



The Value and Contribution of Research: Water for Women 2018-2024

Introduction

Water for Women (WfW) is unique in its role as both a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) implementation and research Fund that contributes to regional and global understanding of best practice in climate-resilient, gender equitable and socially inclusive development.

This brief documents the value and contribution of research that was designed and integrated with the actions of other actors to achieve targeted WfW outcomes during 2018–24. It draws on internal reports and 20 interviews with 35 WfW stakeholders from the Fund Coordinator, research and civil society partner organisations, and government. The findings were discussed and validated at the final WfW Fund event in October 2024.

In Brief

There is **significant value in research partnerships**, contributing to improved processes and outcomes and generating **catalytic value** beyond the initial investment and the WASH sector. They also:

- Facilitate **practical, grounded implementation support, rigour and depth, robust ethics and inclusion approaches**, and two-way **capacity development**.
- Contribute to **evidence-based planning and policymaking, thought leadership and innovation**, and leverage their **independence, convening power and networks** to progress common objectives.

Highlights

- Water for Women research has contributed directly to achieving progress towards Australia's international development priorities of peace, stability and prosperity in the Pacific and South East Asia, focusing on gender equality, disability and social inclusion, resilience, and climate action.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's investments in research and collaborative partnerships created the evidence-base and pre-conditions needed to deliver effective multi-stakeholder work. This work has improved climate-resilient inclusive WASH program performance and contributed to achieving Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 6, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Water for Women's research focus and methodical knowledge and learning processes have helped position Australia's Development Program as a global leader on climate-resilient inclusive WASH.
- Stipulating research in Water for Women's theory of change and designing the Fund to include research organisations as development partners has led to positive contributions to all four end-of-program outcomes for climate-resilient inclusive WASH.

How was this achieved?

- \$16.5 million invested in 35 research projects during 2018–24.
- More than 50 organisations, including local and international civil society organisations (CSOs), universities, research institutes, rights holder organisations and government representatives, directly involved in the 35 projects.
- Significant breadth in research type — applied, action, participatory, transdisciplinary and formative research, either led by research organisations (ROs) with local research partners, and/or conducted in partnership with CSOs, and level of engagement and influence — community, provincial, regional, national, global.
- Thought leadership and innovation, rigour and depth, a robust ethics and inclusion approach, evidence-based policymaking and practice, independent convening power, networking, localisation and capacity development.
- 303 published knowledge products, including 82 journal articles, and 25 in-person or online WfW learning exchanges.
- Improved WASH access due to more effective implementation, strengthened systems, better inclusion, and coordinated knowledge and learning through collaboration.
- Catalytic value beyond the original investment, which will continue to influence policy and practice beyond the life of WfW and beyond the WASH sector.

"In looking at the Water for Women theory of change, we can see that research contributed through multiple, non-linear pathways to the Fund's ultimate WASH aim. We and others built up the WASH evidence-base, which is the fourth Fund outcome, and research also contributed through many other pathways, for instance as a precursor for better informed action by CSOs or other stakeholders such as government and private sector actors."

Professor Juliet Willetts, University of Technology Sydney – Institute for Sustainable Futures

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Abbreviations

CBM	Inclusion Advisory Group (CBM Australia)
COP	Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DWS	Department of Water and Sewerage (Fiji)
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
I&I	Impact & Innovation grant / project
IWC	International WaterCentre – Griffith University
IWMI	International Water Management Institute, Nepal
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OPD	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RHO	Rights Holder Organisation
RO	Research Organisation
SINU	Solomon Islands National University
TOC	Theory of Change
Thrive/EMW	Thrive Networks / East Meets West
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USP	University of the South Pacific
UTS-ISF	University of Technology Sydney – Institute for Sustainable Futures
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WASH-GEM	WASH Gender Equality Measure
WfW	Water for Women



The contribution of research to outcomes

The following overview outlines Water for Women's (WfW) aim and intended outcomes and summarises how its research investment has contributed to the outcomes. Research has contributed to each WfW outcome directly – particularly outcome 4, which pertains to use of new evidence. It has also contributed indirectly by informing, improving, strengthening and supporting learning that influences policy and implementation.

Water for Women aims to improve the health, gender equality and well-being of Asian and Pacific communities through climate-resilient, inclusive and sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.

The research contribution to this aim falls into the four key end-of-program outcomes:

- 1. Strengthened national and subnational WASH sector systems with greater emphasis on climate resilience, gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI), safely managed WASH and water security.**
 - Research supported evidence-based government policy change.
 - Research revealed how to involve rights holder organisations (RHOs) in governance and decision-making to reduce inequalities and strengthen WASH systems.
 - Researchers contributed to critical enquiry to define and work to strengthen WASH systems.
- 2. Increased equitable, universal access to and use of climate-resilient, sustainable WASH services, particularly for marginalised communities and community members.**
 - Research contributed to more effective (particularly evidence-based and localised) large-scale civil society organisation (CSO) implementation, which led to improved WASH access.
- 3. Strengthened climate resilience, gender equality, disability and social inclusion in households, communities and institutions.**
 - Researchers influenced the GEDSI expertise of WfW to improve practice, including strengthening GEDSI monitoring.
 - Undertaking empirical research, then developing practical guidance and promoting its broad uptake and use, strengthened climate resilience and GEDSI policy and practice.
- 4. Strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in climate-resilient, sustainable, gender-sensitive and inclusive WASH by other CSOs, national and international WASH sector actors.**
 - Research elevated local voices and transferred knowledge for greater impact.
 - 303 knowledge products were released, including 82 published journal articles, and 25 in-person or online WfW learning exchanges held.
 - Where research engaged with actors responsible for outcomes 1–3, mutual learning informed their skills and approach to inclusion and climate resilience.
 - Water for Women utilised its network and CSOs' and research organisations' (ROs) complementary networks for learning exchange and engaging on knowledge and findings with decision-makers and global thought leaders.

The effectiveness of research design and theory of change

Research design and theory of change overview

At the outset of Water for Women (2017), WfW's theory of change (TOC) specified research as one of three key strategies to achieve its outcomes and goal: 'targeted research on gender, inclusion, climate resilience and other sector gaps' (Figure 1). The theory stipulated that research can contribute both as part of and alongside investments in WASH implementation, through evidence building, documenting, knowledge sharing and learning.



Figure 1. Water for Women's theory of change

The original Water for Women design therefore included research funding opportunities with the following modalities:

First Phase: 2018–22

- Knowledge gaps (Type 1 research awards).** Addressing key sector research gaps to answer critical sector questions and examine emerging challenges and trends.
- Implementation focused (Type 2 research awards).** Addressing knowledge gaps in WASH service delivery to support implementation of WfW projects in partnership with Fund partner CSOs.

- **Impact & Innovation (I&I) grants.**¹ Targeted research and development opportunities for partners to contribute to WfW outcomes, particularly uptake and use of guidance and tools.
 - **Category 1:** Individual Fund partner CSO or consortiums led by a Fund partner CSO
 - **Category 2:** Individual Fund partner CSO or consortiums led by a Fund partner CSO, in partnership with a dedicated RO or ROs
 - **Category 3:** Individual Fund partner ROs, or consortiums led by a Fund partner RO.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and its wide-ranging impact, WfW adapted its modalities to add specific COVID-19 research focused on WASH and well-being (2020–21).

- **COVID-19 research.**

Extension Phase: 2023–24

As WfW was extended, the extension phase included additional research opportunities in 2023–24 (see [Table 1](#)).

- **Climate-resilient WASH research** (CR-WASH).

Table 1: Overview of Water for Women research investment 2018–24

	First Phase: 2018–22				Extension Phase: 2023–24	
	Type 1	Type 2	I&I	COVID-19	CR-WASH	Total
Number of projects	5	7	14 (category 1: 4, category 2: 5, category 3: 5)	2	7	35
Funding (AUD)	4.47m	5.7m	1.9m	0.13m	4.3m	16.5m
Countries/ regions	Indonesia, Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Cambodia, Bangladesh	Indonesia, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Bangladesh	Indonesia, Nepal, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Lao PDR, Bhutan, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Asia and Pacific regions/global	Vanuatu	Bangladesh, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Vietnam, Kiribati, Nepal, Cambodia, Fiji, PNG, Indonesia	13 countries plus Asia and Pacific regions/ global
Partnership Structure	RO-led (2 RO only, 3 RO led +CSO)	RO-led + CSO (7)	RO only (2), RO- led + CSO (5), CSO-led + RO (5), CSO only (2)	RO-led + CSO (2)	RO-led + CSO (4), RO only (1), RO-led + international CSO (2)	RO only 5 RO-led + CSO 23 CSO-led + RO 5 CSO only 2
Scope (some projects have more than one level)	Household (1), community (2), national (2), organisational (1)	Community (3), organisational (5)	Household (4), community (5), national (3), global (2), organisational (2)	Community (2), organisational (1)	Household (1), community (3), national (2), organisational (7)	Household, community, national, global, organisational

¹ In the original WfW design document, these grants were called Impact Maximisation grants. They were informed by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (and others') positive experience with planning and budgeting for expanding innovation and impact and broadening uptake and use of outputs from projects.

