

WASH and Disability

Imagine being physically unable to travel to a communal toilet and soiling yourself waiting for help.

Imagine being forced to crawl across a make-shift, shared toilet floor.

Imagine consuming less in order to avoid using facilities outside the home at unsafe hours.

Imagine being a student whose wheelchair just won't quite fit through the school's toilet facilities.

Problem

Water - Almost 1 billion people (884 million) do not have safe water to drink.

Sanitation - 2 billion people don't have access to basic sanitation (over 25% of the global population).

Hygiene - 3 billion people lack adequate facilities to safely wash their hands at home.

- Sub-Saharan Africa - 75% (767 million people)
- Central and Southern Asia - 42% (807 million people)
- Northern Africa and Western Asia - 23% (116 million people)

Basic sanitation is access to facilities for:

- safe disposal of human waste
- garbage collection
- hazardous waste management
- wastewater treatment and disposal

Disability-Specific Barriers

- **Social:** Stigma against people with disabilities limits participation in community events or WASH meetings.
- **Physical:** Inaccessible design and construction of toilets, sinks, and water access points.
- **Legal:** Lack of laws and building regulations related to construction of inclusive public WASH facilities.
- **Communication:** Inaccessible WASH information, materials and dissemination strategies by both government and nongovernment development partners.

Disability-Specific Data

Public

- 110 million people with disabilities have poor access to WASH facilities.
- Data on 45,000 public toilets worldwide, mostly in developed countries, found that only 69% were accessible for wheelchair users.

Home

- More than 25% of people with disabilities do not have an indoor toilet in their home.
- 1 in 7 people with disabilities finds the toilet at home hindering or not accessible.
- Data from 34 countries show that persons with disabilities are more likely than persons without disabilities to live in households without access to adequate water and sanitation.
 - In some countries, the gaps reach more than 10 percentage points.

School

- 50% of children with disabilities do not attend school, partly due to a lack of accessible WASH facilities at schools ³
- Children with disabilities are less likely to benefit from WASH in schools programs as only 50% of children with disabilities attend school globally.
- The onset of menstruation can cause girls with disability to leave school early if they face barriers to dignified menstrual hygiene management.

Impact

Without proper sanitation facilities, waste from infected individuals can

- contaminate a community's **land and water**,
- increase the risk of **infection** for other individuals.

Poor access to safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation facilities and high-risk hygiene practices can also cause more **social exclusion and poverty** for people with disabilities due to:

- frequent and serious disease,
- poorer participation in education,
- reduced opportunities for livelihoods.

Diseases Caused by Poor WASH Access:

- Cholera
- Ebola
- Hepatitis E
- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid
- Diarrhea
- Dysentery

If left untreated, many of these diseases can lead to long term disabilities.

Kupenda's WASH Activities

Counseling

- Staff and local leader hygiene counseling for families and children
- Covid-19 prevention counseling
- Home visits to assess family hygiene equipment and practices and advise and support them in making needed improvements
- Providing education counseling to families and referring children with disabilities to schools where they have access to hygiene education and access to clean water and accessible toilets.

Trainings

- Income generating trainings and support for families impacted by disability to help them improve the structures and safety of their homes (including water access and toilets)
- First aid trainings for parents, teachers and youth
- Disability prevention and care trainings (including safe hygiene practices and education on the importance of facility referrals) for traditional healers and traditional birth attendants
- Training our meeting and workshop hosts to ensure the accessibility of materials and venues (including the WASH facilities).

Information

- Flyer with tailored information on hygiene and Covid-19 prevention for children with disabilities (in English and Swahili)
- Distributing our Accessibility Checklist, which includes toilet and water access for people with disabilities

Policy Change

- Collecting and sharing disability prevalence, WASH access, and illness data collection to support WASH-related policy changes that meet the needs of people with disabilities
- Consulting people with disabilities, their caregivers and their organizations (DPOs) to identify WASH-related problems and solutions for people with disabilities

Facilities

- Constructing wells, water pumps, and toilet facilities at special schools
- Building an accessible Advocacy Center with disability-friendly toilets and water access to provide an example to the community

Supplies

- Distributing Hygiene Kits (hand sanitizer, soap, masks) to families impacted by disability

Promoting Inclusive WASH Policies

Kupenda educates families and leaders on national and international laws and agreements regarding the rights of people with disabilities, including access to adequate WASH facilities.

For example, in the UN's *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (which 174 countries have ratified since 2008) Article 28 focuses on the right of persons with disabilities to:

“an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families; this includes State Parties duty to ensure equal access to clean water services”.

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