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# Human Rights and Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan

Sustainable WASH for all

March 2023

Cover Picture: Risky ladder in Kanaka Sundari Rural Municipality-Jumla - Raju Tirwa, July 2022

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## List of abbreviations

AWP	Annual Work Plan
BC	Behavior Change
CBM	Christian Blind Mission (Disability advocacy organization)
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGD	Child, Gender and Disability (friendly)
COWASH	the Community-led Accelerated WASH Project
CRPD	(UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DAG	Disadvantaged group
DFID	UK Department for International Development. [Replaced by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)]
DI	Disability Inclusion
DMM	Dignified Menstruation Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DWSSM	Department of Water Supply and Sewerage Management
ECOSOC	(UN) Economic and Social Council
EU	the European Union
FWSSM	Federal Water Supply and Sewerage Management
FWSSMP	Federal Water Supply and Sewerage Management Project
GAP	(EU) Gender Action Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GE	Gender Equality
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting

HDI	Human Development Index
HH	Household
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Rights
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
HRC	Human Rights Council
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
INSEC	Informal Sector Service Center
IV	Four
JSR	Joint Sector Review
KADMM	Karnali Alliance for Dignified Menstruation Management
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
LISA	Local Government Institutional Capacity Self-Assessment
LMBIS	Line Ministry Budget Information System
MC	Municipal Council
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MEUR	Million Euros
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MHH	Menstrual Health and Hygiene
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
MIS	Monitoring Information System
MUS	Multiple Use (water) System
MWF	Municipal WASH Fund
NDRRMA	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority
NFDN	National Federation of Disabled Nepal
NIRAS	Engineering Consulting Company
NWASH	Nepal WASH monitoring information system
OA	Outcome Area

OPD	Organization for Persons with Disabilities
PCO	Project Coordination Office
PSU	Project Support Unit
PwD	Person with Disability
RVWRMP	Rural Village Water Resources Management Project
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDP	Sector Development Plan
SUSWA	Sustainable WASH for All
TNA	Training Need Assessment
UN	the United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	the United States Agency for International Development
VMW	Village Maintenance Worker
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WS	Water Supply
WSP	Water Safety Plan
WUSC	Water Users and Sanitation Committee

# 1. Introduction

Sustainable WASH for All (SUSWA) is a project funded by the Government of Nepal (GoN), Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland (MFA) and the European Union implemented in selected municipalities of Karnali Province in Western Nepal. The project focuses mainly on supporting rural Water supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services by improving the functionality and safety of existing drinking water systems. The overall approach of the project is to support the planning and implementation cycle of the local government at different levels, by providing technical assistance, capacity building and investment funds. The project contributes to the fulfillment of the rights to water and sanitation for the people in the Karnali Province by supporting the access, the quality and the safety of the services (human rights criteria) as well as the capacity of the local duty-bearers to fulfill their human rights obligations in planning and budgeting for or providing these services.

The SUSWA project implements a human rights-based approach to development (HRBA) and includes the cross-cutting objectives of gender equality and non-discrimination (as well as climate resilience and low emission development) and has specific objectives and targets related to gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI).

This document outlines the strategy, consisting of the theoretical framework or rationale and the scope and approach of SUSWA in following a HRBA and ensuring GEDSI is integrated in the project, as well as an Action Plan, with specific activities to follow for reaching Human Rights (HR) & GEDSI related outputs and ensuring HR & GEDSI is mainstreamed in project activities, organized by Project Outcome Area and overall activities.

The objective of the HR & GEDSI Strategy Action Plan for the SUSWA project is to clarify the human right, gender and disability inclusion elements and to identify concrete action points to strengthen the inclusion and non-discriminatory practices of the project. The aim is to contribute to building the capacity of the duty-bearers to fulfill human rights and of rights-holders to claim their rights and the creation of an enabling environment with inclusive practices and processes in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector in the implementing municipalities.

Concretely, the goal is to increase access to qualitative WASH services in particular for women, persons with disabilities and members of groups in vulnerable positions as well as to ensure their rights and needs are being attended to by the local governments and that they have opportunities to participate in decision-making processes in issues that concern them. The project supports fighting against discrimination in Nepal taking into account discrimination on multiple and intersecting grounds (such as gender, ethnicity, disability, age and other grounds). The project also takes note of and constantly assesses the intersectionality of disability inclusion, climate resilience and gender equality.

***A description of the definitions of Human Rights-related terms used in this document is presented in Annex 1.***

***More details on the SUSWA Project and Karnali Province are provided in Annex 2.***

## 2. The HR & GEDSI Context in Nepal

The development indicators of Nepal have improved over the last two decades with declining overall poverty levels. Further, there is a lot of political and social movement for HR & GEDSI policy goals. At the legislative and policy level, Nepal has made commitments to advancing gender equality and eliminating all forms of

discrimination, including those based on caste, ethnicity, disability status, region, sexual orientation, and gender identity. In this context, Nepal has made significant progress particularly in reaching gender parity. Nepal has ratified as many as 23 international human rights instruments that include international conventions and covenants on women, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities (PWD), and against racial discrimination. The Constitution of Nepal 2015 is committed to ending discrimination related to class, caste, region, language, religion, and gender. The Constitution guarantees equal rights, social justice and freedom from discrimination for all citizens. The GoN further reinforced GESI commitments through the 15th Plan (2019/20 – 2023/24) which includes quotas for disadvantaged groups in all civil service positions and committees of all levels, and through Gender Equality Policy 2021 ensuring meaningful participation in all parts of society and elimination of gender-based violence and harmful practices. Disability inclusion as a focus is also on the rise in federal programme planning, with e.g., National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) planning to introduce the concept of GEDSI (instead of GESI) in national DRR policies in order to include marginalized groups, especially PwDs, in DRR and in government programmes more widely. The social movement, e.g., on social media, against harmful practices of chhaupadi or discrimination of widows, has also grown in recent years.

***More details of Nepali context of HR & GEDSI are presented in [Annex 3](#).***

### 3. SUSWA Strategy

From a GEDSI perspective, SUSWA's main goal is inclusive communities with equal rights to WASH for all, made possible by strengthened local government that has mainstreamed GEDSI in laws, policies, budgets, plans and process, and intervenes with targeted action as required to ensure equitable participation and access for all.

- The focus on equal improved access requires a focus on equitable participation in planning, design, implementation and monitoring to truly be inclusive.
- For access and participation, particular attention is paid to women and girls and persons with disabilities, as well as the intersectionality of e.g., gender, disability, caste/ethnicity or other grounds of discrimination.
- Further, it is recognized that soft and hard components of technical facilitation are both needed to ensure WASH rights. For example, for accessible WASH facilities and Dignified Menstruation management, social norm change is required in combination with technical solutions and an enabling environment created by changes in laws, policies, budgets and participatory planning.

In line with MFA's recommendation for cross-cutting objectives, SUSWA's GEDSI approach is twofold:

1. Mainstreaming GEDSI in all project plans and activities to ensure a GEDSI perspective in WASH implementation and equal access and participation. For example, ensuring that PwDs have participation in decision-making and access to their basic needs in all interventions on an equal basis with others in the community. Mainstreaming GEDSI in the municipalities is a strategy for SUSWA to support the overarching goal of reaching gender equality and non-discrimination, which in turn contributes to the strengthening of societies as a whole.
2. Targeting activities for dignified menstruation management (DMM) and disability inclusion (DI) to address specific forms of harmful social norms, stigma and barriers that prevent women and girls, PwDs and Dalits from accessing WASH and DMM on an equal basis with others. Targeting specific groups, such as elderly, children, pregnant women, Dalits and PwDs and intersections of these, in the provision of WASH facilities and services, means addressing the specific needs in order to ensure WASH is truly accessible for all, while empowering them and ensuring their voices are heard in the planning, implementation and post-construction.

Specific targets for SUSWA GEDSI can be identified in the SUSWA results framework, especially Outcome areas 1 and 3, but as a cross-cutting objective GEDSI is equally important under Outcome area 2 to ensure access to

inclusive and sustainable water supply through inclusive participation in planning, implementation and monitoring. The Action Plan is organized according to Outcome Areas to function as a checklist in implementation and for ease of monitoring of outcome areas.

In this chapter, the scope of this strategy in relation to the results framework is explained, with examples of tools and indicators given, as well as a short discussion on the users of the Action Plan, tying the SUSWA Strategy and Action Plan activities together.

**To facilitate the reading of this document, colors are applied in the following ways:**

- *In the paragraph borders on the right side of the page (as shown here), three different colors are related to the three different strategic areas; in the following pages of this document, outcome areas, tools and indicators of every strategic area will be detailed;*
- *In the fonts, contents from the project results framework are coloured according to their outcome areas: Outcome Area 1: Blue font, Outcome Area 2: Green Font, Outcome Area 3: Brown font*

### 3.1 Strategy Scope

To holistically approach strengthening inclusive participation and equal access, as well as creating an enabling environment, SUSWA strategy requires:

1. Working with duty-bearers
  - Strengthening capacity of local government as duty bearers and project stakeholders on GEDSI
  - Strengthening institutional framework of local government on GEDSI (e.g., policies, budgeting, M&E)
2. Working with right-holders
  - Working to trigger changing of harmful social norms
  - Empowering DAGs as right-holders, e.g., women, persons with disabilities and Dalits through training, targeted activities and communication (awareness campaigns, materials distributed, etc.)
3. Efficient knowledge sharing and linkage building with relevant actors for strengthened enabling environment for sustainable WASH services

Below, we explore the SUSWA GEDSI strategy relation to the SUSWA results framework.

***Further breakdown of SUSWA strategy scope can be found in Annex 2, including a more detailed analysis of SUSWA duty bearers and right holders (at page 30).***

#### 3.1.1 Working with duty-bearers<sup>1</sup>: Strengthening capacity and institutional framework

The key to SUSWA's approach is to support the main implementers and duty bearers to design and implement WASH in a participatory, inclusive, accessible way, facilitating e.g., technical support on accessible designs and support in the prioritization process. However, for inclusive participation and inclusive societies, it is crucial to go beyond this, and work to improve the capacity of local governments to mainstream gender equality, disability and social inclusion in their data collection, policies, laws, planning, budgets, institutional arrangements, and

<sup>1</sup> See Annex 2, chapter 2: Duty bearer analysis

networking. This also includes facilitation for working with local partners, e.g., OPDs and women's and Dalit's rights groups to develop a framework for mapping socially excluded groups for effective targeting and monitoring. Overall, a strong focus will be on strengthening local governments monitoring information systems to ensure effective monitoring of the gender, disability and social inclusion impact.

The main outcome and outputs in the project result's framework for the GEDSI Action Plan are:

#### Outcome Area 1: Strengthened enabling environment and governance for sustainable WASH services and GESI in Project Municipalities

Output 1.2: Municipal Councils, Water Boards/MWRCs and WUAs/WUSCs in the project Municipalities able to manage the WASH sector providing safe and inclusive safe services in a sustainable manner

Output 1.4: Project Municipalities develop and implement evidence -based gender responsive and disability inclusive laws, plans and budgets

Output 1.5: Efficient knowledge sharing and linkage building with relevant actors for strengthened enabling environment for sustainable WASH services

#### Outcome Area 2: Climate resilient, safe and functional water supply in Project Municipalities

Output 2.3: Extended Water Safety Plans (WSP+++ ) introduced, prepared and implemented

#### Outcome Area 3: Sustainable S&H and dignified menstruation management

Output 3.2: Institutional (school, health station, public) sanitation facilities and their maintenance improved in the Project Municipalities

### 3.1.2 Working with right-holders: changing harmful social norms and empowering

SUSWA will promote increased access by women, Persons with Disabilities, and socially excluded groups/disadvantaged groups as identified in the project municipalities, to basic services (water, sanitation, hygiene), and increased participation in project user and management committees. SUSWA will work with girls, women, with men, boys, persons with disabilities, Dalits, faith leaders, school teachers and community elders as allies and champions of change in order to challenge and transform dominant social barriers that perpetuate gender inequality or discrimination due to caste/ethnicity or disability. It generates an enabling environment for women to have a stronger voice in decision-making processes. Working in and with schools, holding on boarding for WUSCs, mass meetings with user communities, leadership training, completion ceremonies of WASH facilities, radio and poster awareness raising campaigns, are some of the ways SUSWA will work to challenge discriminatory norms and empower all community members to participate.

The main outcome and outputs in the project result's framework for the GEDSI Action Plan are:

#### Outcome Area 3: Sustainable S&H and dignified menstruation management

Output 3.1: Personal and household sanitation and hygienic behaviours improved

Output 3.3: Dignified menstruation promoted

### 3.1.3 Policy dialogue beyond SUSWA municipalities

SUSWA will work to promote GEDSI in political decision making and the broader WASH sector in and outside of Nepal. Apart from e.g., facilitating networking opportunities for local government representatives (e.g., representing DAGs) in SUSWA municipalities for strategic purposes such as policies for DMM, legal reform regarding PwDs, SUSWA will support advocacy and policy dialogue on national and provincial level. For strategic work on DMM, this is done through SUSWA's communication channels but also through being a member of the national MHM alliance and being a forming member of the provincial Karnali Alliance for DMM. For strategy support on other issues related to SUSWA's GEDSI approach, other such alliances can be formed with new or

existing organizations, such as the National federation for Persons with Disabilities or National Federation of Dalits, as well as relevant ministries and parliamentarians.