The original Fund design and TOC has been effective. The design of WfW was effective in enabling transdisciplinary research to be both innovative and ensure solid links to policy and practice. Type 1 and type 2 modalities offered different types of research – filling WASH sector research gaps, and filling knowledge gaps in WASH delivery – and both were and continue to be valuable to WASH systems in the target countries. Type 1 awards allowed researchers to explore new areas to draw attention to problems and spur action. Type 2 awards supported a range of academic, action and market research projects in WASH delivery. Through working with ROs, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) brought government partners into projects that were not in the original Fund design and mix of stakeholders. Stakeholders reported that without the partnership structure around the research funding, some of the collaborations between CSOs and ROs would not have happened and so the Fund design facilitated that well.

The Fund design supported a broad range of types of research, which led to diverse contributions to outcomes.

The types of research undertaken through WfW applied, action, participatory, transdisciplinary and formative research, either led by research organisations with local research partners, and / or conducted in partnership with CSOs). The research scope included different levels of engagement and influence such as community, provincial, regional, national, and global ([Table 1](#)). WfW also funded knowledge and learning activities which enabled active engagement of ROs and CSOs in the [Learning Agenda](#). The breadth in type and scope enabled multiple pathways to contribute to WfW outcomes (see [The contribution of research to outcomes](#)).

Strong partnerships and flexibility enabled continuity during COVID-19. Stakeholders appreciated WfW's flexibility to adapt to the COVID-19 context. The pandemic affected many aspects of research, including preventing programmed household interviews, direct observation, and field visits. The strength of partnerships between the Fund Coordinator and its partners was credited with enabling alternative approaches that still met ethical standards to be adopted to meet objectives. During COVID-19, researchers and implementers were able to pivot and find new ways of working together, including adapting research methods and fieldwork, deepening relationships through flexibility and learning together. Two additional research projects were funded to investigate WASH responses to COVID-19 in the Indo-Pacific region in support of [DFAT's Partnerships for Recovery response](#).

Impact & Innovation grants delivered positive outcomes as planned.

Stakeholders commended the investment in I&I grants because they enabled CSOs and researchers to answer questions and grasp opportunities emerging from their previous WfW work. For example, iDE used its grant to deepen its understanding of ways to adapt targeted sanitation subsidies for climate vulnerable households.

Multi-year funding prioritising GEDSI and climate resilience has resulted in 35 research projects that are advancing these areas. Research in the extension phase focuses on climate resilience and inclusion (as championed by DFAT) and addresses both gaps and sector implementation needs. Stakeholders universally appreciated multi-year funding and the opportunity to deepen and expand the reach of projects through the two phases of funding over seven years. The length of funding allowed the development of relationships, processes and systems to deliver efficient, high-quality projects, which takes time in the Indo-Pacific.

“Innovation funding over time allows us to evolve research questions and to answer the right questions, at the right time in the right place. This is even more important as we support communities facing climate change impacts.”

Rana Abdel Sattar, iDE

The investments in research and partnerships between researchers and CSOs led to better informed climate-resilience programming in the extension phase. Research contributed to the quality of the design and the speed of preparation of CSO extension projects. The earlier research enabled CSOs to pivot to climate resilience programming by informing their rapid design process for the extension. I&I grants in 2022 paved the way to transition to climate resilience, such as through informing climate risk and vulnerability assessments. For example, in the extension phase, work using the [WASH Gender Equality Measure](#) (WASH-GEM) in Nepal and Cambodia identified climate risks, hazards and vulnerabilities, and areas where marginalisation was reducing resilience, supporting CSOs' ongoing project implementation.

The significant value of research

Water for Women's experience shows there is significant value in research, contributing to improved processes and outcomes, including in the areas of:

1. **Thought leadership and innovation;** researchers explore important questions and create new knowledge.
2. **Rigour and depth;** research drives a more rigorous and deeper approach to WASH knowledge and practice, and in stakeholder engagement and research participant representation.
3. **Robust ethics and inclusion approaches;** researchers develop and apply protocols for community engagement in line with 'do no harm' and inclusion principles.
4. **Evidence-based policymaking and practice and transferring knowledge;** research informs and changes policy and practice.
5. **Practical, grounded implementation support through partnerships;** researchers and practitioners work together to strengthen practice. Research can enable informed, efficient pivot(s) in programming, which is important in a changing climate.
6. **Independence, convening power and networks;** researchers' independence and credibility allows them to convene stakeholders to pursue common objectives and draw on their diverse and complementary networks.
7. **Localisation;** research partnerships allow engagement and collaboration with local ROs and partners to build locally led, contextualised approaches.
8. **Capacity development;** research partnerships can develop the experience and skills of local researchers, CSOs, government and community members through two-way learning.
9. **Knowledge and learning expertise;** research contributes rich content to advancing climate-resilient inclusive WASH knowledge, and researchers have developed skills in conceptual framing, critical thinking and collaborative learning processes.
10. **Catalytic value beyond the initial investment;** research generates knowledge about policy and practice that goes beyond the initial investment and context, including through sharing research results in regional and global fora and beyond the WASH sector.

Water for Women's strategies of collaborative implementation, facilitated learning and exchange, and targeted research, have positioned Australia's Development Program as a leading supporter of GEDSI transformative change in WASH policy and practice globally.

1. Thought leadership and innovation

Water for Women supported thought leadership and innovation by investing in research designed to fill WASH knowledge gaps. With WfW funding, researchers have been able to delve into longstanding WASH challenges and interrogate and explore knotty questions. ROs reported undertaking novel work with the objective of advancing climate-resilient inclusive WASH policy and practice.

Water for Women research advanced the WASH sector by charting possible paths forward. WfW's WASH sector gap research enabled thought leadership on topics including WASH access for women and girls with disabilities, self-supply water services, inclusive WASH services in workplaces, and safely managed water services for vulnerable and climate-affected populations.

Research stakeholders appreciated that Water for Women shared their understanding of the value of innovation. For both CSOs and ROs, innovation involved testing, piloting, learning and refining approaches. Sometimes findings indicate where activities can advance, as well as where they may not; some results are unsuitable for immediate implementation. However, research and testing always produce lessons that inform the way forward. In its extension phase, WfW has enabled the testing of climate resilience approaches and the development of tools and resources to strengthen climate-resilient inclusive WASH for all.

“Water for Women allowed researchers some space for ‘blue sky thinking’ to explore areas that we know are important, but are not yet caught in programming, such as self-supply of water services and circular economy.”

Dr Naomi Carrard, University of Technology Sydney - Institute for Sustainable Futures (UTS-ISF)

“Researchers are often viewed as the ‘M&E people’, but research is quite different from M&E. It tries to get to an understanding of the nature of the problems and (co)develop approaches in a ‘research and development’ way to improve the practice. A big fund, like Water for Women, needs to have both evidence-based implementation and an R&D element to foster innovation and ideas.”

Dr Regina Souter, Director, International WaterCentre (IWC) at Griffith University

Spotlight 1: Transitioning to Safely Managed Water Services in Self-Supply Contexts – understanding risks and opportunities

WfW partner: UTS-ISF

Locations: Indonesia and Vanuatu

In 2018, the governments of Indonesia and Vanuatu lacked a clear vision about the role of self-supply of water services in their pathways towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6. As a result of innovative WfW [research](#) on transitioning to safely managed water services in self-supply contexts, water sector actors in both countries are now aware of self-supply and understand its risks and opportunities. For example:

- Indonesia's National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) is carefully considering including self-supply and non-piped water in its SDG roadmap.
- In Vanuatu, WfW project data is feeding directly into the national water quality database and dashboard. This is the first time data on water quality for self-supply will be included in national water coverage estimates for Vanuatu.

2. Rigour and depth

Both ROs and CSOs indicated that ROs brought rigour and depth to the approach undertaken, stakeholder engagement and research participant representation. In WfW projects, researchers applied research methodologies that ensured a rigorous approach and close attention to inclusion in participant representation. CSOs mentioned that while they try to keep up with emerging literature, ROs have a deeper capacity for this and desktop analysis. Moreover, ROs can add value by synthesising literature and identifying best practices in inclusive stakeholder engagement.

Civil society organisations reported that researchers brought specialised but complementary technical skills that led to better questions and processes and more efficient goal achievement. CSOs reported that research partners provided additional capacity and supported rigorous research efforts, such as designing and conducting randomised controlled trials. CSOs noted that their teams lacked the skills to answer some questions; and engaging with experienced academic researchers brought deeper technical expertise and refined approaches, and expanded the range of topics they could examine. Partnerships that harness the skills of practitioners, researchers and other partners lead to better research questions and processes, benefitting the entire WASH sector.

Water for Women's dedicated research projects allowed policy assessments at a level of detail that governments had been unable to undertake. For example, in Fiji, researchers mapped departments and roles and responsibilities and interviewed government and community members to learn how WASH policy was working in practice. Researchers also worked with the government to improve policy. Similarly, in Solomon Islands, researchers investigated policy effectiveness more thoroughly than had usually been the case.

Water for Women funded research allowed transdisciplinary investigations into key WASH issues, including GEDSI and governance challenges, which have traditionally received less attention than service delivery. ROs reported observing that social sciences are not always well understood by members of other disciplines (such as engineers) and their research enabled a deeper understanding of the context that ultimately determined the success of service delivery.

“There have been a lot of water projects in Solomon Islands that have not lasted. Our experience has been that research into community water management identified a lot of gaps and recommendations. The research has also been able to provide a baseline and endline to measure impact of the recommended approaches to ensure that future projects actually do last.”

