JOINING FORCES: STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE WASH AND GENDER SECTORS OF CAMBODIA

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To strengthen partnerships between the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) development and gender equality sectors of Cambodia in order to achieve Sustainability Development Goal (SDG) 5 - Gender Equality and SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation for all by 2030.

Project Goal

**Background**
- In Cambodia, approximately 6 million people lack improved sanitation and 4 million people lack access to safe water.
- Women and girls disproportionately lack adequate sanitation, adversely impacting their health and well-being.
- However, women are not included in decision-making or planning for WASH interventions. This represents a form of gender inequality.
- In the WASH sector, achieving gender equality outcomes has been considered far reaching given women's traditional roles in water and sanitation management.
- Projects focusing on improving access to WASH facilities using a gender transformative approach can have an empowering impact on women.

**Project Impact**
- Two sectors (WASH and gender) fighting for the same cause were brought together to learn about the goals and approaches of each group.
- Participants understood the interchangeable relationship between WASH and gender equality.
- Conversations from focus groups and other activities led to the planning of future engagements and collaborations between both sectors.

**Period of Implementation**
The project began on February 1, 2019 and ended August 2, 2019. Data collection occurred in June of 2019, followed by the analysis in July 2019.

**Action Plan**

**5 in-depth Interviews** Learn about WASH and gender equality initiatives in the Gender sector

**Focus Group Discussion** (n=12) Understand barriers that have limited partnerships between the WASH and Gender sectors

**Lunch and Learn** Communicate research findings with stakeholders

**Cross-sector Mapping Meeting** Determine the best ways to increase collaboration between the sectors

**Project Findings**
"The problem is-- I think the knowledge and the needs are not matched because of the limited resources that we have. I think to be able to reach out more, we need to work together-- and that requires strong coordination." - Study Participant

"I think there’s a gap in consultation at the community, especially women; are not properly consulted to understand the needs, to understand their opinion on things or what they want in the process. So without this, during the consultation process the issues are not addressed." - Study Participant

**Next Steps**

- WASH AND Gender Network
- Develop a Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan
- WASH sector to seek consultation from gender experts
- Focus on Gender Transformative Approaches

**Professional Skills**

**Skills Applied:**
- Cultural sensitivity
- Proposal Writing
- Project management

**Skills Learned:**
- Understanding the structure of an international organization
- Adapting to change
- Qualitative data collection and analysis
- Learning to effectively translate research results into proposed action

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**References**