The main outcome and outputs in the project result's framework for the GEDSI Action Plan are:

**Outcome Area 1: Strengthened enabling environment and governance for sustainable WASH services and GESI in Project Municipalities**

**Output 1.5: Efficient knowledge sharing and linkage building with relevant actors for strengthened enabling environment for sustainable WASH services**

## 3.2 Tools & indicators

SUSWA approach builds on previous projects gains and learnings on GESI and Disability Inclusion, such as RVWRMP and COWASH and is aligned with MFA's approach for cross-cutting objectives.

### 3.2.1 Working with duty-bearers: Strengthening capacity and institutional framework

#### **Main tools:**

Institutional capacity support for creating an enabling policy law and budget environment for GEDSI. E.g., leadership training, workshops for GRB, guidelines and support for (and a requirement of) data disaggregation. Quota participating requirements. Technical assistance on accessible designs for municipality staff, private sector constructors, institutions and creating demand on, and options in, market.

#### **The main indicators and their definitions/measurements in SUSWA are:**

- Number of Municipalities systematically using MIS for WASH information
  - Data to at minimum be disaggregated by sex (incl. gender and sexual minorities), disability, ethnicity/caste.
  - Disability disaggregation done according to Nepal Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2017 for definitions and classification if this is already in use in local governments or the Washington Group Questionnaire Functionality approach which is used in project monitoring & documentation
  - Data disaggregated by age when relevant
- Number of Municipalities with gender responsive and disability inclusive budgets
  - In order to measure the gender responsive budgeting indicator, GRB coding in the LBMIS and SUTRA will be ensured at SUSWA working municipalities in line with the "Gender Responsive Budget Directive for Provinces and Local Levels, 2021" formulated by Gender Responsive Budget Committee, Ministry of Finance, Nepal. According to the directive GRB coding and scoring is presented below:
    - GRB Coding:
      - Direct Responsive – if the activities specifically targeted at women and girls (women's skill development training, girls' scholarships, etc.)
      - Indirect Responsive – if the activities that are responsible for women's empowerment and gender equality and create an enabling environment for it

- (gender equality training for service providers, working with men and parents to change discriminatory patriarchal values, etc.)
- Neutral – if less than 10% is allocated for the activities that do not identify barriers to women's empowerment and gender equality (library grants, road construction, etc.)
  - GRB Scoring:
    - Score 1 (Direct) – if more than 60% budget is allocated for gender response
    - Score 2 (Indirect) – if more than 10% and less than 60% budget is allocated for gender response
    - Score 3 (Neutral) – if less than 10% is allocated for gender response
  - The Municipalities will be encouraged and supported by SUSWA for a truly responsive and inclusive budgeting as per the essence of the "Gender Responsive Budget Directive for Provinces and Local Levels, 2021" as well as integrated gender assessment during planning, monitoring and evaluation in local government process):
    - Steps for going beyond for a gender responsive and disability inclusive budget:
      - Properly followed 7-step process, with an integrated participatory (OPDs and women's rights groups) gender and disability analysis (comparative analysis of impact of budget priorities, indicators, allocation and tracking on men and boys and women and girls and PwDs) as a compulsory step of the budget planning process.
        - Gender- and disability-disaggregated Beneficiary Assessment
        - Gender- and disability-disaggregated Analysis of the Impact of the Budget on Usage of Time
      - monitoring and evaluation of expenditure versus allocation with a gender assessment
        - Gender- and disability disaggregated Public Expenditure Incidence Analysis
      - gender responsive and disability inclusive budget statement document which outlines the implications of municipality revenue and expenditure on men, women, PwD, gender equality,
        - Gender- and disability-aware Budget Statement
  - Number of Municipalities having a plan for eradication of harmful Chhaupadi practice
    - Plan must be based on data and done in collaboration with relevant CSOs
    - Plan must have a budget, timeline and clear delegation of responsibilities
    - Plan must have set indicators for M&E and MEL plan
  - Number of Municipalities that involve disability organizations in the WASH planning and monitoring
    - For sustainability, OPDs must be included in official planning and monitoring process and organizational set-up
  - Number of WSUCs having up-to-date WSP+++ (WSP that also address climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, O&M and water fee collection, and inclusion)
    - Inclusion of women, PwD and DAGs in the WSP+++ planning and preparation
    - Inclusion of women, PwD and DAGs in the WSP+++content, addressing intersectionality of e.g., women, disability and climate change, disaster risk and both specific needs and risks as well as capturing specific knowledge of certain groups

- Number of improved institutional toilets with water supply (disaggregated by type of institution, CGD friendliness of facilities, and for schools the 3-star approach categories)
  - 'Improved' as definition to include accessibility in SUSWA, institutional toilets designed and built according to accessibility standards by National Federation of Disabled- Nepal (NFDN)
  - CGD friendliness being measured according to having separate facilities according to gender, MHM facilities, height being measured to fit that of children and the above accessibility standards shared by NFDN. Child, Gender and Disability (CGD) Friendly Features are defined by the government of Nepal as:
    - Child friendly features: include water taps, knobs and latches of toilet doors and windows at suitable heights and convenience for children at different ages.
    - Gender friendly features: the location of the toilet should be appropriately selected in a safe and secure place and the door, windows and ventilation should safeguard privacy. In addition to water, in schools and other public institutions, the toilet should have facilities for maintaining menstrual hygiene management. For example, a bucket with a cover/ lid inside the toilet or an incinerator attached just outside the toilet is essential.
    - Differently-abled friendly toilet: should include a ramp up to the toilet, sufficient space for a wheelchair in the passage, hand railing in the passage and within the toilet cubicles, appropriate types of seating arrangements and support on the toilet.
- Number of Municipalities with action plan developed and implemented for achieving safely managed sanitation and total sanitation; Number of households with handwashing facilities on premises with availability of soap and water
  - Includes a focus on elderly, children and PwDs, with market demand being created for accessible solutions and government analysis and identification of needs and changes in policies on e.g., subsidizing accessible solutions and offering grants for the poorest households to ensure accessible WASH facilities to all households

### 3.2.2 Working with right-holders: changing harmful social norms and empowering

#### Main tools:

Technical assistance on designs, capacity building, awareness raising, behaviour change communication campaigns, and collaboration (with relevant ministries, schools, health centers and other organizations focusing on health or schools, as well as markets)

#### Main indicators:

- Number of people having permanent access to improved sanitation facilities and using them; Number of households with handwashing facilities on premises with availability of soap and water; Number of households fulfilling total sanitation criteria;
  - Includes a focus on elderly, children and PwDs, with accessible solutions demonstrated for households and market demand for it created, with awareness on hygiene
- Number of religious and community leaders, youth networks and teachers mobilized against harmful chhaupadi practice
  - Mobilized requires having participated or organized at minimum one event or campaign directly aimed at changing norms or behaviors related to harmful chhaupadi practices, specifically

- the idea of women and girls as impure when menstruating
  - the practice of staying outside of the home (huts, sheds) when menstruating or postpartum
- Number of women using toilets during menstruation
    - The aim is to change norms regarding MHM. The focus will especially be on school girls, monitoring school girl drop out, as well as intersection of gender and disability when it comes to MHM.
  - Number of people trained on MHM including sanitary pad making
    - Training will be provided especially to those identified as having either the biggest need (no access to other solutions / disposal) and/or the biggest impact, such as tailors.

### 3.2.3 Policy dialogue beyond SUSWA municipalities

#### Main indicators:

- Number and types of strategic partnerships and initiatives between the SUSWA supported WASH programme and other actors related to gender, disability, dignified menstruation, CCA and DRR

SUSWA will form high-level strategic partnerships, such as CBM or UN Women or UNDP to ensure cross-cutting objectives and intersectionality of gender, caste, disability and climate are considered in SUSWA plans. Strategically partnering with CBM, for example, aims to ensure SUSWA project plans and implementation will be disability inclusive, SUSWA staff will be trained on disability inclusion and more research and manuals for disability inclusion for SUSWA municipalities will be created. SUSWA disability WASH facility technical designs are in line with the National Federation of Disabled - Nepal construction guidelines.

Further, SUSWA will work closely with local people with disabilities and OPDs, women-led OPDs will be prioritized when available, both locally and on a strategic level. Knowledge sharing, human capacity building, research undertakings could be potential areas to work jointly. In implementation, supporting municipality partnerships, networking and advocacy with OPDs, Dalit and women's rights organizations is key.

Finally, participation and access require consideration at all times, e.g., all events SUSWA organizes, HR policies and communication. 'Checklists' for these activities are further outlined in the Action Plan under the topics Capacity building, Awareness raising, M&E, research and reporting, and SUSWA Action at PSU.

### 3.3 Users of the strategy

SUSWA's HR & GEDSI Action Plan shall be in use in implementing gender, disability and social inclusion activities with overall guidance and technical assistance of the Non-discrimination/Behaviour Change Specialist at SUSWA.

HR & GEDSI WASH manuals and guidelines shall build on SUSWA's HR & GEDSI strategy and the Action plan and be done in partnership with relevant government sector staff responsible for the subsequent implementation and close follow up. Thus, the following tasks are planned to be undertaken by the G&I Specialist and will continue conducting supportive supervision across COWASH IV target areas throughout the project period.

SUSWA's GEDSI Action Plan shall be in use in implementing gender, disability and social inclusion activities with overall guidance and technical assistance of the Non-discrimination/Behaviour Change Specialist (BC) at SUSWA, who functions as the main focal point for GEDSI strategy and Action plan at the PSU. The action plan overall works as a checklist for BC, who will use it to provide further checklists for municipalities, WUSCs and ensure it is part of guidelines, manuals and step by step guidelines and Annual Work Plans with budgets and timelines set for activities. Further, BC is responsible for distributing the Action Plan and sharing the SUSWA Strategy with all at PSU, and e.g., organizing training for SUSWA staff. The BC specialist is also responsible for PSU level planning of GEDSI targeted actions, such as certain DMM or DI activities, as well as partnerships, networking and advocacy, with the support of the Field Specialist. For SUSWA strategy, strategic partnerships with OPDs/Disability Inclusion organizations are key to fulfill the Action Plan. All specialists of PSU are expected to mainstream GEDSI (and all SUSWA cross-cutting objectives). The action plan provides each specialist with specific activities/action points to ensure they incorporate in their own work plans and the support they give to the municipalities. To facilitate this, the Action Plan is divided according to project Outcome Areas (OA). Despite the strategy of SUSWA being holistic and Specialists expected to uphold GEDSI as a cross-cutting objective, the divide in e.g., OA 1 on Governance and OA3 on Sanitation, is to support SUSWA specialists, such as Governance and Sanitation, to ensure they do not 'miss' any vital GEDSI activities in their support to the municipalities.

For WASH Advisors and WASH Units, the Action Plan provides a minimum checklist for e.g., overseeing mass meetings, WUSCs and WSP+++s to ensure inclusion is integrated in all activities. Action Plan 'OA2' can specifically be used for a checklist by WASH Advisors.

For local governments, the Action Plan provides both a checklist but also knowledge on what kind of support and facilitation to expect from SUSWA. Annual work plans and activities will be planned together with relevant government sector staff responsible for the subsequent implementation and close follow up.

At the community level, the Action Plan provides a roadmap for working with allies and champions of change for GEDSI, as well as criteria on e.g., venue accessibility and language at meetings.