Dr Hugo Bugoro, Solomon Islands National University (SINU)



A SINU researcher conducts water quality tests in Hulavu, Solomon Islands, for the IWC's [Community-Based Water Management](#) project
Credit: IWC / Diana Gonzalez Botero

3. Robust ethics and inclusion approaches

Academic researchers have specialised skills in community engagement and apply protocols to align their work with ‘do no harm’ principles.

Stakeholders valued researchers’ structured approaches to research design, obtaining representative samples and applying community interview protocols designed to minimise harm, particularly to marginalised groups.

Stakeholders reported benefit from learning about potential risks of harm from various research approaches. Within project teams and through the Learning Agenda, WfW enabled the development of ethics skills including expanding various organisations and partners’ understanding of the limitations of using anecdotal and case study approaches to inform practice. An example of this type of limitation is that marginalised groups may be misrepresented or not represented in short data gathering exercises used for case studies.

The London School of Tropical Hygiene & Medicine (LSHTM) worked with WaterAid and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in Cambodia and Bangladesh to build skills in applying ‘do no harm’ principles in research. The LSHTM, WaterAid and OPDs collaboratively developed disability-inclusive WASH checklists for policymakers and practitioners, co-designed and grounded in research findings to ensure practical relevance and accessibility. A similar framework for climate-resilient inclusive WASH is under development.

Leading ROs advanced Water for Women’s policy to prioritise and resource GEDSI, informing better research and programming. Researchers have well-developed theories and principles to translate GEDSI into practice, including detailed informed consent processes and distress protocols for sensitive content. ROs worked with CSOs to develop practical approaches, such as obtaining verbal consent in the WASH gender equality measurement development and rollout because formal written consent was not feasible.

“When we were working with non-research organisations, we invested time in developing understanding, skills and passion for the importance of inclusion and ethical research. Not everyone has the same understanding of what a ‘do no harm’ approach means, but ROs have a wealth of experience in this area to bring to the projects.”

Dr Jane Wilbur, LSHTM



Navy from Kampong Tralach Province in Cambodia shared her experiences with local researchers for the LSHTM's WfW project, [Improving WASH Access for Women and Girls with Disabilities](#). Through this project, a partnership between LSHTM, WaterAid, the Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation and local RHOs has been translating disability inclusive WASH policies into practice
Credit: WaterAid / Sokmeng You

Box 1. How WASH research meets DFAT's international development priorities

Water for Women's WASH research aligns directly with [Australia's International Development Policy](#) for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific. It seeks to enhance state and community resilience, as measured by the climate adaptation, mitigation environment and biodiversity indicators for improved drinking water, sanitation services and handwashing.

Through Water for Women, DFAT has prioritised GEDSI (since 2018) and climate resilience (since 2023) in WASH research. In line with DFAT's priorities, Water for Women research:

- focuses on countries in the Pacific and Southeast Asia
- strengthens policy and practice to improve people's WASH situation, thereby helping to improve their health, education, social protection and well-being
- aligns with DFAT's recognition of research institutions as a "valued source of expertise and ideas in our region."²

"Research should not just remain in a paper. We need to communicate and share the research in different formats to influence change at all levels, including making it simple and accessible for policymakers because it can and should improve policies."

Dr Manohara Khadka, International Water Management Institute (IWMI)



Trained staff conduct water quality testing at Dungeshwar Rural Municipality in Dailekh, supported by SNV's WFW project, [Beyond the Finish Line: Inclusive and Sustainable Rural Water Supply Services in Nepal](#)
Credit: Meeting Point

² Commonwealth of Australia, *Australia's International Development Policy*, DFAT, ACT, p23, 2023. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/development/australias-international-development-policy>

4. Evidence-based policymaking and practice, and transferring knowledge

Independent policy assessments led by researchers provided recommendations for strengthening climate-resilient inclusive WASH policies. The LSHTM's policy analysis framework to assess the inclusion of disability and gender in WASH policies and guidance documents has been used in three countries, enabling comparative analysis and learning across these settings. Research on transitioning to safely managed water services, led by UTS-ISF, led to the Government of Indonesia recognising the need to regulate self-supply of water (see [Spotlight 1](#)).

Research provided evidence in support of policy and governance improvements. WfW research has led to direct policy and practice change, for example, in drinking water safety and security planning in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (see [Spotlight 2](#)). This impact occurred at the national level in Fiji in terms of new guidance and policy, and in Vanuatu in terms of supplementary guidance, and at the provincial level in Solomon Islands in terms of policy approach and budget to support ongoing water committee engagement.

"The self-supply study enriched our evidence and knowledge on the existing self-supply conditions in Indonesia and how we can better move forward. Results of the study have helped us to have more focused discussions among stakeholders especially line ministries on how we can share and play our role more optimally."

Aisyah Nasution, Ministry of National Development Planning, Republic of Indonesia

"I remember it well when the research result was presented [by SINU] that water supply projects in the Western Province were not lasting their full life span and the report suggested continuous monitoring of the committee to keep to their responsibility in looking after the system. As a result, I inserted that planned activity into the AOP [annual operating plan] of the Western Provincial Health Service and it was approved, and the Western Provincial Government has committed now to continue this support for monitoring the water project site committees and the systems."

Merilyn Roy Vana, Ministry of Health, Solomon Islands

"The research was a very effective tool in identifying our weaknesses in the department and what practical things we can do, including in the communities. Through this engagement, we are investigating EPS [ecological purification systems] used in rural Fiji and how these can be applied in Vanuatu."

Theophile Gaston, Department of Water Resources, Vanuatu

Spotlight 2: Community-Based Water Management – progressing inclusive, resilient and sustainable WASH outcomes

WfW partner: IWC at Griffith University

Location: Fiji

Led by IWC and the University of the South Pacific (USP), [research](#) into drinking water safety and security planning led to policy change with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services in Fiji. WfW support enabled the generation of local, relevant evidence about the problems of the former policy and also the ability for researchers to respond to the government's request for support to develop new guidelines, policy and training materials. The research team led a co-development process with Ministry staff to design a strengthened approach ('Fiji Water Safety, Security & Sanitation Planning') and pilot the new guidelines before their adoption as policy (in progress at the time of publication).

In late 2024, Fiji's Department of Water and Sewerage (DWS) asked to use the IWC-led research team's training materials and video in its water committee and caretaker training. The DWS Director commended the products and resources as useful to DWS and its stakeholders. In addition, based on the relationship developed through the seven years of research, IWC was asked to comment on other government water policies and strategies.

"There were different opinions in the research report, but we [the department] took everything in a positive manner because it will help us improve our policy and make changes where needed."

Mohammed Nistar Khan, DWS, Fiji

Through partnership, WfW has enabled change in water safety planning practice. For example, following a co-creation and collaborative process between IWC, Plan International Australia and Live & Learn Environmental Education (Live & Learn), Plan adopted the approach in its programs in Solomon Islands and PNG, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is exploring the approach in Solomon Islands.



A USP researcher conducts participatory mapping with household members in Veidogo, Fiji, for IWC's [Climate-Resilient Inclusive Urban WASH in Melanesian Pacific project](#)
Credit: IWC / Benny Rousso

Research provided baseline data for planning large CSO implementation programs. The LSHTM, the Vanuatu National Statistics Office, Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association and Vanuatu Society for People with Disability undertook a [mixed-methods study](#) on disability, ageing and WASH in two provinces in Vanuatu. Their findings informed World Vision Vanuatu's [Laetem Dak Kona](#) disability-inclusive WASH implementation program, which was extended to improve climate-resilient WASH for at-risk community members in 2023–24.

Co-designed CSO and RO research, including action research, improved the effectiveness of WASH implementation.

This approach goes beyond monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to support CSOs to explore ways to improve their TOC or implementation approach. [Participatory action research](#) by Yayasan Plan International Indonesia (Plan Indonesia) with OPDs and women's organisations resulted in improved WASH outcomes in the community.

“Working with researchers is very beneficial to the department. The research has helped us inform the development of our policy. Training and site visits and working together has been a helpful engagement.”

Mohammed Nistar Khan, DWS, Fiji

Spotlight 3: Action research project – Cambodia Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Scale-Up Program (WASH-SUP2)

WfW partner: iDE

Location: Svay Rieng, Kandal, Prey Veng, Kampong Thom, Siem Reap and Oddar Meanchey, Cambodia

To produce conclusive answers to complex questions about climate vulnerability, faecal sludge management, and GEDSI in Cambodia, iDE undertook rigorous [research](#). This work generated 11 articles (published or currently undergoing review at peer-reviewed journals)³ and is driving valuable changes in practice and strategy.

iDE undertook a two-year biological and behavioural study of on-site household faecal sludge management through alternating dual latrine pits in rural Cambodia. Research showed that the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommended two years of storage treatment with lime mixing reduced pathogen concentrations to safe levels in three in five latrine pits. It also found that behaviour was the key barrier to achieving safely managed sanitation – only 14% of rural households followed the recommendation to switch their pits after emptying. These learnings shaped iDE's ongoing strategy for safely managed sanitation in Cambodia, such as adding an affordable, scalable on-site pit emptying service to the rural market to allow households to empty, switch their pits, and dispose of waste safely.

