensitive and needs-based. This way, we can contribute to the development of appropriate social conditions for the current society to create healthy and liveable communities in the future.

Social sustainability of WASH services is reached when the interventions are based on:

1. **Real demand:** WASH services will only be embedded in the society if there is a real demand for the services, leading to a feeling of ownership.
2. **Full inclusiveness for all groups in society:** this will ensure that all groups will benefit and advance in development.
3. **Local and cultural sensitivity:** WASH services and strategies that are in line with local and cultural practices and behaviours are more easily understood and adopted by the local community.
4. **Most urgent needs:** focus on solving WASH problems in societies, groups and geographical areas where relatively higher need exist compared to others.

Read more on how we bring these principles into action in our work on the next page.



1 Rights-based approach

Our rights-based approach to WASH is about improving wider systems of governance, which determine progress towards the vision of a world where everyone has access to safe water and sanitation. It implies a change in the power dynamics between those without access and the duty bearers. It aims to bring about sustainable and long term structural change in policies, procedures and laws, as well as changes in attitudes and behaviours. The guiding principle here is to understand the root causes of why people lack access to basic water and sanitation not simply in terms of needs, but in terms of society's obligation to respond to the rights of individuals. We ask ourselves questions such as, who are rights-holders and duty-bearers? How do we include vulnerable, disadvantaged or excluded groups? How can we empower these groups to claim their rights to WASH? This way, we make sure our work is based on real needs and real demand.

2 Gender mainstreaming approach

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the programme so that women and men benefit equally. Therefore, we integrate a gender perspective into all phases

of programme management, recognising that women and men have different needs and that development activities can affect them differently. At the same time, we take into account that women and marginalised people tend to have more limited access to information and more limited opportunities to participate, unless specific measures are taken to address these limitations. This approach helps us to reach full inclusiveness for all groups in society.

3 Social marketing approach

Social marketing means applying lessons from commercial advertising to the promotion of social goals. It is a systematic approach to influencing people's behaviours and to create demand. Social marketing is not merely motivated by profit but is concerned with achieving a social objective. It goes beyond marketing alone as it is also concerned with how the product is used after the sale has been made. The aim is for example not only to sell latrines, but to encourage their correct hygienic use and maintenance. We also make sure the WASH products and services take into account local and cultural practices and behaviours.

Community Led Total Sanitation in Ethiopia

To create access to WASH "for everyone, forever" means that people themselves need to demand WASH services. A valuable demand creation tool often used by the Dutch WASH Alliance is Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS). CLTS is a sanitation promotion based on stimulating a collective sense of disgust and shame among community members as they confront the crude facts about mass open defecation and its negative impacts on the entire community. The basic assumption is that no human being can stay unmoved once they have learned that they are ingesting other people's faeces. Generally communities react strongly and immediately try to find ways to change this.

In Koka village, in the Afar region in Ethiopia, the CLTS programme was successfully implemented. Together with the local government, we identified sanitation champions among the villagers by involving health extension workers and those who already have a latrine. With these sanitation champions, we executed a transect walk through the village to find out where the villagers defecate and fetch water. After the walk, we asked the community to drink a glass of water in which we put some faeces from the open defecation area. Of course they wouldn't. This was the moment for us to indicate that they actually do the same by defecating in the open and allowing the faeces to mix with their drinking water. Once the community was convinced that they should not continue their practice of open defecation, we suggested the community to start building and using latrines. Now all villagers have built a latrine that they actually use, Koka village can officially declared Open Defecation Free (ODF).