# HR & GEDSI ACTION PLAN



## 4. HR & GESDI Action Plan

### 4.1 SUSWA Action Plan outline

#### Actions per Outcome Area

**Outcome Area 1:** Strengthened enabling environment and governance for sustainable WASH services and GESI in Project Municipalities

- Institutional capacity enhancement
- Policy formulation & budgeting
- Human resources
- Monitoring & Evaluation

**Outcome Area 2:** Climate resilient, safe and functional water supply in Project Municipalities

- Planning Phase
  - Municipality selection
  - Baseline survey
  - WASH Plan Preparation
  - Planning process of local level (following 7-step process)
  - Annual work plan preparation
- Preparatory Phase
  - WUSC formation
  - WUSC orientation
  - Scheme planning & detailed technical survey
  - Mass meetings
- Implementation phase
  - WSP+++
  - DRR/CCA intersectionality
- Post construction phase
  - M&E

**Outcome Area 3:** Sustainable S&H and dignified menstruation management

- Institutional toilets with water supply
- 3-star approach for schools
- Total Sanitation
- BABY WASH

Dignified Menstruation management promoted

- Capacity building
- Number of people trained on MHM including sanitary pad making
- Institutional
- Number of women using toilets during menstruation
- Social movement and campaign

- Number of religious and community leaders, youth networks and teachers mobilized against harmful chhaupadi practice
- Accessibility
- Number of women using toilets during menstruation
- School focus

### **Cross-cutting Actions**

Advocacy, lobby, alliance building, coordination and partnership

- Advocacy, lobby, alliance building, coordination and partnership
- Using Allies and Champions of Change

### **Capacity building**

- Overall event/training considerations for GEDSI
  1. Training needs assessment & targeting
  2. Participants
  3. Venue and timing
  4. Language

### **Awareness raising**

- Awareness raising
- Celebration

### **M&E, research and reporting**

- Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Reporting
- Management Information System

### **SUSWA Action Plan at PSU level**

- Human Resources Recruitment Policies
- Capacity building
- Creating GEDSI friendly working environment

## Actions for Local Government, WASH Unit and WUSC per Outcome Area

### OA 1: Governance

Objective	Action of integration	Activities
Institutional capacity enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Facilitating municipalities assignment of <b>GEDSI focal person</b></li> <li>● <b>Training Need assessment (TNA)</b> to capacitate municipalities for GEDSI integration will be done in the project municipalities</li> <li>● Based on the TNA, a <b>training package</b> will be developed for municipal executive members, municipal relevant officials and WASH Unit staff</li> <li>● Supporting municipalities for establishment of <b>WASH MIS with disaggregated data</b> considering GEDSI. In addition, separate data management of persons with disabilities is to be done in the municipalities</li> <li>● Providing support to municipalities for <b>GEDSI friendly WASH facilities in the municipal office</b> with the capacity of sustainability management</li> <li>● Facilitate cooperation with and <b>involvement of woman's' rights and Dalit rights organizations and organizations for persons with disabilities (OPDs)</b></li> <li>● Create <b>political commitment</b> to work for DI on municipality level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organize an event for municipality on GEDSI as concept: mainstreaming and identifying local gaps in municipality (human resources, organizational culture, existing infrastructure, issue handling mechanisms)</li> <li>● Support municipality's GESI focal point and provide HR support to municipalities</li> <li>● Ensure GEDSI a criterion in Staff Recruitment and institution working modalities through municipalities agreeing to SUSWA HR strategy</li> <li>● Support the partners' role and responsibility in the projects, with GEDSI an important consideration in WASH Unit staff selection (see Chapter 1.4 in Part 2)</li> <li>● Support partners to ensure GEDSI in their programme cycle through providing step- by- step manuals to follow, and training for capacity building</li> <li>● With municipality MIS focal person, analyze and identify gaps in municipality data collection, ensuring that data is disaggregated by sex and gender and disability disaggregated by Nepal's Act Relation to Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2074 ("Person with disability" means a person who has long-term a) physical, b) mental, c) intellectual or d) sensory disability or functional impairments or existing barriers that may hinder his or her full and effective participation in social life on an equal basis with others)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support municipalities in using local Government Institutional Self-Capacity Assessment (LISA)</li> <li>● Organize meeting with municipality to assign GEDSI focal person and workgroup within municipality for GEDSI analysis</li> <li>● Provide guidelines for accessible facilities for municipalities</li> <li>● Map OPDs and relevant women’s and Dalit rights organization for each municipality, and facilitate their involvement in e.g., WASH Unit work</li> <li>● Build capacity of staff and local government on disability inclusion, as well as municipality’s duties related to ensuring PwD right</li> </ul>
<p>Policy formulation &amp; budgeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support the development and implementation of <b>GEDSI strategies, policies and laws</b> of municipalities</li> <li>● Support municipalities to formulate <b>dignified menstruation management policies</b></li> <li>● Support municipalities in creating and implementing a <b>plan for eradication of harmful Chhaupadi practice</b></li> <li>● <b>Identify current GEDSI gaps</b> in policies and laws, e.g., are the needs of vulnerable groups addressed, rights of PwDs ensured</li> <li>● Supporting municipalities for <b>gender, disability and marginalized ethnicity (Dalit, Janajati) responsive and inclusive planning and budgeting</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organize a network for chairpersons and/or vice-chair persons to review municipality strategies and policies on GEDSI</li> <li>● Conduct workshop with municipality for policy analysis (e.g., gender-aware policy appraisal) and identify areas of improvement from a GEDSI perspective</li> <li>● Look to KADMM for suggestions of DMM declaration to be signed by municipality and hold event at municipality level to celebrate declaration and commitment</li> <li>● Support the adoption and true implementation of existing national code of conduct of child protection, social security scheme and disability inclusion scheme distribution on local government level</li> <li>● Support municipalities in performing comparative gender and disability analysis as part of their 7-step planning process,             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gender- and disability-disaggregated Beneficiary Assessment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gender- and disability-disaggregated Analysis of the Impact of the Budget on Usage of Time</li> <li>● Ensure GRB coding according to Nepal government rules for women, children and PwDs based on gender analysis recommendations, sex disaggregated data and has a monitoring and implementation plan</li> <li>● Support municipalities in performing monitoring and evaluation of expenditure versus allocation with a gender and disability assessment             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gender- and disability-disaggregated Public Expenditure Incidence Analysis</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Support municipalities in preparing gender responsive and disability inclusive plan and budget statement document as well which outlines the implications of municipality revenue and expenditure on men, women, PwD, gender equality,             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gender- and disability-aware Budget Statement</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Support municipalities in providing subsidies or even seed money for economic empowerment for disability family and poor female household families</li> <li>● Support municipalities and schools in ensuring child education support (Scholarship Scheme) for poor family girls' education</li> </ul>
<p>Human resources</p>	<p>WASH Unit staff selection will <b>prioritize women, PwDs and ethnic/caste minorities</b></p> <p><i>PSU staff recruitment includes a diversity statement to encourage applicants from all backgrounds, with women, Dalit/Janajati and PwDs prioritized in scoring process, see</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dalit, Janajati, women and PwD (with capacity to work) will be privileged during selection with 30% weightage for GEDSI will be given during CV evaluation for shortlisting.</li> </ul>

	<i>more in SUSWA recruitment guidelines</i>	
Monitoring & Evaluation	Annual monitoring process will include <b>specific HR &amp; GEDSI objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure above GEDSI analysis is integrated into the 7-step planning process for budgeting with M&amp;E and auditing put in place. Follow up yearly.</li> <li>● Ensure monitoring system and institutional responsibilities are set in place when laws, policies and budgets are developed</li> <li>● Annually follow-up on if the GRB Guidelines with indicators and scoring issued by Ministry of Finance and which all Ministries have to follow, are being followed.</li> <li>● Monitoring visits with public audit, with mandatory representation for public hearing/auditing, O&amp;M training and monitoring team (at least 50% women and proportionate number of DAG, PwDs or PwDs' representative)</li> <li>● Ensure OPDs are involved in assessment and monitoring of disability inclusive technical solutions as well as policies and budget process</li> <li>● GESI Auditing, in line with GoN's GESI Auditing Guidelines</li> </ul>

**OA 2: Water Supply, Water User's Committee & WSP+++**

Planning Phase	<p>Municipality selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Overall project municipality selection was done in the first year based on <b>reaching those not served</b>. This was done through mapping of stakeholders currently implementing WASH projects with confirmed and consistent financial resources (USAID, WB, DFID, FWSSM, Helvetas); 42 municipalities were left as SUSWA working area</li> <li>● Further, the project's GEDSI/HRBA guides the project to focus on the areas that are the most <b>socially and economically deprived</b>. For SUSWA to start implementation, the municipalities need to have a WASH plan, and the municipalities with higher level of willingness, commitment, ownership, and higher intensity of socio-economic and climate change vulnerabilities will be prioritized</li> <li>● This prioritization of communities to work in will include looking at the following to ensure <b>GEDSI is part of the selection process</b>:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Adoption of Local Government Institutional Self-Capacity Assessment (LISA) by the municipality</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Concentration of vulnerable groups (Victims of conflicts-orphans, widows; single female-headed households, victims of human trafficking, physical disability, natural calamities, caste and ethnic minority group)</li> </ul>
	<p>Baseline survey checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Disaggregate data</b> by gender (women, men, third)</li> <li>● <b>Disaggregate gender by single women headed households, casts and poverty</b></li> <li>● Collect and disaggregate data based on functionality approach using <b>Washington Group Questionnaire</b></li> <li>● Collect <b>data specifically on GEDSI budgeting, policies and DMM</b></li> <li>● Collect <b>data to understand current GE situation</b> (land/house ownership, decision making, specifically related to WASH)</li> <li>● Hold focus group discussions with women</li> </ul>
	<p>WASH Plan Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WASH Plans are <b>inclusive tools that leave no-one behind</b> if they are used properly, ensuring everyone's needs are considered and that different priorities and options are discussed openly</li> <li>● Ensure adequate and effective <b>participation of women (at least 50%), proportionate representation of PwDs (or PwDs' family member), prioritizing a mix of men and women PwDs, Dalits, Janajati and other disadvantaged groups</b> during the planning and scheme prioritization process both at ward and municipal levels</li> <li>● Supervise the collection and <b>updating of WASH data in NWASH MIS</b> (ensure proper mobilization and supervision of enumerators/WASH technicians for data collection to include GEDSI)</li> <li>● During the primary data collection, <b>ensure that women and DAGs are consulted</b>, and that data of all wards and pockets is included</li> <li>● <b>The profile of women (especially female-headed households and widows), the poor and socially excluded are identified and prioritized</b></li> <li>● <b>Identify GEDSI data gaps (e.g., of PwDs)</b> and support the municipality to correct them during WASH plan preparation</li> <li>● <b>Involve OPDs</b> in the WASH planning process</li> </ul>
	<p>Planning process of local level (following 7-step process)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure adequate and effective <b>participation of women (at least 50%), proportionate representation of PwDs (or PwDs' family member), Dalits, Janajati and other disadvantaged groups</b> during the planning and scheme prioritization process both at ward and municipal levels</li> <li>● <b>Apply a transparent process</b>, disseminating information of the process and also the result of the plan to the general public</li> <li>● Support the following steps to becoming part of the 7-step process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Gender- and disability-disaggregated Beneficiary Assessment</b></li> <li>○ <b>Gender- and disability-disaggregated Analysis</b> of the Impact of the Budget on Usage of Time</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Check when entry is done in LMBIS (which has a GRB component) according to Nepal's GRB classification criteria</li> <li>● Within every selected municipality, and based on the priorities expressed in the WASH Plan, <b>community projects will be ranked according to the following criteria:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Poverty Incidence</b> of the target community,</li> <li>2. <b>Remoteness</b> / limits in the accessibility of the geographical location,</li> <li>3. <b>Concentration of excluded groups,</b></li> <li>4. Domestic water &amp; Sanitation coverage               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Safely managed Water Supply Coverage (HH) coverage and functionality</li> <li>ii) Basic Water Supply Coverage (HHs)</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Prevalence of gender and caste in community organizations/committees' regulations (level of representation, and <b>participation of women, Dalits, Janajati, PwDs or PwD family members in decision-making bodies</b> at various local-level institutions involved in project implementation and post-implementation)</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Involve OPDs in the planning process</b> and organize training on disability inclusion for local government</li> </ul>
	<p>Annual work plan (AWP) preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>GEDSI to be considered in the preparation of the Annual Work Plan</b>, to ensure the list of communities and activities contain activities from this list, as well as the budget</li> <li>● <i>Apply a transparent process</i>, disseminating information of the process and also the result of the plan to the general public</li> <li>● Support local government to involve <b>cooperation with local OPDs and women's rights groups</b> in planning their AWP</li> </ul>
<p>Preparatory Phase</p>	<p>WUSC formation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WUSCs should be democratically elected and representative of all beneficiaries of the scheme</li> <li>● <b>50% representation of women and proportional representation of Dalit, Janajati, PwDs and gender and sexual minorities</b> in WUSC key positions (i.e., Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Joint-Secretary and Treasurer) must be ensured</li> <li>● <b>Separate meetings for women and men</b> might be organized if needed to select their WUSC representatives</li> </ul> <p>WUSC orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>GEDSI sensitization</b> training to WUSC and WUSC orientation to include GEDSI and HRBA</li> <li>● WUSCs shall receive <b>gender and disability inclusion in WASH awareness training</b> o tackle harmful traditional practices that promote the exclusion of women and PwDs from access to and control over resources and make their voice unheard due to their exclusion from decision making process both at community and household level</li> <li>● WUSC orientation session to promote changes in the division of labour, <b>decision making power and gender/caste based discriminatory practices</b></li> </ul>

- When possible, partners (husbands and wives of WUSC members) and wider community can receive **gender and disability inclusion awareness training** so that at the end, the WUSC member will receive the required support from other family members and community for his/her voluntary job
- **Leadership training shall also be given to WUSC members to bring women and PwD in leadership positions (chairperson, treasurer and secretary position)**. Separate sessions to build sufficient capacity and confidence of women who are in financial management positions if required
- **Ensure WUSC meetings are inclusive** from the start, e.g., invitations to the meetings sent out early enough, the venue is suitable to most of the members, and all WUSC members are encouraged to express their views, and minutes pay attention to the presence of all members. See venue-requirements for inclusion in the checklist below.