Another iDE study explored the effects of climate vulnerability on household sanitation access, functionality and practices in rural Cambodia. It showed that as climate change increases the prevalence and irregularity of heavy storms and floods, sanitation systems are more likely to fail, forcing households to resort to unsafe behaviour, including discharging waste openly and abandoning latrines. As a result, iDE has introduced affordable, climate-resilient sanitation solutions that have been tested and scaled in seasonally flooded areas bordering Lake Tonlé Sap. iDE is a strong advocate for resilient and safely managed sanitation systems to protect water resources and public health from the effects of climate change.

³ Examples include: J Harper et al., Microbial hazards in real-world alternating dual-pit latrines treated with storage and lime in rural Cambodia, *Journal of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Development*, 13(10):764–775. 2023. <https://doi.org/10.2166/washdev.2023.016>

J Harper et al., Household perceptions, practices, and experiences with real-world alternating dual-pit latrines treated with storage and lime in rural Cambodia, 2023. <https://osf.io/preprints/osf/e8q4k>

R Abdel Sattar et al., Effects of climate vulnerability on household sanitation access, functionality, and practices in rural Cambodia, *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-024-04881-2>

Water for Women has made a significant contribution to knowledge about inclusion in WASH, including:

- 82 academic papers and peer-reviewed journal articles, and 221 knowledge products published by ROs and CSOs between 2018 and 30 June 2024.
- Over 5,000 downloads in three languages of the [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool](#), created by WfW and the Sanitation Learning Hub.
- A 2024 [PLOS Water article](#)⁴ on evidence about disability-inclusive WASH listed 69 references published since 2018; 21 (30%) relate to WfW funded projects.
- In a [Frontiers in Water special edition](#)⁵ for World Water Day 2022 on the importance of WASH, equal access opportunities and WASH resilience, of the 10 published articles, four were based on WfW funded projects.

Box 2. Transferring knowledge

In February 2024, Water for Women enabled a learning exchange between SNV Lao PDR and iDE Cambodia. SNV's Lao PDR WASH team, Laotian latrine business owners, and government representatives travelled to Cambodia to learn from iDE's market-based approach to WASH, which then informed SNV Lao PDR's WASH programming.



Sanitation entrepreneurs Ms Thitsamai Nonpasith from Lao PDR (left) and Ms Hat Tin from Cambodia (right) participated in a [learning exchange](#) facilitated by WfW between CSO partners SNV and iDE
Credit: iDE / Claire Meyer

⁴ J Wilbur, R Dreibelbis & I Mactaggart, Addressing water, sanitation and hygiene inequalities: a review of evidence, gaps, and recommendations for disability-inclusive WASH by 2030, *PLOS Water*, 3(6):e0000257, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pwat.0000257>

⁵ J Wilbur, S Cavill & J Willetts, World Water Day 2022: Importance of WASH, equal access opportunities, and WASH resilience – a social-inclusion perspective, *Frontiers in Water*, 5, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frwa.2023.1258088>

5. Better practical, grounded implementation support through partnership

Researchers translated evidence to make it more useful for CSOs and other WASH actors. Led by UTS-ISF, researchers reviewed social science literature on gender equality in WASH to learn how to strengthen civil society partnerships, workforce development and impact measurement. Working from this evidence, they performed empirical research and developed guidance and tools for CSOs (see [Spotlight 4](#)). The guidance and tools have been adopted and used by many CSOs worldwide, including in partnerships with the International Water Association, the World Bank's Equal Aqua initiative and the Pacific Community.

The research process and findings helped make investments in implementation more effective and fit for purpose. Research, particularly when co-designed using the complementary skills and experience of researchers and implementers, informed the direction and approach of large implementation programs, including as they progressed. Research increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness through a better understanding of the situation.

“Because the aims of the Fund, the CSOs and the researchers were aligned, and there was multi-year funding, it meant we had time to digest and take forward what has come through from the research, using a participatory approach. Our country programs appreciated having a role in local research and developing skills and we’ve gained a lot from the Fund’s learning initiatives.”

Meredith Hickman, WaterAid Australia

Civil society organisations and ROs co-designing and using tools led to well-informed, relevant and useful resources for implementation. CSO stakeholders found co-designed and completed research valuable. In Timor-Leste, UTS-ISF, WaterAid and Plan International Australia collaborated to assess, select and test tools for determining useful climate resilience approaches.⁶ Through this collaboration, CSOs had more confidence in using tools and in their relevance to the community context.

Civil society organisations regarded WfW funded action research on the operating realities and problems of CSOs as highly relevant. CSOs appreciated ROs’ ability to assess the literature and perform analysis relevant to specific situations.

“We have appreciated researchers producing practical toolkits that are being used by our in-country partners for example the integrated water management toolkit. We have replicated toolkits, such as, from Indonesia to Cambodia.”

Wahyu Triwahyudi, Plan International Australia

“Research should always be included in any development work because there is so much we still don’t know. Researchers are well placed to make development more effective and as such they need to happen together.”

Dr Sarah Pene, USP, Fiji

⁶ See: J Kohlitz et al., *Climate Change Response for Inclusive WASH: a guidance note for Plan International Indonesia*, ISF-UTS, Sydney, 2020. <https://waterforwomen.uts.edu.au/outputs/climate-outputs/ccriw-guidancenote-indonesia/>

Spotlight 4: Gender in WASH Partnerships, Workforce and Impact Assessment

WfW partners: UTS-ISF, SNV, Plan International Australia, WaterAid, iDE, and Thrive Networks/East Meets West (Thrive/EMW)

Locations: Indonesia, Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Nepal

A [research project](#) led by UTS-ISF in partnership with SNV, Plan International Australia, WaterAid, iDE and Thrive/EMW, investigated how CSOs can engage more strategically with civil society, government and the private sector to achieve gender and socially inclusive WASH policy and practice and measure relevant gender equality impacts. This collaborative CSO/RO approach led to the co-design and use of the [WASH-GEM](#), a novel quantitative measure.⁷ The WASH-GEM tool collects data in a context-relevant way that differentiates the lived experience of women and men, revealing intended and unintended gender equality changes associated with WASH programs. It gives organisations new information and prompts new ways of thinking. The tool includes questions that elicit gendered experiences of climate change.

The WASH-GEM was piloted in Cambodia and Nepal, then rolled out in five more countries, and made available online for use by practitioners in the WASH sector. It is a major advance for quantitative data analysis of gender equality and outcomes related to WASH.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, SNV and UTS-ISF undertook transformative leadership [research](#) to identify the qualities of outstanding leaders of the response. SNV, UTS-ISF and Inclusion Advisory Group (CBM Australia) were awarded [I&I grants](#) to extend this work, including to women with disabilities in leadership roles and the support they need. The resulting insights have since been applied as part of the WfW extension phase, focusing on 'climate heroes' to foster climate action in local governments.

"We have had a wonderful partnership with UTS-ISF because of the collaborative way the research is done that ensures we are aligned in our objectives, principles and ways of working. This makes the difference when developing responsive and useful research with local teams that informs our implementation."

Gabrielle Halcrow, SNV



Local government climate heroes in Lao PDR introduce the integration of climate risk indicators in community-led sanitation monitoring in Champhone district, supported through SNV's [I&I project](#) with UTS-ISF and the National University of Lao
Credit: SNV / Bart Verweij

⁷ See: D Gonzalez et al., A partnership approach to the design and use of a quantitative measure: co-producing and piloting the WASH gender equality measure in Cambodia and Nepal, *Development Studies Research*, 9(1):142–158, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21665095.2022.2073248>

Research led to enriched inclusion and climate risks perspectives in municipal planning processes and governance.

The results of disability research in Nepal prompted a municipal government to allocate budget to improve access to its disability help desk. WfW research enabled ROs and CSOs to determine how to integrate and enable RHOs in governance and decision-making in PNG and Timor-Leste. Involving RHOs is key to reducing inequalities and strengthening the WASH system and service delivery.

Research enabled an efficient pivot to informed climate-resilient programming. WfW funded research contributed to the quality of the design and the speed of preparation of CSO extension projects. Earlier research enabled CSOs to pivot to climate resilience programming by using knowledge to inform their rapid design process for the extension.

“There is a symbiotic relationship between ROs and CSOs in global advocacy because we are creating space in the global discourse that allows both ROs and CSOs to contribute and engage with leaders. Our evidence-based collective advocacy efforts would be weakened without the leadership and involvement of research organisations.”

Melita Grant, UTS-ISF

Spotlight 5: Changing Hygiene Around Maternal Priorities (CHAMP)

WfW partners: LSHTM and WaterAid

Location: Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia

The WfW [CHAMP research](#) investment enabled ROs and CSOs to make useful discoveries about WASH in healthcare facilities in Cambodia. The LSHTM, with WaterAid and the National Institute of Public Health, revealed practices, infrastructure, training, attitudes and staffing decisions that influenced health outcomes for babies. Notably, they identified that hand hygiene behaviours performed before, during and after birth were more effective for protecting mothers’ than children’s health, leading to poor neonatal outcomes. Other examples were that:

- none of the postnatal care wards in participating facilities had functioning handwashing facilities
- midwives were not consistently washing their hands with soap between glove uses or changes
- institutional factors promoted inadequate gloving as a timesaving hand hygiene substitute
- interventions that linked antenatal care, birth, and postnatal care are more effective in improving health outcomes compared to those with fewer linkages.

