



Food and Agriculture Organization
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Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition • FSN Forum

TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSIONS

Call for submissions No. 202 • 09.10.2024 – 27.11.2024

➤ <https://www.fao.org/fsnforum/call-submissions/community-engagement-rural-transformation-and-gender-equality>

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

Community engagement for inclusive rural transformation and gender equality

The objective of this call for submissions is to collect good practices, experiences, and lessons learnt on the use of community engagement for inclusive rural transformation and gender equality. The initiative, organized by the [Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division \(ESP\)](#), seeks to gather insights from a diverse range of contributors, both within FAO and from external stakeholders. Its goal is to share knowledge, foster learning, and guide the scaling up of community engagement and community-led collective action to leave no one behind. The call builds on FAO's past efforts in this area, such as the [Community Engagement Days](#) series of webinars.¹



The call for submissions is open until 27 November 2024.

How to take part in this call for submissions:

To take part in this Call for submissions, please [register](#) to the FSN Forum, if you are not yet a member, or “sign in” to your account. Please review the **topic note** to understand the criteria we are considering for this call. If you wish to learn more about community engagement, you may refer to the [background document](#). Once you have completed this submission template, upload it in the box “Post your contribution” on the [call webpage](#), or, alternatively, send it to fsn-moderator@fao.org.

Please keep the length of submissions limited to **1,500 words** and feel also free to attach relevant supporting materials.

¹ The call for submissions is directly aligned with the thematic components of collective action within FAO's Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), specifically Better Life 1 (Gender Equality and Rural Women's Empowerment), Better Life 2 (Inclusive Rural Transformation) and Better Life 3 (Agriculture and Food Emergencies).

Template for submissions

Contact person	Name: Jantien Bult and Mia McKenzie Organization/Unit: Plan International Netherlands Country: Netherlands Email address: jantien.bult@planinternational.nl ; mia.mckenzie@planinternational.nl
Name/title of the good practice	Gender and WASH Monitoring Tool (GWMT)
Where is the good practice taking place? (Multiple selection allowed)	'promising' practice <input type="checkbox"/> Europe and Central Asia <input type="checkbox"/> Latin America and the Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> North Africa and Near East <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sub-Saharan Africa <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Asia and the Pacific <input type="checkbox"/> North America <input type="checkbox"/> Global
Affiliation	<input type="checkbox"/> Farmer and producer organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Union <input type="checkbox"/> Informal community-based, farmer-based or self-help group <input type="checkbox"/> Research and academia <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Local/traditional authorities <input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Civil Society Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Intergovernmental Organization (e.g. UN system, World Bank) <input type="checkbox"/> Resource Partner/Donor <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
In which sector(s) and context (s) have you used this community engagement good practice? (Multiple selections allowed)	<input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health and Sanitation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food production in agrifood systems (please also tick the sub-categories) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Crop cultivation</i>

	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fisheries and aquaculture production</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Livestock</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Forestry</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Agroforestry</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Horticulture</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Apiculture (beekeeping)</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Agroecology and sustainable farming practices</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Soil and water management</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other: _____</i> </p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Post-production in agrifood systems (please also tick the sub-categories) </p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Processing and value addition</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Marketing and retailing</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Transporting</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Food loss and waste</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Packaging</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Storage</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Distribution</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other _____</i> </p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Equality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Action <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship and Governance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Protection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian and protracted crisis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conflict resolution, peace and resilience <input type="checkbox"/> Digital innovation <input type="checkbox"/> Other sector (please specify) _____ </p>
<p>Who are the financial partners supporting this good practice, if applicable?</p>	<p>Among others: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Inclusive Green Growth Department; Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) in Ethiopia</p>
<p>1. In a few sentences, summarize your community engagement good practice.</p> <p>Plan has taken the opportunity to develop an explicit focus on monitoring changes in gender relations in WASH. The Gender and WASH Monitoring Tool (GWMT) enables local project staff and</p>	

Government partners to explore and monitor gender relations with communities in implementation of WASH related initiatives. In practical terms, the tool comprises a series of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) activities, an instruction manual, and preparatory trainings.

The GWMT is innovative because it addresses gaps in measuring gender equality in WASH projects by focusing on strategic changes in gender relations. Developed in 2014 by Plan International Australia and updated from 2017 to 2023 in Nepal, Indonesia, Uganda, Zambia, and Ethiopia, the GWMT supported staff, partners, and communities explore and monitor gender relations through participatory activities and training. The tool raises awareness about gender roles and relationships in household and community WASH activities. It promotes gender equality by providing opportunities for women and men to discuss gender relations and set their own agenda for change. Additionally, it develops practical skills for gender monitoring and collects sex-disaggregated information about strategic gender changes.