#### Scheme planning & detailed technical survey

- **Work with OPDs for disability assessments and design**
- Representative scheme-level mass meeting, with **75% of beneficiaries present and 50% of the participants women, and proportional representation of Dalit, Janajati and PwDs**
- In planning of schemes, **disaggregate data** by sex, caste, ethnicity, age, poverty and disability
- In planning of schemes, consider **accessibility/access** for both personal water use and institutional toilets
- Considered possible support to the poorest. Do all community members find the future **water tariff to be affordable?** If it was found not affordable, different options must be considered at this point
- Create a **community map for the scheme**, identifying all households (including squatters), toilets, physical and natural features (e.g. buildings, rivers & forests) and sources of construction materials, observe & discuss possible critical issues that relate to accessibility and use of facilities by all, i.e. who is forbidden or physically cannot access/use, such as menstruating women, DAGs, physically disabled persons etc.
- Ensure **women and DAGs actively participate** and express their opinions in the community mapping meeting
- Ensure everyone has **access to technical and financial information** planned and discussed in mass meetings (i.e., hoarding boards, public audits, minutes and good practices)
- Work hard to ensure the design, **technology and location of tap stands and latrines** take account of the special needs and interests of women and girls related to protection, privacy and suitability for menstrual management, as well as accessibility for PwDs and needs related to intersectionality of gender and disability
- **Map if there are any residents (e.g., squatters) in the scheme area who do not have access to these taps**
- If MUS is an option in the scheme, **consult women and DAGs separately for the multiple uses of water**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attention is given to the right of everyone to <b>sufficient, acceptable quality, affordable and physical accessible water</b> for personal and domestic use</li> <li>● <b>Discussion with girls, female teachers and PwDs in the schools</b> will be conducted to incorporate their specific needs in the design of WASH facilities in the schools.</li> <li>● <b>Location of the WASH facility service points</b> will be fixed considering the menstruation management, physical disability and elder citizens</li> </ul> <p>Mass meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Selection of <b>suitable venues with appropriate time and timely information</b> to all users/WUSCs for the meetings will be made. This means ensuring physical access, the time is such that women and poorer households can participate, and all households, remote clusters too, are informed in time of the meeting</li> <li>● <b>50% representation of women and proportional representation of Dalit, Janajati, PwDs and gender and sexual minorities</b> in the mass meeting, public hearing/auditing and training/workshop during preparatory phase will be ensured</li> <li>● <b>75% of all beneficiary households must be present</b> in each mass meeting, and public hearing/auditing</li> <li>● <b>Local language</b> is used in facilitation of the training and mass meetings, if applicable.</li> <li>● Mass meetings are regularly held throughout the planning phase to inform communities of the project and processes. It is important that <b>all members of the village have access to project information</b></li> <li>● <b>Separate meetings with women’s/mothers’ groups and men’s groups</b> will be conducted at cluster or ward level to trigger behavior change, build consensus and achieve commitment to eliminate menstruation management, sanitation and hygiene related taboo</li> </ul>
Implementation phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Women, ultra-poor, Dalit, Janajati and other disadvantaged persons (if any) will be given priority in the scheme construction activities</b> to receive wages and paid equal wages for their work</li> <li>● <b>Exemption in contribution for ultra-poor</b> as decided by WUSCs</li> <li>● <b>Women, ultra-poor, Dalit, Janajati and other disadvantaged persons (if any) are given priority when selecting participants for skilled training opportunities</b></li> <li>● <b>Female Village Maintenance Workers (VMW)</b> are trained (at least one woman VMW) in each WS scheme</li> <li>● <b>50% representation of women and proportional representation of Dalit, Janajati, disability and gender and sexual minorities</b> in the mass meeting, public hearing/auditing and training/workshop during implementation phase should be ensure</li> <li>● <b>75% of all beneficiary households must be present</b> in each mass meeting, and public hearing/auditing</li> <li>● Ensure <b>no children are used for work</b></li> <li>● Ensure <b>procurement process is public</b></li> <li>● Keep monitoring that <b>public taps are located in places that can be accessed</b> by all (including children and persons with disabilities) Make sure <b>Water Safety Plan (WSP+++)</b> planning sessions have a proportionate number of women, PwDs and DAGs</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hold separate <b>WSP+++ sessions with women, PwDs and DAGs to ensure their voices</b>, needs as well as knowledge and skill are incorporated in the WSP</li> <li>● <b>DRR/CCA training intersectional, considering gender, ethnicity, disability</b>, and also targeted training for DAGs</li> </ul>
<p>Post construction phase and M&amp;E</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>50% representation of women and proportional representation of Dalit, Janajati, disability and gender and sexual minorities</b> in the mass meeting, public hearing/auditing and training/workshop during post construction phase will be ensured</li> <li>● <b>75% of all beneficiary households must be present</b> in each mass meeting, and public hearing/auditing</li> <li>● <b>Monitoring and evaluation by WASH-MC</b>, municipal level monitoring task force, project level and center level will be accomplished periodically to <b>ensure the GEDSI integration</b>.</li> <li>● Monitoring formats will be developed to get <b>GEDSI related quantitative and qualitative data</b> in a disaggregated manner</li> <li>● The project will follow the monitoring task force structures of the municipality. However, the monitoring visits team will be ensured with <b>at least one woman and PwD or OPD representative for gender and accessibility audit</b>.</li> <li>● The monitoring team will <b>ensure the GEDSI aspects in all monitored activities</b> aligning with the step-by-step process</li> <li>● It has to be <b>ensured that WUSCs has implemented the GEDSI actions</b> as learnt during the training</li> <li>● The monitoring visit will <b>assess that the women, Dalit, Janajati, persons with disability and other excluded people are participating meaningfully and listened</b></li> <li>● Reporting system will be developed in a <b>disaggregated data management</b> system.</li> <li>● WUSC’s self-monitoring on <b>HR &amp; GEDSI aspects</b>; using scheme monitoring books as per the Step-by-Step Process; <b>collecting data regarding gender, caste and ethnicity</b>; WASH Facilitators visiting households and promoting small doable actions; WASH Unit staffs including this in the <b>monthly/bi-monthly planning and then reporting</b> the finding</li> </ul>

### OA 3: Sanitation & hygiene

<p>Institutional toilets with water supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Institutional, school and public toilets will be constructed using designs that promote access for all. Ensuring inclusive access to water and sanitation for persons with disabilities requires <b>accessible designs, including accessible toilets, water points, water carriers, bathing places and handwashing facilities</b></li> <li>● SUSWA shall <b>collaborate with OPDs</b> to develop designs to adopt on institutional level</li> <li>● SUSWA will support investment on <b>making paths to WASH facilities accessible for all</b></li> <li>● In collaboration with the respective institutions (health institutions or municipality), toilet construction or repair/maintenance will be done as needed in health care centers and public places considering following components</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Construction or repair/maintenance of <b>separate toilets and urinals for men and women</b></li> <li>○ <b>Sanitary pad changing room, soap with water facility and pad disposal technology for women</b></li> <li>○ <b>Railing, ramps and other necessary component</b> will be considered to ensure accessibility for all PwDs, elderly and children</li> </ul>
3 star approach for schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sanitation and hygiene facilities of the school from the <b>GEDSI aspect will be assessed with the school</b> as planned in the annual work plan</li> <li>● Based on the need assessment school toilets will be supported for new construction or repair &amp; maintenance along with the school management or municipality as considering gender and disability components. In this regard, following activities will be implemented             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Construction or repair/maintenance of <b>separate toilets and urinals for boys and girls</b></li> <li>○ Construction or repair/maintenance of <b>separate toilets and urinals for male and female teachers</b></li> <li>○ <b>Sanitary pad changing room, soap with water facility and pad disposal technology for female teacher and student</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Railing, ramps and other necessary component will be considered to ensure accessibility for all PwDs, elderly and children</b></li> <li>● WASH in School approach to get 3 star status will be applied</li> </ul>
Total Sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In order to get total sanitation status in a community, awareness raising with some capacity enhancement will be done to promote the following situation             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Accessible location of sanitation service points</b></li> <li>○ Construction or repair or maintenance of the toilet considering the <b>menstrual and disability component</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Working the sanitation market &amp; supply chain to provide solutions, alternatives and demonstrations for both new construction and modifications of toilets (household and institutional) for improved <b>access by the elderly and disabled</b></li> <li>● <b>Work with OPDs to identify appropriate designs and modification ideas</b>, and provide this information to households</li> <li>● <b>Hygiene capacity building to specifically target women, men, children, health institutions, schools and PwDs</b> with tailored focus depending on gender roles, needs and skills. A separate strategy for behaviour change intervention activities will be done</li> </ul>
BABY WASH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WASH services and awareness activities to mothers and caregivers by collaborating with healthcare facilities for regular home visits, group discussion etc.</li> <li>● Working with PwD and Dalit mother groups to ensure intersectionality considered</li> <li>● Support new mothers with a <b>Baby kit, including potty, soap, kettle etc.</b></li> </ul>

### OA 3: Dignified Menstruation management

Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Municipal executive members, relevant section officials, WASH Unit staff and WASH MC members from project working <b>municipalities will be trained on DMM</b></li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Teachers, students/child clubs/ adolescent groups and social female volunteers will be trained on MHM/DMM</b></li> <li>● <b>Community people along with local tailors will be trained on MHM/DMM and sanitary pad making</b></li> <li>● 'Across-Generation' workshops/Interaction (<b>Sasu and Buhari workshop</b>) will be conducted in project municipalities</li> <li>● <b>Focus group discussion</b> will be conducted</li> </ul>
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work towards signing <b>DMM declarations</b> at provincial and local government level, ensure policies in place, work with KADMM to mobilize all levels of government</li> <li>● <b>Local resource persons for dignified menstruation management</b> will be developed and mobilized to look after DMM in the municipalities</li> </ul>
Social movement and campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promote <b>awareness raising to the communities</b> to address societal beliefs, taboos and stigmas surrounding the issue</li> <li>● <b>Religious and community leaders, youth networks, FCHVs, child clubs, adolescent groups, teachers and WUSCs will be mobilized against harmful practices of menstruation management</b></li> <li>● <b>Creative activities such as street drama, video show, speech, poem, cultural programme etc.</b> for awareness raising against menstrual hygiene and discriminatory practices of menstrual hygiene management will be organized</li> <li>● <b>Collaborate with KADMM</b> for e.g., <b>Goodwill Ambassador for DMM</b>, sanitary pad quality campaigns</li> </ul>
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>About 24,000 additional girls/women have access to the toilet during menstruation</b></li> <li>● <b>Hardware and software activities to ensure the access to the toilet</b> will be planned and implemented in the municipalities</li> <li>● Awareness raising on demand creation for sanitary materials for menstrual hygiene</li> </ul>
School focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with schools to ensure <b>MHM interventions in schools</b>, which include safe spaces for girls to wash, change and dispose of sanitary pads, access emergency pads, get information and counseling about menstruation, and rest to alleviate menstrual pains and cramps. This will help keep girls in school during their period</li> <li>● <b>Enhancing knowledge of adolescent girls and women</b> (including women and girl students with disabilities) that exist in and out of school system on MHM/MHH using a comprehensive MHM/MHH awareness raising material</li> <li>● Support the <b>construction of MHM rooms in schools</b>, along with construction of separate toilets for boys and girls; The MHM rooms and the path leads to the MHM rooms should also be accessible for women and girls with disabilities</li> <li>● Promote <b>enabling environment for local manufacturing and distribution of menstrual hygiene products</b> (including the supply chain to ensure sustainability), In order to increase the access of the girls to the sanitary pad with privacy, sanitary pad vending machine installation in the schools will be explored in the project municipalities with assurance of proper operation and management system</li> <li>● Support <b>awareness raising training for teachers, school supervisors, directors, school gender and WASH club leaders</b> in order to make menstrual hygiene an issue for everyone in the school.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Data collection</b> tools prepared, absence of the girls /female teachers in the schools and women in the social events due to menstruation will be monitored</li> </ul>
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## Cross-cutting

### Advocacy, lobby, alliance building, coordination and partnership

Advocacy, lobby, alliance building, coordination and partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strategic partnerships on project level with global disability organizations and strategic and technical collaboration with local OPDs in SUSWA working area</li> <li>● Partnering with, and getting commitment on GEDSI topics by local and provincial governments including Social Development Ministry of Karnali Province, development partners and other legal entities will be made</li> <li>● Implement actions will be made in close partnership with women groups, religious leaders, local decision-makers, as well as organizations of persons with disabilities</li> <li>● Collaboration will be made with government agencies and organizations centered in education, as well as directly with teachers and students, to design and conceptualize school curricula incorporating DMM empowering all adolescent girls, including those with disabilities, with accessible information and support, with clear linkages of dignified menstruation management to family planning, sexual and reproductive health, and future wellbeing</li> <li>● Karnali Alliance for Dignified Menstruation Management will be formed and institutionalized for synergy development</li> <li>● Province level workshops on sustainable dignified menstruation management with deputy mayors/vice chairpersons from project working municipalities will be organized for common understanding and strategic planning for DMM</li> <li>● Coordination with UN women will be made for story collection and other potential efforts</li> <li>● Partnership with media will be made for radio programme and case stories collection and publication</li> </ul>
Using Allies and Champions of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mobilization of celebrities as a DMM Goodwill Ambassador will be made by the Alliance</li> <li>● SUSWA will work with girls, women, with men, boys, persons with disabilities, Dalits, faith leaders and community elders as allies and champions of change in order to challenge and transform dominant social barriers that perpetuate gender inequality.</li> </ul>