As a result of the research and its policy recommendations, shifts in protocols and behaviours have been observed. Changes include improved use of gloves and handwashing – including by parents – to protect children’s health in the healthcare facility and at home.

“The WfW project allowed me to develop my research skills, including in gaining ethical approval, asking interview questions and listening, and coding responses including around feelings expressed by community members and how to support them through this process.”

Sophak Kanika Nguon, independent researcher with a disability, Cambodia

6. Independence, convening power and network

Stakeholders suggested that the independence of Water for Women's partner ROs had great value for advancing policy and practice. Neutral, apolitical university partners were able to act independently to convene multiple stakeholders such as government, CSOs and RHOs. This convening power was also linked to the independent evidence they contributed and the ability to act as neutral meeting facilitators. In-country universities have local understanding and are well-regarded, credible and sustainable development partners.

Research organisations have wide and diverse networks that complement the CSO network. ROs have brokered collaborations between government, CSOs and /or the community. At times ROs have played roles that CSOs could not, for example, when working with government in certain contexts, ROs were able to conduct policy assessments and broker discussions between a wider group. ROs also reported leveraging relationships between CSOs and other partners to develop opportunities for grounded research.

Partnerships between international and national universities provided convening power. For example, in Fiji in 2018, an international university was effective in initially convening local actors, including government, CSOs and the national university, to discuss research opportunities. Stakeholders noted that at times it was difficult for a CSO to broker a relationship and administration with a local university and that an international university, with local relationships, supported effective engagement. For example, to deliver an I&I grant, Plan International Australia (an international CSO) and Live & Learn (a local CSO) partnered with IWC (an Australian university-based centre), which brokered a relationship with Solomon Islands National University (SINU – a local university). This grant ultimately led to successful delivery of the [Community-Based Water Management project](#) in Solomon Islands.

Organisations have expanded their networks via Water for Women research projects, DFAT's WASH conference and regional learning events. For example, Fijian DWS staff met personnel from the Department of Water Resources in Vanuatu at an IWC-brokered regional learning exchange. They now have a formal relationship and are sharing their experiences in water safety planning, particularly relating to technologies for rural drinking water.

“When stakeholder consultations are done by the Department, we feel that sometimes people can hold back, but when we see the interviews done by researchers, we see different types of responses. I am happy that this data is there so that we know if we are on the right track with our policy.”

Mohammed Nistar Khan, Director, DWS, Fiji

“When it comes to coordination, researchers have collaborated and brought people together. This is something we would like to improve in rural WASH because we feel we will have better outcomes together.”

Mohammed Nistar Khan, Director, DWS, Fiji

Spotlight 6: Addressing Climate Vulnerability in Nepal through Resilient and Inclusive WASH Systems (RES-WASH)

WfW partner: IWMI

Location: Dailekh and Sarlahi, Nepal

Recognising that the WASH sector is one of the most vulnerable sectors to climate change in Nepal, IWMI undertook an assessment of WASH vulnerability and risk at the municipal level using 100 indicators. IWMI developed an online dashboard for Dailekh and Sarlahi districts to help make informed decisions. The [research](#) assessed climate resilience by mapping more than 200 WASH systems. The gender and social vulnerabilities of various groups including women, marginalised and vulnerable communities, were also assessed. The project improved the capacity of local authorities of more than 30 municipalities by sharing evidence-based recommendations to make WASH systems more inclusive and climate-resilient. The research created an evidence-base for accessing climate finance to support climate-resilient inclusive WASH in Nepal. In addition, IWMI administered the [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool](#) to reflect on the extent and quality of relevant work in this and other IWMI projects.

As a result of its research and advocacy efforts with other stakeholders, IWMI has been supporting the climate-resilient inclusive WASH discourse at local, provincial, national and international levels. During a provincial workshop in Karnali, attended by Nepal's Minister for Water Resources and Energy Development and the Ministry's Secretary, the importance of climate-resilient inclusive WASH was noted. Consequently, climate-resilient inclusive WASH was included in the Ministry's program for fiscal year 2024–25 and subsequent budgets. The provincial government then also allocated budget for climate-resilient inclusive programs.

The influence of IWMI and partners' efforts is reflected in the 20-point [Kathmandu Declaration of Key Recommendations for Advancing the WASH Sector in Nepal](#) (September 2023), which highlights the importance of climate-resilient WASH in point 17: "Develop climate-resilient WASH service delivery frameworks, [a] climate rationale for WASH, [a] capacity building training module, technical guidelines and standards to support all three tiers of government and sector stakeholders [in] aligning WASH investment with green, resilient and inclusive development ... for inclusive, climate and disaster-resilient WASH plans and programs."



Women queue up at the handpump, dutifully fetching water for their families in Sarlahi, Nepal
Credit: IWMI / Onion Films

7. Localisation

Some Water for Women research projects included direct funding to local researchers, and thus benefitted from highly localised knowledge, understanding and programming. This support was particularly pertinent in complex contexts such as Jaipur and Bhubaneswar, India, where WfW partner, the Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) led research and interventions among marginalised women and transgender communities. Through knowledge and learning, WfW and its partners also benefitted from the experience of these approaches.

Many Water for Women research projects involved partnerships between Australian/United Kingdom (UK) based researchers and local researchers in the target countries. Partnerships between international and local researchers

allowed for the combination of broad and local perspectives. Local researchers ensured that the projects were localised to their country context, and at the various levels – national, regional, provincial and community. The approaches adopted aligned with DFAT's [guidance on locally-led development](#) by taking a collaborative approach to enable agency of diverse local actors in the projects. Research projects supported through WfW included increased capacity and engagement with local researchers, universities and institutes, which is a key pillar of a locally led agenda. Approaches taken aimed to decolonise methodologies which called for research agendas, questions, framings and methods to be determined by local actors, especially Indigenous peoples.

Research partnerships contributed to elevating local voices and different knowledge types in research processes and outputs. Stakeholders reported the benefit of co-developing approaches and then co-creating analysis and recommendations to contextualise and deliver demand driven projects. These approaches involve integrating different types of knowledge, such as, rights-holder groups, traditional knowledge, practitioner experience and scientific knowledge including climate science.

For example, in Bangladesh the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b), LSHTM and World Vision conducted participatory workshops with persons with disabilities and their caregivers, ensuring their perspectives were central to developing solutions for issues identified in the research. Local researchers facilitated the workshops, ensuring contextual relevance and creating a comfortable environment where participants felt valued and confident in their knowledge. Engaging methods were used to actively support and encourage meaningful participation.

Water for Women supported UTS-ISF's systematic scoping review of literature to explore locally led opportunities for WASH, climate change and gender equality partnerships in the Blue Pacific.⁸ In Timor-Leste, local researchers requested that qualitative data software capacity development be incorporated into the project, which resulted in them being taught the Dedoose analysis software system by UTS-ISF, and using it in their coding process. In Indonesia, early career researchers were coached in the journal article writing process, and in the use of applying gender equality frameworks to analysis processes.⁹

Localisation was supported by Water for Women research through the development of responsive tools. CSOs reported the value of localised outputs from the research. For example, in Solomon Islands research outputs went beyond publishing findings. In response to a locally determined need to support practice, [innovative context-specific tools](#) were developed and implemented. In Indonesia and Timor-Leste, research findings and recommendations related to WASH and RHO partnerships were published in easily accessible [briefs](#), as well as a co-developed document including best practices, [checklists and infographics](#).

“When it comes to inclusion in climate-resilient WASH, unless we place leadership of the most at risk at the centre, we cannot achieve anything.”

Juhi Jain, CFAR

⁸ M Grant & J Willetts, Locally Led Opportunities for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Climate Change and Gender Equality Partnerships in the Blue Pacific. *Water* 2024, 16, 872, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.3390/w16060872>

⁹ M Siscawati, N Ratnasari, A Soegito, N Ila, M Grant, I Davis, A Kumar & J Willetts, “We cannot work alone”: A study of WASH and gender equality civil society partnerships in Indonesia. Summary Brief. ISF-UTS, Sydney, 2021. <https://waterforwomen.uts.edu.au/inclusive-workplaces/>

8. Capacity development

Local researchers reported developing their research and facilitation skills and learning through partnerships with Australian/United Kingdom based partners. SINU researchers developed project leadership skills through [WfW funded action research](#), and acquired other technical WASH skills through networking and coordinated knowledge exchange. Furthermore, the project supported the skill development of contracted local enumerators and contributed to building research teams. Two in-country researchers reported the benefit of Australian/UK-based partners acting as mentors, particularly on social science related to WASH. Two ROs reported developing skills in writing and communicating research findings to multiple audiences.

Four local ROs reported that, through Water for Women projects, they built WASH research capacity and strengthened their positions as inclusive WASH authorities. For example, a researcher from USP credited WfW projects with broadening and deepening her skillset and career prospects, and positioning USP as a partner of choice for WASH research. The SINU team outlined how the university is now recognised as a research institution as well as a teaching one. IWMI credited WfW projects with its increased profile and positioning as a leading voice on WASH in Nepal.

Local researchers reported their Water for Women funded projects supported building awareness and understanding in communities, particularly around inclusion and climate resilience. In interviews, meetings and discussions as part of the project, local researchers stated that community members were expanding their awareness and understanding of key water issues and the topics of inclusion and climate resilience. For example, SINU researchers reported community capacity building for better management of local water supply as a benefit of the research.