The GWMT seeks to address the following dual aims:

- 1) In communities: — To explore and raise awareness about gender roles and relationships in household and community WASH activities. — To promote (aspirations for) gender equality by providing opportunities for women and men to discuss gender relations and to set their own agenda for change.
- 2) For WASH staff and partners — To develop their understanding of, and skills in, gender analysis and the role that WASH can play in promoting gender equality. — To develop practical skills for gender monitoring (including monitoring changes in gender relations). — To collect sex-disaggregated information about strategic gender changes, assess changes over time and utilise information to improve practice.

The GWMT is not designed or intended to be a stand-alone tool for gender monitoring in WASH. Rather, it should be seen as one tool that can contribute to an intervention's overall approach to addressing and monitoring changes in gender relations. Plan International considers the GWMT as a *promising* practice until full data sets can be collated and analyzed. Due to the tailored application of the tool in different settings, Plan International is still verifying data and drawing proven conclusions about the impact of the tool.

2. What **problem(s) or **challenge(s)** does your good practice aim to address through community engagement?**

WASH projects have traditionally focused on seeking **access** to WASH as a reflection of improved gender relations (e.g. **number** of women on WASH committees), and not given sufficient attention to contributing to strategic impacts on gender relations (e.g. extent to which women have **decision making power** on WASH committees). WASH projects should focus on seeking both practical and strategic impacts on gender equality and inclusion. The need for the GWMT tool arose as Plan International staff recognised the gaps and challenges of measuring progress towards gender equality in WASH projects. It was found that while WASH monitoring identified a range of practical changes for women and men in households and communities, the existing project monitoring approach was not sufficient to monitor strategic impact in gender relations (i.e. those that relate to power relations between women men). Discussions with other WASH development actors highlighted that this was a shared challenge.

3. Describe your **good practice in more detail. Include the main **guiding principles**, the **desired changes or outcomes** you aim to achieve (*Theory of Change*), and the **key phases of implementation**.**

In the places where WASH projects are implemented, Plan International makes underlying gender inequality a topic of discussion. The GWMT allows us to measure the extent to which gender relations change during the implementation of our WASH projects. In this way, we learn more and more about the role that WASH can play in promoting gender equality.

The GWMT comprises a series of 8 steps, which are grounded within the four gender principles and participatory monitoring approaches. Preparation for the meeting is outlined in Step 1, although this is done prior to the community meeting. Steps 1–6 include PRA activities and discussions within a community setting. Steps 7 and 8 are undertaken post the community meeting. These steps are related to analysis of the data and integration with the WASH Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system for monitoring and planning purposes.

- Principle 1: Facilitate participation and inclusion Focus on ways of working that enable women, men, girls and boys to be actively involved in improving their water, sanitation and hygiene situation.
- Principle 2: Focus on how decisions are made Use decision-making processes that enable women's and men's active involvement, within the project and activities.
- Principle 3: See and value differences See, understand and value the different work, skills and concerns of women and men related to water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Principle 4: Create opportunities Provide space and support for women and men to experience and share new roles and responsibilities.

The GWMT is designed to generate data for four key strategic gender indicators based around the principles:

- Indicator 1: Level of shared WASH workload in the household
- Indicator 2: Level of participation in WASH activities in the community
- Indicator 3: Level of women's leadership in the community around WASH
- Indicator 4: Level of shared WASH decision making in the household

- 4. Who are the **key actors and stakeholders** involved in the design and implementation of the good practice, and what are their respective roles? *Consider local partners, government, local authorities, community radios, civil society, research, the private sector, etc.***

The GWMT and associated training is designed for anyone who is implementing a WASH program. In particular WASH practitioners, program managers, government workers, local civil society organisation partners, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) specialists, and gender advisors. In practice, the GWMT requires the following staff:

1. Lead Facilitator (preferably female and/or diverse SOGIESC and/or person with a disability is represented as a facilitator or Co-Facilitators)
2. MEL Coordinator
3. WASH Project Manager

4. Co-Facilitators

The GWMT provides the space for community participants to reflect on gender relations within their separate single sex groups that are further disaggregated by age (known as sub-groups). Ages for each sub-group is specific to individual contexts:

- a. Young women
- b. Young men
- c. Middle aged women
- d. Middle aged men
- e. Older women
- f. Older men

5. How does your intervention ensure **inclusivity and equal and meaningful participation** within the **community**?

Describe how your intervention includes and engages different groups within the community. Consider aspects like gender, age, ethnicity, disability status, livelihoods, and other specific conditions (e.g., people living in prolonged crisis, migrants, refugees). Explain how your intervention engages diverse segments of the rural community. Highlight the specific actions or strategies you use to reach these groups. If applicable, mention if your intervention uses specific approaches such as gender-responsive, gender-transformative, intersectionality, or other methods to ensure inclusivity and gender equality.