## Capacity building

Overall event/training considerations for GEDSI	Training needs assessment & targeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Checklist to be developed for planning events and training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Who benefits from the training?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What GEDSI related topics can training impact?</li> <li>○ What GEDSI related topics have an impact on the training content?</li> <li>○ Would the training objective benefit from involving OPDs or women’s groups in the training planning and implementation?</li> </ul>
	<p>Participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In all training organized at municipality level equal participation of women and men is striven for</li> <li>● Women, PwDs, poorest households and DAGs will be given priority when selecting candidates for skilled training opportunities (e.g., Village Maintenance Workers)</li> <li>● For exposure visits 50% of the participants must be women and members of excluded groups. If possible, ensure pro-women travel conditions and lodging</li> <li>● No all-male panel, ensure women representation among those active in an event (e.g, speakers, trainers, facilitators)</li> <li>● When planning events, check the below list to increase the representation among both speakers and participants.</li> <li>● Some of the aspects for consideration are:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gender</li> <li>○ Caste, ethnicity and minority indigenous community representatives</li> <li>○ Socio-economic status</li> <li>○ Different types of disabilities</li> <li>○ Age</li> <li>○ Geographical location</li> <li>○ Minorities such as gender and sexual minorities and religious communities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p>Venue and timing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When organizing an event, go through venue checklist:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Is the time of the event such that also women,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<p>men, PwDs who need assistance, all ethnic/caste groups can participate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Is the venue accessible for all, e.g., menstruating women, persons with physical disabilities?</li> <li>○ Does the venue have accessible WASH facilities?</li> <li>○ Does the venue have WASH facilities for women and men, and gender and sexual minorities?</li> <li>○ Is the venue safe for all?</li> <li>○ Is there provision of caretaker for children so both parents can participate?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessibility of training venues / training halls requires special attention to ensure participation of PwDs as attendees or trainers. Hence, accessibility has to be a mandatory requirement in the procurement process in SUSWA organized trainings</li> <li>● To create a conducive environment for diverse panelists to participate, ask the panel members if they need any support to be part of the event. Some tips are below:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ When planning the timing of the event, exercise flexibility when deciding the time of the meeting to accommodate care responsibilities.</li> <li>○ Extend needed support to speakers to enable access to meetings and the required preparation to strengthen the voice and agency of women and marginalized groups.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Monitoring & Reporting	1. Collect data on participants disaggregated by sex gender, PwDs (Washington Group

		<p>functionality approach), poverty level, DAGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Collect data on speakers, panelists, trainers, facilitators (all those having an active role) disaggregated by sex gender, PwDs (Washington Group functionality approach), poverty level, DAGs</li> <li>3. Collect data on others (e.g., support staff for training/event) disaggregated by sex gender, PwDs (Washington Group functionality approach), poverty level, DAGs</li> <li>4. Ask for feedback from all participants (including panelists, speakers) after each training</li> <li>5. Include tables with statistics on gender information in your progress reports for all events organized in the EU-funded action including for a) participants, b) panelists/ trainers/ facilitators/ speakers (those having an active role), c) others (e.g. support staff).</li> </ol>
	<p>Language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● GEDSI sensitive language and preferred pronouns will be used to facilitate all events/trainings/capacity development initiatives</li> <li>● Ensure fair publicity of women and marginalized groups that does not perpetuate gender stereotypes and allows them to be on an equal footing.</li> <li>● Ensure that the facilitator, resource persons and participants use GEDSI sensitive language, with no use of socio-culturally biased/discriminatory proverbs, jokes or offensive terminologies.</li> <li>● If possible, ensure facilitator is of same gender, caste and has local language skills, as participants</li> <li>● Where possible, aspire to facilitate the use of native languages to enable inclusive participation in panels / conferences / meetings to foster inclusivity both in panels and the audience.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Information will always be provided both in writing and orally</li> <li>● Accessible information including provision with sign language interpreter and/or braille and/or closed captioning will be arranged as needed.</li> <li>● Translation to local languages will be arranged as required</li> <li>● See SUSWA Communication Plan for Disability and Gender Inclusive Communication</li> </ul>
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### Awareness raising

Awareness raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continuous awareness raising and capacity building actions will be made to change norms and behaviors related to social inclusion issues.</li> <li>● Behavioral (social norm) change campaigns to address attitudes, stigma and discrimination regarding gender, disability and ethnicity will be made</li> <li>● Actions for information, education and communication such as posters, hoarding boards, pamphlets, radio programmes will be made with synergetic effort</li> <li>● Cross learning and experience sharing, site visits and discussion with user communities will be taken into consideration</li> </ul>
Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● National and international days celebrations such as 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, international day of persons with disabilities, international dignified menstruation day, international women’s day, menstrual hygiene day etc. will be made with creative activities</li> </ul>

### M&E, research and reporting

Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Reporting	<p>MEL Policy Sustainability Plan Accountability mapping of the project Sex and Gender and PwD Disaggregated data Reporting format Reporting &amp; research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitoring and evaluation by WASH Unit, WASH-MC, municipal level monitoring task force, project level and center level will be accomplished periodically to ensure GEDSI integration</li> <li>● Monitoring formats will be developed to get GEDSI related quantitative and qualitative data in a disaggregated manner</li> <li>● The project will follow the monitoring task force structures of the municipality. However, the monitoring visits team will be ensured with at least one woman and PwD or OPD representative for gender and accessibility audit</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The monitoring team will ensure the GEDSI aspects in all monitored activities aligning with the step-by-step process</li> <li>● It has to be ensured that WUSCs have implemented the GEDSI actions as learnt during the training</li> <li>● Monitoring systems must include identification and inclusion of disadvantaged people. Monitoring must be participatory and transparent. The monitoring visit will assess that the women, Dalit, Janajati, persons with disability and other excluded people are participating meaningfully and listened to</li> <li>● Reporting system will be developed in a disaggregated data management system</li> <li>● All information published on the project website, including all plans and reports</li> <li>● Budgets spending must be assessed</li> <li>● Monitoring format for WASH-MC will be developed with the checklist of GEDSI actions to be done. Every monitoring visit will ensure whether the actions are on track</li> <li>● Qualitative and quantitative research undertakings of any subject shall include analysis from gender and marginalized groups', including disability inclusion, point of view</li> <li>● Research on gender and social/disability inclusion shall be conducted to respond better to women's, men's and people with disabilities needs for improved WASH services</li> <li>● Some of the research topics include, but not limited to: gender and disability inclusion audit on selected water points, harmful social norms and cultural practices, menstrual hygiene management practices, women's participation, empowerment and leadership</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Findings of the research shall be disseminated to WASH sector partners in every way possible</li> </ul>
Management Information System	Disaggregated data management and for reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SmartME Management Information System will be established in a disaggregated data management system consisting, gender, ethnicity and disability</li> <li>The dashboards will be developed to have enough and clear updated information on achievement of GEDSI related target</li> </ul>

### SUSWA Action Plan at PSU level

Human Resources Recruitment Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide equal employment opportunities and treatment without any discrimination based on origin, race, caste, tribe/ethnicity, religion, gender/sex/sexual orientation, age, disability, language, or ideological conviction</li> <li>Provide compensation and benefits commensurate with the work performed</li> <li>Encourage initiatives and suggestions for improvements concerning job descriptions, expected performance, working conditions, working tools and facilities, occupational health and safety, and the project policy and procedures</li> <li>Physical violence, harassment, and sexual abuse are strictly prohibited and will be subject to immediate administrative action. Link to NIRAS Policies</li> <li>Encourage women and individuals from minority groups, indigenous groups, disadvantaged groups and persons with disabilities to apply in each job vacancy</li> <li>SUSWA provides internship and training opportunities to women and individuals from DAGs to build their skills and experience to compete in the job market</li> <li>SUSWA promotes diversity within their workforces through affirmative action: Extra marks will be given to candidates who are women, from disadvantaged caste and ethnic groups, and/or local people who are residents of working project districts. The project will also include at least one woman on the interview panel of the staff selection. In order to actively seek out candidates from DAGs and remote areas, the projects will network with women, Dalit and Janajati organisations, their federations and branch/district chapters to inform them of open vacancies</li> <li>Job Descriptions/Staff evaluations: projects periodically review and update the Terms of Reference and Job Descriptions of staff. All Job Descriptions/Terms of Reference have HRBA and GEDSI related tasks and responsibilities included to mainstream these across all substance areas</li> </ul>
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SUSWA and WASH Unit staff will be given GEDSI training and. Due to staff turnover at different levels, conducting continuous capacity</li> </ul>

	<p>building training / refresher training throughout the project period is important as deemed necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The capacity building activities can be done through e.g.,             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ GEDSI action plan be printed out and read by all, as well as integrated in other SUSWA plans and documents</li> <li>○ formal awareness raising training on disability inclusion, gender mainstreaming and women empowerment training</li> <li>○ sharing materials, posters and leaflets on gender and disability inclusion</li> <li>○ cross learning and experience sharing through site visits and discussion with user communities, partners and inviting e.g., local OPD representatives to come talk with the staff on different topics</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Creating GEDSI friendly working environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mutual respect is a guiding principle in the project</li> <li>● Gender, disability and social inclusive language is encouraged, and no discriminatory or defamatory language is tolerated</li> <li>● Accessible work and meeting environment is created at the office</li> <li>● Inclusive meeting protocol to be created and followed in all meetings</li> </ul>

# ANNEXES



# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1: Definitions in this document

**The Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)** sector in Nepal is supported in line with the National Water Supply and Sanitation Policy from 2014. WASH is defined according to the Sustainable Development Goal 6, meaning to contribute to achieving 1) universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking 2) access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all to 3) open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

**The Human Rights Based Approach to Development (HRBA)** is an approach to development cooperation which according to the Common Understanding<sup>2</sup> among the UN Agencies has three dimensions: 1) All programmes of development co-operation, policies and technical assistance should further the realization of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, 2) Human rights standards contained in, and principles derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process and 3) Development cooperation contributes to the development of the capacities of 'duty-bearers' to meet their obligations and/or of 'rights-holders' to claim their rights. The project was planned according to guidance by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign affairs including its Guidance note on HRBA<sup>3</sup>.

The SUSWA project is planned and implemented in line with the HRBA and supports the Nepali government and the municipalities involved as duty-bearers to protect, respect and fulfill human rights, in particular the right to water. Human rights commitments of Nepal guide the project in its priority setting and its objectives. The authorities as the duty-bearers are supported in their obligations to ensure the fulfillment of human rights and the capacity of the rights-holders (the beneficiaries of the project) is supported in their ability to claim rights, be heard and participate in decision-making processes relevant to the sector.

**The Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)** is derived from the thinking in the Common Framework for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion<sup>4</sup> which is based on The Constitution and Policy instruments and priorities set by the Government of Nepal. The intention is to 1) Focus development attention on the overlapping layers of disadvantage that surround women, poor, the vulnerable and the excluded; 2). Analyze the barriers presented by each layer; and 3). Develop holistic, data-driven development approaches and interventions that successfully address multidimensional exclusion/deprivation.<sup>5</sup> The GEDSI approach used in the project includes Disability as a key focus area to highlight the needs and rights of people with disability in line with international commitments and standards included in the Convention of the Rights of people with Disabilities<sup>6</sup> The aim of disability inclusion is to involve persons with disabilities or organizations representing them in assuring

<sup>2</sup> The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies, UNSDG Human Rights Working Group, 2003, available at [https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/6959-The\\_Human\\_Rights\\_Based\\_Approach\\_to\\_Development\\_Cooperation\\_Towards\\_a\\_Common\\_Understanding\\_among\\_UN.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/6959-The_Human_Rights_Based_Approach_to_Development_Cooperation_Towards_a_Common_Understanding_among_UN.pdf), visited 26.9.2022.

<sup>3</sup> The Human Rights based Approach In Finland's Development Cooperation, A Guidance Note, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2015 available at [https://um.fi/documents/35732/48132/human\\_rights\\_based\\_approach\\_in\\_finlands\\_development\\_cooperation\\_guidance](https://um.fi/documents/35732/48132/human_rights_based_approach_in_finlands_development_cooperation_guidance), visited 25.9.2022

<sup>4</sup> A Common Framework for Gender Equality & Social Inclusion, GESI Working Group, 2017: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Working Group, International Development Partners Group, Nepal, available at [https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEA/Docs/Publications/2017/04/GESIframeworkReportFinal2017\\_compressed.pdf](https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEA/Docs/Publications/2017/04/GESIframeworkReportFinal2017_compressed.pdf), visited 25.9.2022.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 2017, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Convention of the Rights of people with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (A/RES/61/1069 adopted 13 December 2006, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

working towards physical accessibility to services and facilities as well as accessibility to information and participation in decision-making processes.

**Gender** refers to the socially constructed roles and identities of men and women as well as the relationships between them. These roles change over time and vary by culture. In Nepal, women face unequal power relations and gender-based barriers and violence due to a patriarchal society.

**Disability** is an evolving concept depending on the interaction between a person and the environment, as it is the result of the combination of an impairment and barriers. Disability inclusion is therefore the combination of an impairment and an accessible environment. The cause of an impairment may be an accident, war, natural disaster, congenital, medical negligence, while the cause of disability relates to poverty, lack of accessible environment, poor educational and health opportunities, discriminatory practices, various barriers in society. Disability is seen through a functional approach in SUSWA and the Washington Group Questionnaire is used to identify those who have difficulties doing something because of health issues, such as, e.g., a physical or mental or intellectual impairments.