Lead ROs reported strengthened team capacity. Following completion of a [WfW project](#) in Cambodia and Bangladesh, two PhD students with the LSHTM utilised the same methodology for disability and inclusion assessments. One conducted research in healthcare facilities in Chile, and the government is taking forward the recommendations. DFAT support through WfW is enabling the generation of valuable WASH data in many countries, including Vanuatu, Cambodia and Bangladesh. Such data has been used in at least five LSHTM Masters courses for budding public health professionals. Two USP students have completed Masters projects as part of WfW research.

“The Water for Women research has added value to the IWMI profile in Nepal. It allowed us the opportunity to work with the Ministry of Water Supply who now see us as a strong research institution in promoting inclusive and climate-resilient WASH at scale. We have also developed our relationship with local and provincial government, and many other implementing partners in the Fund network.”

Dr Manohara Khadka, IWMI

“The collaboration between northern and southern academic and research organisations, like LSHTM and icddr,b, has been instrumental in strengthening capacities and learning for early career researchers like me. One of the key highlights was learning the participatory methods used in this research, with support from LSHTM. We did not just collect data through traditional means; we employed methods like PhotoVoice and ranking exercises, and participatory workshops. These tools allowed people with disabilities to actively engage in the research, voicing their concerns and offering their recommendations on inclusive climate-resilient WASH services.”

Shahpara Nawaz, icddr,b

Lead ROs and CSOs reported that research partnerships had improved the research skills of local CSOs and RHOs.

In Bangladesh, LSHTM, icddr,b and World Vision are studying how climate change affects the WASH experiences of people with disabilities and their caregivers. The [study](#) focused on developing research skills through collecting and analysing mixed-method data, culminating in several journal articles – the first locally produced peer-reviewed research publications on the intersection between disability, climate change and WASH in Bangladesh. Based on the findings, the team is collaborating with persons with disabilities and OPDs, caregivers, and other sector experts to co-develop an evidence-based operational framework. It will guide service providers in designing and implementing climate-resilient disability-inclusive WASH programs.

In Cambodia, solid relationships between the LSHTM, WaterAid and OPDs enabled researchers to adapt rapidly during the COVID-19 context and continue important disability-related WASH research.

Thrive / EMW reported that working with UTS-ISF improved their research and ethics processes and led to a deeper understanding of their target communities in Cambodia.

Research partnerships between UTS-ISF and University of Timor-Leste, and USP and Universitas Indonesia led to significant opportunities for early career researchers enabling them to have articles published, and research skills enhanced through the partnerships.¹⁰

Government representatives reported acquiring new and valuable knowledge through engagement with ROs. The Government of Vanuatu reported learning about gaps in its water resources policies and systems that must be addressed to meet the needs of communities.

“What we have learnt not only built the capacity of our team on research methods but also benefitted Cambodia. [The] Commune Committee for Women and Children appreciated the research work which improved their empowerment.”

Kim Hor, Thrive / EMW Cambodia

“I learned [through the research] how to support the community in being climate-resilient through managing and caring for the water system during bad weather and disasters. We can encourage the communities to use their traditional knowledge to prepare each month. For instance, if the northern wind comes on next month, then they have to ensure that the dam is well protected or cover all the exposed pipeline for such weather.”

Merilyn Roy Vana, Ministry of Health, Solomon Islands



Merilyn Roy Vana from Solomon Islands Ministry of Health interviews a community member in Labulabu as part of the IWC's WfW project, [Supporting Decentralised Rural Water Supply and Climate Resilience in Pacific Islands](#)
Credit: IWC / Mark Love

¹⁰ M Grant, TT Nguyen, A Vieira, S Niner & C Roche, Working together: A study of civil society partnerships between WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) and GESI (gender equality and social inclusion) organisations in Timor-Leste. *Frontiers in Water* 5:1047955, 2023. doi: 10.3389/frwa.2023.1047955 Accessed at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/frwa.2023.1047955/full>

9. Knowledge and learning expertise

Water for Women systematically prioritises knowledge, learning and reflective practice and research has played an important role in the success of this Learning Agenda. In the [first phase](#) of the Learning Agenda, a broad set of themes were explored. In the [extension phase](#), Water for Women has consolidated its focus on exploring, challenging and deepening collective understanding of climate-resilient inclusive WASH. Research has been an important part of the Learning Agenda content, for example, sharing findings from research activities with WfW stakeholders.

Research organisations and CSOs collaborated on a Water for Women learning activity to develop guidance on partnerships between WASH organisations and rights holder organisations, which contributed towards locally led development. As part of the Learning Agenda, in 2022 WfW supported a consortium of ROs and CSOs to capture research and knowledge related to partnering with RHOs.¹¹ As explained by Grant et al (2024) through their systematic scoping review of literature related to WASH, gender equality and climate change organisations in the Blue Pacific, “we contributed to discourse in relation to what “locally led” development means and looks like. We synthesised learnings and recommendations for actors, coalitions and partnerships in the Blue Pacific as one step in the process towards greater collaboration, alliance building and ways of addressing collective challenges stemming from causes and impacts of climate change.”¹²

In addition to the content contribution, multiple stakeholders reported the valuable role played by ROs in the Learning Agenda conceptual framing and processes. ROs were leaders in setting up groups, prioritising topics, and developing strategic connections with the broader sector. ROs brought expertise in synthesis, critical thinking, knowledge sharing and facilitation to WfW’s Learning Agenda development and processes. Stakeholders noted that there is great synergy between the learning agenda’s focus on CSOs’ ideas, interviews and practice and the skills and experience of ROs, including their ability to identify, synthesize and leverage existing knowledge for the benefit of CSOs and the wider sector.

The dedication to knowledge and mutual learning included organising and participating in regional and global fora. CSOs and ROs have supported the development of sessions and presented their WfW research to large audiences. The breadth of experience to draw on and alignment in consolidated thinking has placed WfW as a leading voice on climate-resilient inclusive WASH. Leading national, regional and global organisations, such as UNICEF, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, point to WfW as an authority for its practical, evidence-based contribution to WASH sector learning. While WfW prioritises investments in the Asia-Pacific region, its Learning Agenda means it remains connected to other regions to draw on and contribute to best practice globally.¹³

“I learned during the [Pacific knowledge and learning] event [from IWC led research] that women are also powerful people in the community to be part of the care and advocacy for the water system in the community, as they always feel the pain of home responsibilities with regards to the need for water when there is scarcity of water in the village. And so, it is important that they are part of the water committee.”

Merilyn Roy Vana, Ministry of Health, Solomon Islands

¹¹ Water for Women, *Partnerships for Transformation: Guidance for WASH and Rights Holder Organisations*, WfW, Melbourne, 2022. <https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/partnerships-for-transformation-guidance-for-wash-and-rights-holder-organisations.aspx>

¹² Grant & Willetts, *Locally Led Opportunities for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Climate Change and Gender Equality Partnerships in the Blue Pacific*.

¹³ Water for Women, *Knowledge and Practice Gaps in Climate Resilient Inclusive WASH*, WfW, Melbourne, 2022. <https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/knowledge-and-practice-gaps-in-climate-resilient-inclusive-wash.aspx>

10. Catalytic value

Some research projects developed tools and resources that are widely applicable and being adopted beyond the original geographical scope. Many of these projects had relatively small amounts of funding (for example, \$100,000) but are yielding a much larger return due to wide application of their results. For example, after its genesis in Cambodia and Nepal, [WASH-GEM](#) is being rolled out in five other countries and is a publicly available tool with training guidance for practitioners to adopt. Water for Women enabled the research and co-development of WASH-GEM, a novel, open-source quantitative gender equality measure – a **major achievement in advancing quantitative data analysis of gender equality** in WASH.

Another example is an I&I project that expanded the impact of UTS-ISF's [Climate Change Response for Inclusive WASH](#) (CCRIW) project. The project developed a [massive online open course](#) and provided targeted training on the CCRIW materials. The impact of this course will continue beyond the life of WfW.

Research on WASH topics is serving as an entry point to broader systems change. ROs reported that findings from WASH research in areas such as community-based water management are applicable to other sectors, such as energy and rural infrastructure management, and other geographical regions.

Relationships developed through Water for Women research are enduring after the conclusion of the research project. Stakeholders reported that connections they had made through research, such as with local rights-holder organisations, were continuing beyond the project. In addition, (local) partners have engaged with government and other local stakeholders and have established relationships for future collaboration. The engagement has inspired a community of practice outside with WfW program, for example around behaviour change management.

Researchers are sharing WASH research with large groups of students. ROs reported that researchers are drawing on WfW funded WASH research in their teaching, thus exposing undergraduates to the sector and the important role of research. In Nepal, the [RES-WASH project](#) supported two Masters students researching disability and inclusion in the WASH sector. One grantee, a tenure-track faculty member and former Head of the Department of Gender Studies, is expected to enhance the department's capacity, leading to long-term benefits.

Water for Women's investments in the Asia-Pacific are reaching the global stage. Relatively small amounts of funding have supported projects with extensive reach, including through sharing at global fora such as COP27, 28 and 29, World Water Week and the World Water Forum. At the global level, Australia - Water Partners for Development featuring WfW, is a leading voice on GEDSI and climate resilience. For example, at World Water Week 2024, WfW held five sessions and seven booth events, including on GEDSI in WASH, effective water governance, Indigenous knowledges, circular economy principles, and how research drives innovation and scales up climate-resilient inclusive WASH. ROs have submitted abstracts and led presentations and sessions with CSOs at international conferences including the Water and Health Conference, OzWater, World Water Forum, Water & WASH Futures, Faecal Sludge Management, UN Water Forum, Australasian Aid conference, and other international forums.