As indicated under 4), the GWMT provides the space for community participants to reflect on gender relations within their separate single sex groups that are further disaggregated by age (known as sub-groups). The aim is to pro-actively work towards diverse community groups and providing a safe space for women, men, boys and girls in all their diversity to reflect on gender relations, Plan International uses a gender transformative and intersectionality approach in all its programmes.

1. By using community engagement, what **results and impacts** have your good practice achieved?
Please provide specific examples and evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of your intervention, focusing on both qualitative and quantitative outcomes related to livelihoods and well-being improvements.

The GWMT produces different results and impacts depending on the context to which it is applied. Data is available from at least five countries of implementation, however this has not been compiled into a conclusive data set. For this reason, Plan International considers the tool to be a 'promising practice' until an analysis of the data is made.

Community involvement has boosted female WASH entrepreneurs and increased men's participation in household chores. Gender-responsive budgeting, menstrual health orientation, and pro-poor mechanisms have been emphasized. Regular reviews of action plans, along with training and mentoring, have built women's leadership. Monitoring progress and inclusive facility designs have fostered positive change, while engaging men and boys has furthered community support. Collaboration with authorities has enhanced transformative outcomes. During the WASH SDG programme, this approach proved successful in contributing to sustained changes at the household and community level. For example, in Indonesia, the level of empowered participation of women and girls in WASH decision-making increased

6. Among these results, has the good practice led to improvements in terms of **gender equality, women's empowerment, and/or social inclusion**?

Describe the **behavioral changes** in terms of gender that the good practice promotes, emphasizing agency, leadership, and participation in local governance. Include efforts to challenge discriminatory norms and unequal power dynamics. Highlight also how the intervention has supported the well-being (including psychological resilience) of marginalized groups and enhanced their inclusion and participation in decision-making processes.

The GWM develops practical skills for gender monitoring and collects sex-disaggregated information about strategic gender changes. At the same time it is besides a monitoring tool also a triggering tool. Through the community dialogues in which information is collected, an awareness raising process about social and gender norms is started which is guided by the trained facilitators. During the WASH SDG programme, this approach proved successful in contributing to sustained changes at the household and community level. For example, in Indonesia, the level of empowered participation of women and girls in WASH decision-making increased from 29.9% to 63.4%. The innovation lies in its capacity-building aspect, where it not only raises awareness but also equips local staff and partners with the skills needed to monitor and promote gender equality effectively.

7. What key challenges did you encounter while implementing the community engagement activities, and how did you address them?

Include any resistance from communities, pushback, or issues related to unequal power dynamics, if applicable.

- Changing deeply ingrained beliefs cannot change overnight, and the impact of the tool may not be validated during the implementation period;
- Youth participants may feel uncomfortable speaking out in the presence of their elders when subgroups are divided into gender segregated groups and must be managed during participatory discussions to gather accurate data;
- The tool is time-consuming and requires effective facilitation and thorough notetaking;
- Not all gender transformative components have been tested and proven. For example, disability has not been adequately addressed in the GWMT Manual to date, although it has been incorporated in some countries like Indonesia
- The GWMT produces different results and impacts depending on the context to which it is applied. Data is available from at least five countries of implementation, however this has not been compiled into a conclusive data set. The different impact and scope of application of the project poses a PMEL challenge for drawing conclusions about the impact of the tool.

8. What are the key lesson learned from your community engagement good practice?

- The GWMT has been designed for community members (divided by age and gender) to share challenges, priorities, and preferences specific within/amongst their age group, rather than toward those with power. However, a combination of mixing and involving people with power at certain points or phases of the tool's implementation could be useful as well to enable behavior change at community level.
- The GWMT can act as a community participation tool but also as a data collection tool to help determine community factors affecting or influencing specific characteristics of interest in a project/topic;

- Strong facilitators are critical to the tool's success and impact. Facilitators must possess probing/prompting skills to lead effective discussions that accurately extract relevant information, without doing harm. Data must be documented by a capable note-taker who also is aware of personal bias and misinterpretations.
- Engaging the community as partners in analyzing findings from each monitoring trail is crucial for integrating these insights into the planning of interventions, and serves to reduce the risks of misinterpretation/misrepresentation as the community members will validate the findings.