**Caste** refers to the Hindu hierarchical system, which originated by categorizing people into caste groups according to the division of labor, roles, and functions. In Nepal, the “upper” castes refer to the Brahmans and Chhetris and the “lower” castes refer to the Dalits who suffer from caste- and untouchability-based practice and religious, social, economic, political, and cultural discrimination.

**Vulnerable groups** or ‘**those in vulnerable situations**’ (used by SUSWA) are referred to in the project outcome statement. When referring to those in vulnerable situations, we refer to all those on a group and individual basis who are at risk and more vulnerable to e.g., climate change or disasters or heightened living costs or political uncertainty or violence, who have special needs to consider. Who are vulnerable can be context-bound. Excluded groups are often vulnerable e.g., due to discriminatory policies or customs, but vulnerable groups are not necessarily excluded / can also include others not excluded, e.g., children, elderly, and temporarily sick. Ultra poor households have been identified by proxy-indicators in Nepal, such as having daily wages as main income and woman-headed households, households without adult members and/or households having person(s) with physical disabilities.

**Discriminated /Excluded groups** refers to the experience of groups that have been systematically and historically been politically, economically, socially and culturally discriminated against based on gender, caste, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, language, disability, HIV status or religion. Exclusion occurs in public institutions such as the legal or education system, as well as social institutions such as communities and households. For example, LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex) +, single women, returnee migrant women, home-based workers, sex workers, women with disabilities, indigenous women, Dalit women, Madhesi women, Muslim women, orphans, refugees might be subjected to exclusion from opportunities, the access to services and resources. The Constitution of Nepal has two lists of backward and excluded groups that are under state provisions of welfare and development assistance.

**Disadvantaged groups** contain both excluded and vulnerable groups and refers to all those that face extra obstacles to participate and benefit equally with the mainstream population, e.g., because of social exclusion, gender exclusion, physical disability, poverty, overall vulnerability, lack of education, organization and exposure, and they often face multiple discrimination and barriers. In this document we will refer to DAGs, which due to e.g., patriarchal structures and norms includes widows and single-women, Dalits, and Persons with Disabilities, at a minimum. In Nepal, it is important that each municipality SUSWA works with further identifies the disadvantaged groups per municipality that require further consideration, as this can include other ethnic groups, people in isolated locations or otherwise potentially neglected or discriminated groups.

## ANNEX 2: The SUSWA Project, HRBA and GEDSI

### 1. SUSWA project introduction & context

The Sustainable WASH for All (SUSWA) project is a continuation of financial and technical support that the Government of Finland has been providing to the development of the WASH sector in Nepal since 1989. The core goal of Finland's development policy is to eradicate extreme poverty and to reduce poverty and inequality. The realization of human rights is another key framework and goal in Finland's development policy. The aim is also to strengthen the capacity of individuals and authorities to promote human rights as well as to assure that development cooperation is not discriminatory and people, including persons with disabilities have an opportunity to participate in decision making. Gender equality, non-discrimination with a specific focus on persons with disabilities and climate resilience and low-emission development are crosscutting objectives in Finland's development cooperation.

The Department of Water Supply and Sewerage Management (DWSSM), under the Ministry of Water Supply (MoWS), is the main agency supporting the implementation of this project. The Federal Water Supply and Sewerage Management project (FWSSMP) Surkhet under the DWSSM acts as the project Coordination Office (PCO) of the project. The initial total budget of SUSWA is 21 MEUR which comprises the budget from GoN 5 MEUR, GoF 9 MEUR, Municipalities (estimate) 5 MEUR and Users' contribution (estimate) 2 MEUR. However, after the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal decided to provide additional funding of 10.1 MEUR to the project as part of the Team Europe Initiative on Green Recovery, the total project budget comes to 31.1 MEUR.

The duration of the project is 5.5 years starting from Mid-November 2021. The project aims to work in and with 42 municipalities, covering all ten districts of Karnali Province.

Annual funds for the implementation of the project activities will be transferred directly to the Municipal WASH Fund (MWF). The planning process is integrated into the municipalities' seven-step planning process. SUSWA supports the local government to undertake their mandate in providing WASH services to the people in a participatory and transparent manner with focus on strengthening the local governance.

The Municipalities are the main implementers of this project and the main duty-bearers to be supported to implement human rights and in increasingly becoming more sensitive towards the needs and rights of women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. The Municipalities are responsible for planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of WASH activities in their respective areas. The Municipalities are to follow the community-based and human rights-based approach for the implementation of project activities. SUSWA supports the local government to undertake their mandate in providing WASH services to the people in a participatory and transparent manner, taking into account human rights principles.

The following are the key impact and outcome statements of the SUSWA project.

**Impact Statement:** "Improved well-being and inclusive communities with sustainable WASH services and behaviors through local governments' improved capacity to achieve equal rights to WASH for all".

The impact statement has a clear vision on promoting inclusion and sustainable WASH services and rights with a spirit of non-discrimination, since it involves the idea of reaching all and leaving no one behind in line with the HRBA and the SDGs. It clearly identifies the capacity strengthening of the local governments as a key impact objective.

**Outcome Statement:** "People supported by the project Municipalities have improved and equitable access to safe and sustainable drinking water and adequate sanitation services, dignified menstruation

and improved hygiene practices paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.”

The project improves the fulfillment of the right to water in concrete ways, as outlined in the outcome statement. A key human rights challenge with regard to dignified services in relation to menstruation is also high-lighted in the outcome statement. Particular attention is paid to women and girls in vulnerable situations, which might be women and girls facing multiple discrimination in practice such as girls with disabilities. The outcome has an intersectoral approach involving the right to water and health and intersectionality between different risk factors of discrimination and exclusion, which are worth noticing.

The key results and achievements of the project are built on the following three outcome areas (OAs):

**Outcome Area 1:** “Strengthened enabling environment and governance for sustainable WASH services and GESI in project Municipalities”

**Outcome Area 2:** Climate resilient, safe and functional water supply in project Municipalities

**Outcome Area 3:** Sustainable sanitation & hygiene and dignified menstruation management

### 1.1 Karnali Province

Karnali is the country's largest province with an area of 30,211 sq.km. covering one-fifth of Nepal's total geographical area. However, it is sparsely populated with 1.69 million people, accounting for only 5.8 percent of the national population and thus has the lowest provincial density. Karnali Province shares its borders with Tibet in China to the north, Sudurpaschim Province to the west and Gandaki Province and Lumbini Province to the east. The province consists of 54 rural and 25 urban municipalities, and has 366,255 households.<sup>7</sup>

Despite major improvements over the past few decades, the province lags behind on several development fronts. 28.9 percent of its people live below the poverty line with a per capita income of \$606, which is substantially below the national average. Likewise, in 2019 as per the multidimensional poverty, 51.2 percent of people are poor and the Human Development Index (HDI) of the province was just 0.538, both of which are below the national average of 28 percent and 0.49, respectively<sup>8</sup>. The province contributes less than four percent of Nepal's GDP, which is not surprising given the rough terrain and limited number of registered industries (only 39 as of March 2019). The average life expectancy in Karnali is 67 years: the lowest of all provinces. Malnutrition in children under five years is 58 percent.

The SUSWA working area covers 42 municipalities in all districts. The total population for the SUSWA working area is 690, 250 with 148,046 households, with 9% being woman-headed households according to SUSWA Baseline report 2022. The caste-ethnic compositions is 59.5 percent are Brahmin, 24.5 percent are Janajati, 15.3 percent are Dalit and 0.7 percent are others with 83% Hindu, 15% Buddhist, 2% Christian and the remaining 0.2% percent other religion.<sup>9</sup> In the SUSWA working area, 22.3 percent of households don't have access to safe water and 11 percent of households don't have access to toilet facilities. The literacy rate in Karnali is 59% according to the National Population Census of 2021.

Karnali Province has been a fertile ground for publicly funded socio-economic projects. The Karnali Employment Guarantee Project, for example, has inspired a national version. The province's geographical vastness increases the cost of providing infrastructure. Karnali Province has major prospects in eco-tourism, high value organic

<sup>7</sup> Source: National Census 2078 (2021)-Preliminary Report 2078

<sup>8</sup> [https://npc.gov.np/images/category/MPI\\_Report\\_2021\\_for\\_web.pdf](https://npc.gov.np/images/category/MPI_Report_2021_for_web.pdf) and HDI 2019 report

<sup>9</sup> Source: SUSWA Baseline Report 2022.

agriculture, and hydropower. However, a number of hurdles inhibit realization of these opportunities, such as clarifying the roles of national, provincial and local governments in the federal context; investment in hard and soft infrastructure; attraction of domestic and foreign investment; and creation of quality human resources.

## 2. SUSWA in HRBA and in GEDSI

The strategy, as well as the SUSWA project, is built on previous achievements and lessons learned and in GEDSI policy development in Nepal. It works in line with international and Nepali standards and established institutional arrangements on GEDSI coordination and policy implementation. The project is aligned with and supports the implementation of, Nepali human rights commitments.

### **Duty-bearers analysis**

The main duty bearers supported by the SUSWA project are the implementers of the project; Local Governments in the project areas, and the Strategy and Action plan identify strategic ways on how to support their own capacity to design and implement gender-sensitive and inclusive policies and to ensure the project itself is responsible to the rights of the focus groups.

The project supports the local governments in their capacity development to ensure the WASH services provided and coordinated by the local governments are functional, sustainable, inclusive and accountable to their stakeholders and beneficiaries. SUSWA also ensures the normative human rights criteria are taken into account in the provision of the WASH services. The criteria are availability, accessibility, quality/safety, affordability and acceptability.

SUSWA aims to strengthen the capacity of the main duty bearers, especially the municipalities as implementers of the project, in creating an enabling environment and to fulfill human rights with particular attention to women and people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.

### **Right holders' analysis**

The rights-holders of the SUSWA projects are the beneficiaries of the project activities, the users of the water, sanitation and hygiene services the project supports. The local community in the target area are the rights holders of the project, and the implementation of their right to water is concretely being supported as an integral part of the project. The right's holder's right to participate in public decision-making is supported by increasing the opportunities of women, people with disabilities and people who risk marginalization to actively participate in the decision-making procedures in the water, sanitation and hygiene sectors.

Groups in marginalized and vulnerable positions shall be identified in each municipality and community where SUSWA works. In the assessment done on the rights holders of the project, attention is paid to different factors which might lead to discrimination of certain groups in what concerns accessing WASH services and participating in decision-making processes.

Certain groups might be in a disadvantaged situation such as members of certain casts such as the Dalits or some ethnic groups which lack access to services and participation. Poverty, disability and remoteness make people vulnerable irrespective of gender or social status, caste or ability. Social equality, child, gender and disability-friendly facilities, and ensuring dignified menstruation are the key issues in addressing the needs of persons in vulnerable positions.

Finally, it is important to note that identifying those most vulnerable does not mean that SUSWA activities should be aimed specifically at them, as targeting those with the power to create an enabling environment for change, or changing their own behaviour and mindset for reduced discrimination, is often important when working for

gender equality and non-discrimination. SUSWA activities will work to meaningfully include those vulnerable, but often target men or those without disabilities in working for change.

### **SUSWA HR & GEDSI priorities**

The strategic HR & GEDSI priorities are:

- 1) Changing social norms and discriminatory practices in communities through training, targeted activities and communication (awareness campaigns, materials distributed, etc.), empowering rights holders to claim their rights,
- 2) Promoting GEDSI in political decision-making and strengthening municipalities' capacity on human rights, gender and disability and social inclusions, through training, enhancing disaggregated data collection, policies, laws, gender and disability responsive budgeting, institutional arrangements, network and HR support and
- 3) Strengthening project and project stakeholders, as well as the broader WASH sector, capacity through data collection, analysis, training and guidelines.

In order to reach the above, some important strategies of the SUSWA HR & GEDSI approach are:

- Inclusion planned from the onset, with Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPD's) or PwDs/PwD family members and women and Dalits included in all stages, via accessibility and partnering with local OPDs.
- Identification of inequality and discrimination with the aim to remove barriers (attitudes, physical, communication) that prevent equal participation and access to services, e.g., Conduction of gender analysis as part of planning processes, disability assessments as part of technical designs
- Gender-responsive budgeting and budget allocation for inclusion and accessibility
- Data disaggregated by sex, age, caste, ethnicity and disability in the project
- Setting specific targets and indicators for inclusion in monitoring and evaluation processes

The SUSWA HR & GEDSI Action plan functions as a checklist or a reminder of ensuring the above activities are carried out. Both the Strategy and Action Plan are living documents which are to be updated annually as needed, in order to provide insight and support for all SUSWA staff and municipalities in working to mainstream HRBA and GEDSI.