"We are upskilling the next generation and sharing our passion for improving WASH [through teaching]"

Dr Sarah Pene, USP

Box 4. Global stage - Climate Resilient Sanitation Coalition

Water for Women is a member of the [Climate Resilient Sanitation Coalition](#), along with global International financial institutions and multilateral organisations such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Green Climate Fund, WHO, UNICEF, private sector and research partners including UTS-ISF. The Coalition works to advance research and action through global advocacy to highlight the overlooked and under-resourced role of sanitation in climate policy and practice, including as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions along the sanitation service chain.

Lessons from Water for Women research

Research organisations make an important contribution to Water for Women governance

Water for Women's experience is that ROs should be part of the governance structure of the Fund Partnership Group. ROs were important contributors to the structuring of WfW's knowledge and learning agenda, and pivotal in setting up groups, prioritising topics, and developing strategic connections to the broader sector.

More could be done to support localisation and participation of in-country researchers in WfW activities, which has been evolving in the extension phase. Involving in-country researchers effectively in governance and knowledge and learning is more complicated, requiring commitment, time and resources. Nonetheless, it is valuable in ensuring diversity of voices in decision-making, connection to needs and constraints in-country, and upholding principles of justice and equality.

Research grants should retain the core strategy for research projects with varying structures and criteria for collaboration and learning

Water for Women's experience, informed by best practice transdisciplinary research, shows that it is important to retain funding criteria that include collaborative, co-designed processes with in-country partners. An example is a joint communications plan that focuses on research impact and uptake.

Type 1, Type 2 and I&I grants allowed ROs and CSOs to pitch climate-resilient inclusive WASH projects based on sector or knowledge gaps, making them highly relevant to the local context. Multi-year funding was appreciated by all; several stakeholders suggested that research grants lasting 4–5 years would allow testing of research and evaluation of impact of resulting implementation activities.

Stakeholders noted that some support (time and resources) was required to develop the research skills of partner organisations, including local universities, CSOs and OPDs. This is important to include in future investment planning.¹⁴

Research organisations found the reporting requirements in the first phase projects onerous. The same reporting was required of large CSO implementation projects and relatively small research projects. It is recommended that reporting requirements be adjusted commensurate with the financial investment and risk of research projects. Where possible, proposals should allow some flexibility to enable researchers to respond to their experiences and findings to plan for the final year(s) of the project. ROs also perceived a lack of clarity about how their reports were used.

Time and budget should be allocated to enable inclusive research

Stakeholders understand the importance of involving relevant groups in research that affects them. For example, to allow effective engagement for persons with disabilities, budget must be allocated for accessibility requirements and travel. OPDs should receive fair compensation for their time and expertise, as they are often expected to contribute their skills voluntarily.

Consideration should be given to the structure of any research partnership and the co-design process. For example, CSOs noted the importance of the time working with an RO to prototype, test and refine the research so that it is appropriate to the local context. To evaluate outcomes and results of informing inclusive policy and practice (both research and implementation), change could be measured at the household level for people with a disability, who may be unable to leave home, and their caregivers, many of whom are women. This also requires time and budget to be delivered effectively.

¹⁴ See: J Wilbur, *Foundations of success: driving change through successful research collaborations. Learning brief*. London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.17037/PUBS.04668172>

Research should align with the ethical principles of research including of informed consent

In the various types of research, processes should be informed by 'do no harm' approaches for example, ethical engagement with vulnerable populations. Research into important climate-resilience and inclusion issues needs to be cognizant of sensitivities and not add to the burden of impact on time and well-being for people involved. Language and wording of interviews needs to be accessible to a range of community members.

The integration of research findings into implementation could be strengthened

Stakeholders reported that when the research is finished, the CSO and/or RO team members must move onto the next project. There is not always time to fully integrate the research findings in ongoing work. Sometimes this is a timing issue, with projects running in parallel, sometimes it is solved by multi-year funding and opportunities such as I&I grants or extensions. However, stakeholders suggested that the Fund Coordinator, ROs and CSOs look for better ways to integrate research findings into existing project planning processes.

The commitment to learning and knowledge sharing in Water for Women has built a strong network

Stakeholders reported the benefit of connecting with an international network through the WfW Learning Agenda, as well as at international WASH events. WfW has supported an enabling environment for cross-learning. Some CSOs noted constraints in their capacity to absorb the wealth of knowledge being produced and to implement new practices. However, they acknowledged the benefit of the learning, particularly when it aligned with a particular challenge or regional or local context. Stakeholders appreciated the diverse formats for learning, including briefs, webinars, in-person events and country visits. ROs reported appreciating it when CSOs contributed to determining the best format(s) for learning.

Stakeholders agreed that it is important to establish the Learning Agenda early on and assess and fund time for ROs to actively participate in it. A different approach may be required for organisations that lack core funding for participation in learning events and similar engagements. Similarly, stakeholders reported the importance of clarity about the funding available and adequate recognition of their inputs into research processes, products and journal article development. WfW's experience shows that co-design is a way to establish and acknowledge the roles of partners.

Australia's DFAT, through Water for Women, has facilitated researchers working closely with programs with priority on knowledge and learning; this model has made an enormous contribution to the WASH sector. CSOs noted the clear difference between Water for Women activities and those of other funds that do not embed research, and recommended that DFAT and other donors compare the value of Water for Women outcomes against those of other funds.



Women participate in a [Gender WASH Monitoring Tool](#) (GWMT) activity on a beach in PNG, with paper and pictures used to prompt discussion. Developed by Plan International Australia, the GWMT enables practitioners to explore and monitor gender relations in WASH projects
Credit: Live & Learn

Future opportunities

1. Research can support evidence-based leadership in climate-resilient inclusive WASH.

As shown in this brief, DFAT is an established leader in climate-resilient inclusive WASH. Given significant resilience and WASH needs, particularly in the Pacific, investing in multi-year, transdisciplinary WASH research, would continue driving evidence-based policy and practice. This aligns with Australia's International Development Policy¹⁵ that states a commitment to:

- maximise the value of Australian expertise by expanding research funding and outlining a clear development research agenda
- deepen the partnerships between Australian institutions and the region, including through the reinvigorated Australia Awards Fellowships program
- expand joint training and collaborative analysis with development organisations.

2. Research into identified knowledge gaps for climate-resilient inclusive WASH could form part of DFAT's bilateral Development Partnership Plans.

For example, a strong long-term knowledge partnership exists between Indonesia and Australia. As part of the [KONEKSI initiative](#), both governments are investing to boost the role of knowledge, research and innovation in Indonesian society. A similar approach could be taken with other countries.

3. Co-development of climate-resilient WASH research projects is valuable to understand and respond to local priorities and opportunities.

Facilitating a country-level process between DFAT Posts and key stakeholders or prospective partners, including Australian, regional, local and other sector actors, and 'non-traditional' WASH actors such as RHOs, climate scientists and from the private sector, could enable joint agreement on climate resilience priorities and activities and a rich evidence-based approach.

4. Research investments should leverage capabilities of both ROs and CSOs to achieve shared objectives, particularly tackling critical and challenging areas of climate-resilient inclusive WASH.

Collaborative, co-designed initiatives and/or knowledge sharing between ROs and CSOs would be beneficial features of future investments in various types of research, including thought leadership and action research. Invest in varied structures to derive maximum value, for example, large, rigorous studies coupled together with relatively smaller Impact & Innovation grants over time has significant impact.

5. Further investments could build on the momentum and important relationships created.

For example, momentum and relationships that are established for water safety planning in the Pacific. National governments and local universities have requested further support to maintain links and access resources, such as through a virtual community of practice.

6. To support localisation, an opportunity exists to invest in RO and CSO collaborations designed to generate evidence-based, climate-resilient inclusive WASH policy and practice.

There is an opportunity to build the capacity of local research and teaching organisations, which are central to locally led development. To further support localisation and uptake and use of WASH guidance, tools and output documents, placing greater emphasis on and investing more in translation into local languages, and accepting reports in local languages could be considered.

¹⁵ Commonwealth of Australia, *Australia's International Development Policy*.