9. Has this practice been **replicated** in the same context or in different contexts? *What are the required conditions to replicate and adapt the practice in another context/geographical area?*

Between 2017 – 2024, the GWMT was applied to the WASH SDG programme (Funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Throughout this programme, the tool monitored changes in gender relations in programmes in five countries (Nepal, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Uganda and Zambia) on four indicators:

2. WASH workload distribution in households;
3. Influence level in household decision making;
4. Participation levels in WASH matters in the community; and
5. The level of female leadership in the community.

Plan International gathered qualitative evidence of the impact of the GWMT within the WASH SDG programme which indicated positive changes to the equal distribution of household duties between male:female couples and positive shifts in attitudes to gender.

Between 2020-until date, the GWMT was adapted to and applied in the WASH-Nutrition Healthy Village Programme in Ethiopia. It continues to be used by Plan International Nepal and Plan International Indonesia across various WASH related projects and initiatives.

Each time that the GWMT will be applied, the tool needs to be contextualised to the programme goals and to the local context and people need to be trained to apply the tool. For this reason, the impact of the tool differs per context.

10. How **sustainable** are the results achieved by this good practice?

Describe the key elements that need to be in place to make the initiative sustainable, including enabling environment (legal and policy frameworks and institutions), local ownership, accountability, etc.

As the GWMT is used in overall gender transformative programmes the GWMT contributes to the overall sustained changes we see. Key elements of such programmes are to involve people at different levels: the community, local leaders, government workers at local and district levels. Creating ownership and local leadership through community engagement and creating an enabling environment by working on gender transformative policy frameworks and institutions are key elements for sustainability.

In the end the WASH results in a programme will be more sustainable when they are implemented in a gender transformative way. And vice versa: more equal gender relations can be easier reached when using WASH as an entry point to discuss these gender relations.

11. Based on the conversations FAO held during the Community Engagement days, a definition of community engagement for empowerment was proposed:

“Community engagement for empowerment and community-led collective action can be defined as an inclusive and participatory process that enables community members to become active agents of change in decisions affecting their lives, health, and environment. This process develops their capacity to achieve sustainable outcomes for improved rural livelihoods. Embracing a rights-based approach, it prioritizes the agency and participation of all community members, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, caste, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, migration status, or ability/disability. Indeed, inclusive approaches recognize the complexities of overlapping marginalization and discrimination that can exclude different community members from decision-making processes and implement strategies to foster their participation, agency and empowerment.”

We invite you to contribute to this definition. What would you add or change? Please share your thoughts, suggestions, and any additional elements you believe are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of community engagement approaches aimed at community-led collective action for inclusive rural transformation, people’s empowerment and gender equality.

In addition to: *implement strategies to foster their participation, agency and empowerment, (last sentence definition of FAO); strategies for dominant groups to embrace positive attitudes and to promote gender equality and social inclusion.*

12. Based on your experience, what **gaps or areas for improvement** still need to be addressed in the field of community engagement?

- Do no harm principles and risk mitigation measures are important to include when working with the dominant and non-dominant groups in a community.
- Community-led data collection and data analysis. Capacity building for facilitators and note takers in terms of technical skills, but also in terms of soft skills such as personal bias awareness

6. What do you think is **FAO's role in the field of community engagement**? How can FAO support and enhance interventions like yours, if applicable? *Consider aspects such as policy advocacy, capacity development, funding, technical assistance, knowledge production and sharing, and fostering partnerships.*

Plan International would benefit from networking opportunities with (technical) climate resilient agriculture experts in Africa, especially those with experience in changing/adaptive environments. Combined with Plan International’s gender transformative expertise, such technical advice would further strengthen our interventions and may attract attention from donors toward complex settings, flexible funding and adaptive responses.

<p>Link(s) to specific references about your good practice (e.g. reports, communication products, videos, articles)</p>	<p><i>Please include attachment(s) or add here link(s) to documents/videos/podcasts/other with specific references.</i></p> <p>Factsheet: https://www.plan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/gender-and-wash-monitoring-tool-2018.pdf</p> <p>Trainer's Guide: https://www.plan.org.au/publications/gender-and-wash-monitoring-tool-gwmt-preparatory-trainers-guide/</p> <p>Video from implementation in Indonesia: Gender and WASH Monitoring Tools Plan Indonesia</p>
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