### ANNEX 3: HR & GEDSI Context in Nepal

Nepal started to enforce the National Human Rights Action Plan in 2005/6. The government has prepared the 5-year-long “Fifth National Human Rights Action Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24” in 2020 that will guide the implementation of the Constitutional provisions and those in other laws. This framework aims at improving the situation of human rights in Nepal and has been viewed positively. This framework encompasses 20 different sectors related to human rights, including education, healthcare, human resource development, child rights, minority rights, empowerment principles, human rights awareness, employment, prison reform, transitional justice, institutional strengthening, among others and also indicates the programs that would be undertaken towards improving the human rights situation. Also, as part of the framework, the government has committed itself to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030) in areas of ending hunger, providing food for all, ending gender disparity, providing safe water and sanitation, providing safe housing, and for facilitating equal access to justice. The National Human Rights Commission monitored the implementation of the Human Rights action plan in most of the districts and found some positive results on its implementation.

Further, the decentralization process is ongoing, offering both opportunities to integrate HRBA in local government processes as well as highlighting the importance of strengthening local government. Political representation of women and excluded groups has significantly improved after the restructuring and decentralization processes are often assumed to have positive impact in reducing corruption and increasing integrity, due to their potential for increased representation in decision making. New government agencies are currently being set up in the provinces, where more than 60% of the elected representatives are new, with the second local elections having been organized in May 2022. This is an opportunity as mainstreaming as well as targeted GEDSI interventions can be part of the municipalities structure from ‘the beginning’<sup>10</sup>. As this process takes place, it would be important to ensure that strong legislation and regulation are implemented, and that governance is transparent. It is also crucial that roles and responsibilities are made as clear as possible, since uncertainty on roles and resource transfers have been shown to create integrity risks. If there are weak governance mechanisms in place, corruption, malpractices, and collusion will thrive, and public trust in the new structures will erode. Thus, to capitalize on past learning and get on track to achieve SDG 6, it is also necessary to focus simultaneously on SDG16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and tackle governance issues to strengthen institutions.

However, inequalities still exist based on gender, caste and ethnicity, language, agency, sexual orientation, wealth, ability and location. While Nepal has made progress in its commitment to GEDSI in recent years, especially lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) persons continue to face significant challenges in social and political inclusion. Nepal Human Rights Year Book 2021, published by Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) concluded that there was little progress towards developing policies and regulations for ensuring the implementation of laws drafted to operationalize the fundamental rights listed in the Constitution and other laws. This led to difficulties in the implementation of fundamental rights provided by the Constitution. The recent 30th edition of the Human Rights Year Book of 2022 mirrors this, highlighting suspicion of political instability, as well as discriminatory policies and laws and a weakening of the accountability of law enforcement agencies, indicating a sense of indifference of the state institutions to protect human rights, especially gender-based violence which was a fundamental challenge for human rights protection in 2021.

The root factors relate to patriarchal norms, poor infrastructure, language and access barriers, social and cultural norms, and a history of systematic marginalization and discrimination of certain segments of society. Sociocultural and hierarchical institutions and values perpetuate the low status of women and certain groups based on caste and ethnicity, as well as religio-cultural discriminatory practices such as chhaupadi. At present, Nepal ranks 145th

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<sup>10</sup> The decentralization process began after the 2015 constitution, with the first municipal elections held in 2017 and the second municipal elections were held in May 2022.

on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index, which combines maternal mortality ratio, female share of seats in parliament, and other indicators. Lack of data and awareness of needs of Persons with Disabilities as well as difficult topography for accessibility are further challenges of inclusion.

In the light of such developments, SUSWA will need to continue analyzing the norms and root causes of the discriminatory practices, as well as identifying ways to address them in implementation and monitoring to show the progress towards transformative change.

## 1 GESI & WASH

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has been ratified by Nepal. The right to freedom from discrimination against women in rural areas is of particular relevance in the context of rural WASH (CEDAW article 14.2) GESI in WASH entails equality, child-gender-disability (CGD) friendly facilities, dignified menstruation management and financial feasibility as key issues. WASH services need to move beyond technical solutions towards a more GESI oriented approach that considers existing negative social norms, unequal power relations between men and women, including between persons with and without disabilities and between diverse social groups, and takes into consideration how this impacts the realization of specific rights, such as equal access to WASH.

The European Union has adopted a gender mainstreaming approach as the primary means to achieve gender equality, with the core principles of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) III (2021-2025) focusing on an approach that is gender-transformative, addressed intersectionality of gender with other forms of discrimination, e.g. social identity (caste, ethnicity and religion), age, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), geographical location and income status), and is based on human rights. As part of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) III (2021-2025), there is a specific Country Level Implementation Plan for Nepal, which identifies the three most relevant areas of engagement of the GAP III for Nepal as 1) Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence (AE1), 2) Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women (AE3), and 3) Promoting equal participation and leadership (AE4), which entails "Increased access to essential services", such as WASH.

There are strong national and international mandates for inclusive WASH services in Nepal. The Government of Nepal has prioritized water supply service level upgrading in the National Water Supply and Sanitation Policy, and the 15th Development Plan is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the country. Nepal is committed to pursuing and achieving SDGs by 2030 including those relevant to water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH): 6.1 (achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all) and 6.2 (achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations).

Improved public health and living standard of people of Nepal through safe, sufficient, accessible, acceptable, and affordable water, sanitation and hygiene services, at any time, for everyone and everywhere, is the major development goal of the Government of Nepal. According to the Constitution of Nepal, access to drinking water and sanitation is a fundamental right of all citizens. Article 35 (4) states that "every citizen shall have the right of access to clean drinking water and sanitation." The aim is to ensure sustainable delivery of water supply and sanitation services for which payment, through taxes and transfers or directly through affordable tariffs, would be necessary. Likewise, the 15th Periodic Plan (2019/2020– 2024/2025) aims to provide basic drinking water and sanitation services to 99% of the population, and expand medium- and high-quality services in the Plan period.

It is in this context, various policies have directed for increased participation of women and excluded groups in water and sanitation user groups in planning, implementation, ownership of systems, and operation of services. Some of these policies are the National Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Policy (2009), the Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan (2011), and the National Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Policy (2014). These policies aim to address the rights and needs of women, Dalits, Janajatis, Madhesis, Muslims, persons with disabilities, and

LGBTQI through proportional representation and increasing their role in decision-making, and to identify urban poor and vulnerable groups requiring special assistance through social mapping. As a step toward addressing equity in access to WASH services, four disadvantaged groups are identified in WASH plans: (i) poor populations, (ii) indigenous populations, (iii) ethnic minorities, and (iv) persons with disabilities.

There is a high correlation between access to toilets and poverty levels, and high correlation between poverty and women headed households. The 15-year Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Sector Development Plan (2016–2030) mandates that child, gender and disabilities (CGD) -friendly facilities be available as part of improved services, with sufficient supply of water, separate toilets for boys and girls, handwashing with soap, and menstrual hygiene management (MHM). It directs that priority should be given to women and excluded groups in cross subsidy mechanisms and to projects that mainstream GESI in large and medium systems. The National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan 2011 stresses the importance of gender and social inclusion and emphasizes child, gender and disability inclusive features as well as poverty aspects in project implementation. It calls for a fair balance of women (usually minimum 33% in committees) at all implementation levels. However, meaningful female participation in decision-making roles continues symbolic due to inter alia, lack of political will, illiteracy, lack of time and necessary skills.

## 2 Disability & WASH

Nepal signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities CRPD in January 2008 and it was ratified in June 2010. Nepal adopted the Disability Rights Act in 2017, taking on a right-based approach to disability compared to welfare-based approach (the previous law was Disabled Persons Welfare Act of 1982). The National Penal Code 2017 criminalized discrimination based on disability with heavy penalties.

The Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen (MoWCSW) and a National Disability Direction Committee are responsible for policy development at the national level. At the village and municipality level, disability coordination committees are to be established. The 1999 Local Self Governance Act provides ward committees with the responsibility of ensuring the livelihoods of persons with disabilities. Access to education for children with disabilities has been improved by the 2017 Inclusive Education Policy for Persons with Disabilities and the School Sector Development Plan 2016- 2023.

Poverty and disability have a strong correlation and for persons with disabilities and their families the cycle of poverty is hard to break as disability is both a cause, as well as a consequence of poverty. A family member with a disability can trigger additional costs that can push the family into extreme poverty. At the same time poverty can be a cause of disability: through lack of access to adequate nutrition, preventative and curative health care; information, clean water and sanitation or safe housing and employment conditions.

Disability can be a significant factor creating barriers to accessing adequate water, sanitation facilities and services. As well as facing physical barriers, these groups are often left out from decision-making processes when planning meetings and public activities. Due to topography and long walking distances in Nepal as well as difficulties of accessing government buildings with stairs or walking several hours to the municipal offices, they face challenges in raising their voice and in having their concerns heard. to the staff members. People with disabilities are often stigmatized in a social and cultural sense, and shame leads them to sometimes remain hidden in houses. There is inadequate availability of data to assess the exact number of PwDs who face water scarcity and lack of access. However, there is however marginalization and invisibility of this population in water sector development programs. For instance, people using wheelchairs in rural Nepal usually cannot access toilets – either at home or in institutions such as schools.

To address accessibility and availability of WASH services for persons with disabilities physical access needs to be ensured in the design phase of WASH facilities and in acquiring equipment. Situational aspects for selection of facilitation such as assessing the surrounding environments to ensure access for all. An example is the taps

accessible without, for example, taps that are not always in easy reach without squatting or there might be obstacles to reach taps which are barriers to people with disability.

Several aspects of WASH sector development need to take note of factors which might limit the right to water and sanitation for people with Disability. These are for example, inadequate communication, unclear or complex written information or no availability of sign language. There might be budgetary constraints in the WASH sectors or not considering the needs of people with disability in budgetary planning processes and decision-making. There is often a lack of reliable data on the number of people living with disability which inform public policy planning. Negative attitudes, stigma and public beliefs which exclude people with disabilities from WASH related planning.

In WASH programming efforts can be made to increase cooperation with experts and organizations which represent people with disabilities and in establishing networks with others working in the field in Nepal. By promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in the WASH coordination committees there is increased opportunities to factor in the removal of barriers for accessing services for the focus group. This often leads to increased awareness of the rights and concrete needs of people with disabilities in the planning and implementation of WASH activities. Inclusive planning and inclusive budgeting process at the municipality level can be supported and facilitated. To address the challenge of lack of reliable data the program can engage experts for tailored studies on disability and data gathering assignments for the use of the municipalities.

According to the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, the EU external action respects and implements the CRPD principles alongside Agenda 2030, mainstreaming the universal design approach for better accessibility and provision of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities into all actions, and that EU delegations provide support to advance the rights of persons with disabilities, guidance to implement accessibility and ensure meaningful consultation of persons with disabilities, including through their representative organizations based on existing good practices. The EU strives for targeted action on disability as well as disability mainstreaming in its external action.

SUSWA will focus on strengthening the human rights/social model of disability, which stresses the role of duty bearers and authorities to take measures to remove all barriers (physical, social communication related) to ensure that persons with disabilities, including from rural areas and indigenous or Dalit backgrounds have access to human rights and basic services as well as equal participation. For the purposes of SUSWA, the project adopts a functional capacity approach by which it can approach the concept of disability by identifying persons that have serious limitations in their physical and sensory or self-care related functioning capacity using the Washington Group questionnaire.

### **3 Menstruation management as a gender and human rights challenge**

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) has gotten increasing attention in recent years in Nepal and is a vital part of the crosscutting GESI approach. Further, menstruation management is a key human rights challenge in the Nepali context because of cultural beliefs and practices on how women are treated in society during their menstruation period. In Hinduism, menstruating women are traditionally considered ritually impure and given strict rules to follow. During menstruation, women are not allowed to touch taps, enter the kitchen and temples, wear flowers, have sex, touch other people, or use the same toilet with others. Women themselves are deemed impure and polluted, and are often isolated as untouchables and unable to return to their family for the length of their period. This practice is called Chhaupadi in Nepal and is mostly linked to caste cultures (Brahmin, Chhetri, Dalit), while not so widely practiced among Janajatis in the area (Magar, Tharu, Tamang, Kham, Gurung and Sherpa etc.) Despite being outlawed in 2015 and being a punishable crime in 2017, Chhaupadi is still widely practiced among certain Hindu communities in Karnali. Based on SUSWA baseline data 89.13 percent think that Chhaupadi needs to be abolished but only two-third know that Chhaupadi is illegal.

Apart from prevailing negative socio-cultural restrictions, practical and logistics reasons such as shortage of water, soap, sanitary products, waste disposal facility as well as separate and clean toilets, women and girls continue to face many challenges and often struggle to manage their menstruation hygiene in the province. Due to the harmful social practices, women do not have adequate access to water as women and girls are not allowed to use a hand-washing facility during menstruation in many communities. Restrictions during postpartum vary, as there are less restrictions for women after delivery in some areas. The conformity to traditional, religious beliefs is thought to be the major reason for the prevalence of such restrictions in the community.

Most adolescent girls suffer from inadequate toilet arrangement at home as well as in institutions, particularly at schools. Girls experience fear, confusion, and concern at the time of menstruation. The issue is of utmost importance as safe and effective menstrual hygiene management is a critical component of adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health. As stated in UNICEF's study (2016) on menstrual hygiene practices in Nepal, at a practical level, in order to manage menstruation hygienically, women and girls must have access to water and sanitation and convenient disposal/cleaning facilities. They require somewhere private and safe to change their sanitary cloths, as well as facilities for safely disposing of used materials or a place to wash and dry them if reusable.