Annex A: List of 35 research projects

Research type	Grant ID	Project Title	Lead Research Org	Partners	Web page
WASH Research Awards (2018-2022)					
Type 1	WRA1004	Transitioning to Safely Managed Water Services in Self-Supply Contexts	UTS-ISF	Universitas Indonesia, USP	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/Transitioning_to_safely-managed_water_services.aspx
Type 1	WRA1023	Gender and Socially inclusive Co-Design of Water-Sensitive Communities	Monash University	Emory, Universitas Hasanuddin, USP	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/gender-and-socially-inclusive-co-design-of-water-sensitive-communities_.aspx
Type 1	WRA1031	Promoting Safe Child Faeces Management	IWC, Griffith University	LSHTM, SINU	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/promoting-safe-child-faeces-management.aspx
Type 1	WRA1048	Improving WASH Access for Women and Girls with Disabilities	LSHTM	WaterAid Australia, Cambodia & Bangladesh	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/improving-wash-access-for-women-and-girls-with-disabilities.aspx
Type 1	WRA1054	Engaging Corporate Actors for Inclusive WASH	IWC, Griffith University	USP (Fiji), The University of Udayana (Indonesia), Bandung Technical University (Indonesia)	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/engaging-corporate-actors-for-inclusive-wash.aspx
Type 2	WRA034	Gender in WASH: Partnerships, Workforce and Impact Assessment	UTS-ISF	SNV, WaterAid, Plan International Australia, iDE, Thrive/EMW, National University of Timor-Leste, Universitas Indonesia, Edge Effect, CBM, International Water Development Agency	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/gender-equality-in-wash.aspx
Type 2	WRA063	Community-Based Water Management	IWC, Griffith University	Plan International Australia/Live & Learn, Habitat for Humanity, USP Fiji & Vanuatu, SINU	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/Community-Based-Water-Management.aspx
Type 2	WRA089	Changing Hygiene Around Maternal Priorities (CHAMP)	LSHTM	WaterAid Cambodia, Cambodia National Institute of Public Health	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/Changing-Hygiene-Around-Maternal-Priorities.aspx
Type 2	WRA094	Water Supply and Gender: Enhancing Water Supply Systems in Nepal	IWMI	SNV Nepal, Everest Club (Dailekh), Bagmati Sewa Samaj (Sarlahi)	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/Water-supply-and-gender.aspx
Type 2	WRA120	Climate Change Response for Inclusive WASH	UTS-ISF	Plan Indonesia, WaterAid Timor-Leste	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/Climate-change-response-for-inclusive-WASH.aspx

Research type	Grant ID	Project Title	Lead Research Org	Partners	Web page
Type 2	WRA140	Gender-Transformative Social Accountability for Inclusive WASH	UTS-ISF	World Vision Bangladesh & Australia, University of Rajshahi	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/social-accountability-for-inclusive-WASH.aspx
Type 2	WfW SP00001	CHAMP Plus	WaterAid Australia	WaterAid Cambodia, LSHTM, Cambodia National Institute of Public Health	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/changing-hygiene-around-maternal-priorities-champ-plus.aspx
COVID-19 Pivot (2020-2021)					
COVID	RA01	WASH, Foodways, Markets, Women and COVID-19 in Vanuatu	IWC, Griffith University	World Vision Vanuatu, USP	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/wash-foodways-markets-women-and-covid-19-in-vanuatu.aspx
COVID	RA02	Sharing Evidence and Practice on WASH & COVID-19 for more Effective Preparedness and Response	IWC, Griffith University		https://washfutures.com/wash-covid-19/
Innovation & Impact (2021-2022)					
I&I Cat.1	WIIG18	Voices at the Table Toolkit	Plan International Australia	Edge Effect Collaborations Pty Ltd, Plan Indonesia, Perkumpulan Arus Pelangi	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/project/innovation-impact-voices-at-the-table.aspx
I&I Cat.1	WIIG21	Unlocking Critical WASH Contributions to Care and Domestic Work for a Feminist-Led COVID-19 Economic Recovery	SNV		https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/project/innovation-impact-in-nepal.aspx
I&I Cat.1	WIIG08	Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation Measures, and Inclusive Resilience System in WASH: A Case Study of Marginalised Communities in Rural Cambodia	Thrive/EMW		https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/project/innovation-impact-in-cambodia-emwf.aspx
I&I Cat.1	WIIG17	Towards Integration: Practical Lessons from Applying an Inclusive WASH and Climate Adaptation Framework	WaterAid Australia	Hydrology and Risk Consulting	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/project/innovation-impact-in-png.aspx
I&I Cat.2	WIIG06	Adapting Targeted Sanitation Subsidies for Climate Vulnerable Households	iDE	Causal Design	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/project/innovation-impact-in-cambodia.aspx
I&I Cat.2	WIIG07	Integrated Water Management Action Research	Plan International Australia	Plan Indonesia, Monash Sustainable Development Institute, Monash University	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/project/innovation-impact-in-indonesia.aspx

Research type	Grant ID	Project Title	Lead Research Org	Partners	Web page
I&I Cat.2	WIIG20	Community-to-Catchment Planning for Inclusive, Climate-Resilient WASH Systems in Solomon Islands	Plan International Australia	Plan International Solomon Islands, Live & Learn Australia, Live & Learn Solomon Islands, IWC – Griffith University, SINU, Earth Water People	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/project/innovation-impact-in-solomon-islands.aspx
I&I Cat.2	WIIG01	Inspiring Local Government Heroes of Climate Action for Inclusive WASH	SNV	UTS-ISF, National University of Lao PDR	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/project/innovation-impact-in-lao-pdr-nepal.aspx
I&I Cat.2	WIIG02	Transformative Leadership for Inclusive WASH in a Post-COVID World	SNV	UTS-ISF, CBM Australia, Bhutan Network for Empowering Women, Ability Bhutan Society	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/project/innovation-impact-in-bhutan.aspx
I&I Cat.3	WIIG11	Planning for Climate-Resilient Urban WASH in Pacific Islands	IWC, Griffith University	USP Vanuatu (Emalus Campus), USP Fiji, Urban Analytics and City Systems (UACS), SINU	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/innovation-impact-in-the-pacific.aspx
I&I Cat.3	WIIG12	PaCWaM+ Vanuatu – Strengthening Drinking Water Safety & Security Planning in Vanuatu	IWC, Griffith University	USP, Vanuatu Department of Water Resources	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/innovation-impact-in-vanuatu.aspx
I&I Cat.3	WIIG03	Self-Supply in Asia and the Pacific	UTS-ISF		https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/innovation-impact-in-asia-pacific-self-supply.aspx
I&I Cat.3	WIIG15	Towards Transformation: Uptake of New Guidance and Tools in Gender Equality and Inclusion and WASH	UTS-ISF	iDE, SNV, Pacific Water and Wastewater Association	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/innovation-impact-in-asia-pacific-towards-transformation.aspx
I&I Cat.3	WIIG19	Climate Change Response for Inclusive WASH: Transferring Knowledge for Greater Impact	UTS-ISF		https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/innovation-impact-in-asia-pacific-climate-change.aspx
Climate-Resilient Inclusive WASH Research Awards (2023-2024)					
CRIW	WRA-CR01	Inclusive Pathways Towards Climate-Resilient WASH in Bangladesh	LSHTM	icddr'b, World Vision Bangladesh	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/inclusive-pathways-towards-climate-resilient-wash-in-bangladesh.aspx
CRIW	WRA-CR02	Supporting Decentralised Rural Water Supply in Pacific Islands	IWC, Griffith University	USP (Fiji, Vanuatu), SINU	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/supporting-decentralised-rural-water-supply-and-climate-resilience-in-pacific-islands.aspx

Research type	Grant ID	Project Title	Lead Research Org	Partners	Web page
CRIW	WRA-CR04	CIRCLE WASH: Circularity for Climate-Resilient and Equitable WASH	UTS-ISF	Institute for Economics and Water Resources Management, UNICEF, IWMI	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/exploring-how-circular-economy-approaches-can-drive-inclusive-climate-resilient-wash-circle-wash.aspx
CRIW	WRA-CR05	Addressing Climate Vulnerability in Nepal through Resilient and Inclusive WASH Systems (RES-WASH)	IWMI	Bagmati Welfare Society Nepal (Sarlahi), Everest Club (Dailekh), The Global Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies, National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/addressing-climate-vulnerability-in-nepal-through-resilient-and-inclusive-wash-systems.aspx
CRIW	WRA-CR07	Strengthening Water Resources Management for Inclusive Climate-Resilient WASH Services	UTS-ISF	Cambodia Development Resource Institute, Thrive/EMW, WaterAid Cambodia, Cambodia Water Association	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/strengthening-water-resources-management-for-climate-resilient-and-inclusive-wash-services.aspx
CRIW	WRA-CR09	Climate-Resilient Inclusive Urban WASH in Melanesian Pacific	IWC, Griffith University	USP (Fiji & Vanuatu), UACS, WaterAid PNG, University of PNG	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/climate-resilient-inclusive-urban-wash-in-melanesian-pacific.aspx
CRIW	WRA-CR12	Resilience in a Changing Climate: Advancing Research on Groundwater for Equity (RECHARGE)	UTS-ISF	University of Indonesia, USP, Can Tho University, Pacific Community, ACE Group	https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/research-and-innovation/resilience-in-a-changing-climate-advancing-research-on-groundwater-for-equity-recharge.aspx

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Header photo: An elderly woman outside her house in Vinh Chau District, Vietnam, completes the card sort activity with a Can Tho University researcher, as part of the UTS-ISF [RECHARGE project](#). Credit: UTS-ISF / Diana Gonzalez Botero.

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About Water for Women

Water for Women supports improved health, gender equality and well-being in Asian and Pacific communities through climate-resilient and socially inclusive WASH projects and research. It is the Australian Government's flagship WASH program, investing AUD159.9 million over seven years. Water for Women is partnering with civil society organisations, research organisations and local partners to deliver 40 projects in 16 countries from 2018 to 2024. Knowledge and learning are central to Water for Women, positioning the Fund as an important contributor to global knowledge development and sharing in climate-resilient, inclusive WASH. Water for Women's [Learning Agenda](#) promotes collaborative learning, knowledge development and sharing to support long-term transformative change to WASH policy and practice globally.

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