The intersection of gender and disability is crucial to consider in order to ensure dignified menstruation management for all. Women and girls with disabilities may face specific barriers when it comes to MHM, such as physically inaccessible WASH facilities and suitable sanitary products due to e.g, lack of data and budgeting to inform inclusive infrastructure and supply chains, inaccessible information on MHM, e.g., only written or only spoken communication, communication only reaching those attending school, and reliance on caregivers to provide a dignified environment for MHM and harmful attitudes preventing them from practicing dignified menstruation management. SUSWA's actions for Dignified Menstruation Management (DMM) shall include women and girls with disabilities and ensure that awareness about dignified menstruation reaches persons with disabilities and their caretakers equally. To ensure this, SUSWA shall also co-operate and build partnerships with national and local organizations of women with disabilities.

Massive awareness raising campaigns, and addressing religious authorities and the community as a whole is important as well as supporting the municipalities to formulate their own plans for eradication of malpractices of menstruation management to support the new legislation. Dignified menstruation needs to be incorporated appropriately and entirely into the curricula, empowering all adolescent girls, including those with disabilities, with accessible information and support, with clear linkages of dignified menstruation to family planning, sexual and reproductive health, and future wellbeing. Both the government agencies and organizations centered on education should collaborate directly with the teachers and students themselves to design and conceptualize education to best impart the knowledge needed for comprehensive dignified menstruation. Advocacy campaigns are required to combat the deeply ingrained religious and cultural malpractices, restriction, and taboos related to menstruation. Female teachers should be encouraged to stay at work and practice all the regular activities during their own menstruation to act as positive role models to the adolescent girls. Increasing access to hygiene absorbents and disposal of MHM items should be addressed and MHM friendly WASH facilities must be made available at schools.

SUSWA will in its activities take note of the contextual analyses and aim to address the harmful practices relating to menstrual practices and in supporting awareness training and capacity building and in strengthening municipal policies to ensure access to water and sanitation for all. SUSWA further co-operates with both the national level alliance on MHM as founding and functioning as secretary for the provincial level Karnali Alliance for DMM. Collaboration and networking for DMM is part of SUSWA's strategy to reach as many as possible in Karnali and to utilize multiple modes of activities for social norm change.

#### 4 HRBA and WASH in Nepal

The human rights-based approach (HRBA) means that development cooperation is based on international human rights standards and principles and that development promotes the respect, protection and fulfillment of human rights. The HRBA is a tool to identify inequalities and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress. It identifies right-holders and their entitlements, corresponding duty-bearers and their obligations, and works towards strengthening the capacities of rights holders to make their claims and duty-bearers to meet their obligations. In HRBA, both the realization of the rights and the process of implementation are equally important.

An important element of HRBA is that rights-holders should be able to claim their rights, and justice, which requires accountability of duty-bearers. Municipalities are therefore important entry points for ensuring HRBA, with local government as duty bearers, accountable for gender-responsive budgeting, planning and social and disability inclusion. HRBA is an essential tool in any initiative to assess the capacity gaps in duty-bearers' abilities to plan for, budget and provide access to water and sanitation for all. The HRBA is an approach which pays attention to the most vulnerable groups, with a certain focus on the people who face poverty, stigmatization and are disadvantaged communities in remote areas. In the context of Nepal, applying a HRBA will contribute to increased social and environmental considerations in the sector and to improved accessibility to water and sanitation for the whole population in general and women, Dalits, Janajatis, Madhesis, Muslims, persons with disability and LGBTQI persons in particular.

The normative human rights standards give the minimum acceptable level of a desirable outcome. The human rights principles (such as non-discrimination, participation, empowerment and accountability), in turn, give the criteria for an acceptable process. The HRBA principles like universality, non-discrimination and equality, participation, and empowerment create an enabling environment for all to be involved in maintaining the WASH services. HRBA integrates the norms, principles, standards and goals of the international human rights system into development plans and processes.

The basis for the HRBA is the human rights commitments the country has made and which touches upon all duty-bearers in their capacities, such as the municipalities SUSWA supports. Nepal has ratified various international human rights conventions and instruments. Human rights were given a high priority in the formulation of Nepal's Constitution in 2015. The Constitution protects both civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights under Part 3 on Fundamental Rights and Duties. Rights related to basic human needs such as food, education, housing, employment as well as WASH are acknowledged. It also distinguishes the rights to social justice for all disadvantaged and socially marginalized groups, including e.g., Dalits, women, senior citizens, children, indigenous people and nationalities, minorities, and persons with disabilities. Overall, Nepal has ratified most of the international human rights instruments. These instruments include international conventions of women, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities (PWD), and against racial discrimination.

In addition, and most critically for this sector, is the United Nations Resolution on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation (2010). The UN resolution on the right to water and sanitation as a human right was adopted by the General Assembly in 2010, and Nepal voted in favor of it. It is considered soft law, a recommendation on interpretation to states. The Constitution of Nepal (2015) however recognizes the right to water (Art. 35, para. 4).

Starting from the 1997 United Nations Water Conference at Mar del Plata, the International Drinking Water and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990) and the International Conference on Water and the Environment (Dublin 1992), there has been explicit recognition of the central role of women in water management. The UN Water for Life Decade (2005-2015) promoted efforts to fulfill international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015. It places emphasis on ensuring the involvement and participation of women in the development as they play a central role in water provision and management.

The United Nations Resolution A/HRC/24/L.31 on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation recognizes that the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation entitles everyone, without discrimination, to have access to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use and to have physical and affordable access to sanitation, in all spheres of life, that is safe, hygienic, secure, socially and culturally acceptable and that provides privacy and ensures dignity. The non-discrimination factor was a particular groundbreaking interpretation in the UN Resolution on the Right to Water and this is a crucial factor for the SUSWA program in Nepal.

The HRBA is a tool for the poor or marginalized to claim their rights to existing resources, and to share these more equally. Access to resources is part of a political and gradual process. A human rights-based approach focuses attention on those groups who lag behind. The linkage between the reduction of poverty and increased access to water and improved sanitation services is incomplete without addressing health and hygiene. Sanitation and hygiene require approaches that are sensitive to the local culture and conditions, as well as increased support and commitment at the national and policy level.

The most important human rights instruments for the water/sanitation sector are contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Access to "safe and clean drinking water and sanitation" was explicitly recognized as a human right by the UN General Assembly in July 2010 and by the Council for Human Rights in September 2010. It is part of the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to health (articles 11 and 12 of the ICESCR).

#### 4.1 Right to Water

The right to water and sanitation has been internationally recognized as a human right. The most important relevant legally binding human right instrument is the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The right to water is derived from the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing. The right to water is a prerequisite for securing an adequate standard of living, since it is a fundamental condition for survival.

The United Nations General Assembly recognized the human right to water and sanitation in its Resolution 64/292 in 2010.<sup>11</sup> The Resolution is a politically binding instrument but has been regarded as an interpretation of the Right to an adequate standard of living. In the resolution, it is recognized that drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realization of all human rights. States and international organizations are called upon to provide financial resources, help capacity-building and technology transfer to help countries, in particular developing countries, to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.

According to Article 2 "The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses. An adequate amount of safe water is necessary to prevent death from dehydration, to reduce the risk of water-related disease and to provide for consumption, cooking, personal and domestic hygienic requirements" The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has recognized the right to water in its General Comment No 15 in 2002. Article I.1 states that "The human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights".<sup>12</sup>

The ECOSOC defined the right to water as the right of everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable and physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses.

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<sup>11</sup> Resolution A/RES/64/292. United Nations General Assembly, July 2010

<sup>12</sup> General Comment No. 15. The right to water. UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, November 2002

The criteria for the human right to water and sanitation has been furthered specified and applied in Nepal:

**Availability:** A sufficient quantity of water for personal and domestic uses should be available. Although not legally established, many organizations estimate 20-50 liters per day/person as a minimum. Likewise, a sufficient number of sanitation facilities have to be available to all. Consideration should be given to ensuring a minimum sufficient quantity and a continuous supply of water. In Nepal this is ideally 45 liters per capita per day, but realistically this may not be physically possible in all locations, at all times of the year. Therefore, this should be considered an aspirational target. Regarding sanitation, all households, institutions, schools and offices should have toilet facilities available.

**Accessibility:** Water and sanitation services should be accessible to everyone in the household or its vicinity on a continuous basis (maximum 1 km or 30 minutes round trip). Physical security must not be threatened when accessing facilities and must be within reach also for elderly and persons with disabilities. Accessibility of information on water and sanitation issues is also essential. The Nepali standard is considered to be 15 minutes for the return trip and collection time. However again, this should be considered as a target to work towards. The toilet facilities should be accessible for all, including elderly, small children, persons with disability and such cases as menstruating women. This must be considered while designing the facilities (ramps, hand railings etc.).

**Quality/safety:** Water has to be safe for consumption and other uses, so that it poses no threat to human health. Sanitation facilities should be hygienic, technically and environmentally safe to use i.e. durable and safe (privacy, secure) for users. To ensure hygiene, access to water for cleansing and hand washing after use is essential.

**Affordability:** Access to water and sanitation should be affordable to all, also for disadvantaged persons and groups. Expenditure may not compromise the ability to pay for other essential necessities guaranteed by human rights such as food, housing and health care. A benchmark of 5% of income available to the household has been established for water and sanitation. People should be made aware of different types of affordable toilet options and how they can finance the toilet construction.

**Acceptability:** Sanitation facilities, in particular, have to be culturally and socially acceptable for the people. This will often require gender-specific facilities, constructed in a way that ensures privacy and dignity. Priorities of local people are identified in Water Plans and in some municipalities Water Use Master Plans (WUMPs).

#### 4.2 WASH service level national standards

In Nepal, the criteria of the Right to Water are specified in the WASH draft Sector Development Plan (SDP). The Plan was prepared for a period of fifteen years (2016-2030) by the Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation (MoWSS), which is now the Ministry of Water Supply (MoWS), following the recommendations made by the Joint Sector Review (JSR) in 2014.

The primary focus of SDP is to improve the public health and living standard of Nepali through the provision of safe, sufficient, accessible, acceptable and affordable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. SDP has an unofficial status for the time being. However, with the implementation of the SDP, the sector would adopt one WASH Act, one national WASH policy framework, one National WASH sector development plan executed by one Ministry, and one WASH performance report. This would result in an effective, responsive, transparent, and accountable WASH sector. Further, integrity, accountability, and anti-corruption principles have been incorporated into SDP since they form a basis for accountable WASH projects and service delivery. The SDP also specifically mentions adequate arrangements for disabled, elderly and vulnerable people.

SDP defines water supply service levels as standard, basic, medium, and high, based on quantity, quality, accessibility, reliability (duration and continuity) and service satisfaction. Similarly, service levels of sanitation have been defined as no service, limited, basic, and improved, based on accessibility, facilities, use, reliability, and

environmental protection. SDP presents an opportunity for sector development by providing a shared vision and coherent strategy around national priorities. The Plan provides a programming framework and direction for action to all stakeholders in the realization of universal access to safe water and sanitation services. SDP needs updating to align it fully with the federalization context.

The SDP foresees to provide WASH services in three phases:

- Phase I/Short Term (2016–2020): Universal access to basic WASH services, improved service levels (medium 25%, high 15% population, reconstruction);
- Phase II/Medium Term (2021–2025): Improved service levels (medium 40%, high 30% population), functionality and sustainability improvement; and
- Phase III/Long Term (2026–2030): Improved service levels (medium 50%, high 50% population), impact assessment.

#### **4.1 Main duty-bearers in the implementation of the right to water and sanitation in Nepal**

The duty-bearers of human rights commitments made by Nepal are the public institutions. They have a particular obligation and responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and abstain from human rights obligations. Other responsible actors or moral duty-bearers are other actors which can influence in the respect and protection of human rights such as civil society actors, development cooperation actors, churches, the private sector, service providers, traditional or religious authorities and leaders, community leaders etc.

A key human right duty-bearer on the implementation of the right to water is the Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation (MoWSS).

Municipalities as autonomous local governments have a wide range of powers and duties, e.g., WASH related matters (Local Government Operation Act 2074). Municipal councils hold the decision-making power, responsibility for long-term planning and funding of WASH development and operations.

In addition to municipal councils, WASH Units have an important role in bringing up the voice of the local population and coordinating between clusters in development planning and implementation. The key institutions are Municipality and Ward WASH Coordination Committees (WASH-CC), which are municipalities' 'right hands' in the management of water and sanitation services. Water Users' and Sanitation Committees (WUSCs), nominated/elected by the members of the concerned Water User Associations, have operational responsibilities.

In the bottom-up approach, the lowest level of duty Water and Sanitation bearers—who are simultaneously rights holders—are Water User Associations (WUAs). According to the National Water Supply and Sanitation Policy (2014), WUSC is a legal entity registered with the local authorities as per the Water Resource Act. It is responsible for the operation and management of WASH facilities but ownership of the assets lies with the municipality.