GENDER SENSITIVE WASH GOVERNANCE AND STAKEHOLDER MAPPING IN SYRIA

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Photo courtesy of: CARE staff and volunteers in Syria

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBOs - Community Based Organisation

FGD - Focus Group Discussions

KII - Key Informant Interview

IDPs - Internally Displaced Persons

INGOs - International Non-Governmental Organisations

M^3 - Meter cubed

MEAL - Monitoring Evaluation and Learning

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organisations

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SYP - Syrian Pound

USD - United States Dollar

UN - United Nations

WASH - Water Sanitation and Hygiene

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Section 1 – Executive Summary

Water and sanitation governance has been largely overlooked within the WASH response in Syria. Before the crisis, the relevant ministries and water and sanitation authorities in Syria managed WASH infrastructure and services effectively. However, with the collapse of those centralized institutions in opposition-held areas, it is the private sector and humanitarian actors who have been left to fill the void. This situation is compounded by the fact that gender issues related to WASH in south, central and north-eastern Syria are a product of deeper gender inequalities and social norms. From the study findings, men and women uniformly identified gendered roles in household and community water management – suggesting that women were 'water managers' in the household and men were in the public sphere. The findings showed that women are currently acting as household water managers and some have the motivation to participate in engaging with their local authorities/municipalities over water management, yet do not feel empowered to do so. This lack of empowerment was evident throughout the discussions with households, focus groups, key informant interviews at various levels, where the role of the women as key players in the WASH Governance outside of the home, was not evident or clear. This same scenario was evidenced also in the staffing for local councils where majority of those interviewed did not have any female representation and even for those few that had women, the role of those women in the set up was not clear. It was argued that women did not have the prerequisite technical skills, physical strength or ability to be successful in performing non- traditional roles like plumbing or decision-making roles. Even though both men and women respondents were supportive of the idea of a WASH Committee as they thought it would be a useful way to liaise with District and local councils/ Kumin over water problems, to share information and to improve water services, they raised doubts on the women's ability to participate due to domestic responsibilities, mobility restrictions and a traditional culture that discouraged women from interacting directly with men.

From the study findings, key stakeholders identified included individuals, organisations and businesses in the public, private and non-profit sectors and were made up of families including IDPs, female headed households, local community representatives, municipal sector offices (for example, water services office, sanitation engineers) and development partners including donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and private sector groups like the individual consultants, water truckers among others. The key stakeholders identified were then mapped based on their relative power and interest in influencing decisions and policies with regards to WASH services and governance and categorised into four groups: those with high interest but little power (A) for example the primary stakeholders; those with high interest and high power (B) and those with low interest and little power (D).

Another key finding was that there were no rules and regulations governing the WASH service delivery within the regions under study. At the moment, it is a free for all service. For example, water truckers were not registered and there was no way of controlling the quality of water they delivered. There was no control on pricing of services and the service providers could set prices as they wished. There were also concerns about uncontrolled drilling of boreholes as it would deplete the ground water levels. Other concerns were that there was no designated places for disposing of raw sewage after toilets were desludged and this was dumped in valleys and far off places posing a great risk in terms of pollution. The primary stakeholders are impacted negatively by this scenario especially in relation to access to quality and affordable WASH services delivery. With regards to formal registration of agencies/institutions wishing to operate in Syria, it was stated that most of the CBOs had not been registered as there was no clear office which would carry out this function within Syria. As for the local NGOs, most were registered outside of Syria as many were affiliated with INGOs with bases outside

Syria. The local councils, municipalities and the governorates, had the mandate of coordinating and monitoring the operations of all agencies working in WASH and other sectors, but had limited capacity in terms of skills and expertise to perform this role as expected. Majority had not received any form of training and capacity building activities on WASH Governance, gender mainstreaming; standards and quality control or technical training for example sewerage and piping networks. It was however, noted that coordination meetings were organised regularly amongst the service providers, an opportunity which could be explored and further supported.

It was gratifying to note that most service providers had put information and communication mechanisms in place for example Facebook pages operated by the local councils were available for consumer usage; WhatsApp, as well as Friday sermon (speech), or posters posted on the mosques doors. The local media had also contributed greatly to making the general public aware of WASH related issues for example the concern on uncontrolled drilling of boreholes and were making use of the internet as the preferred mode of communicating these issues. However, despite these efforts, complaints and feedback mechanisms were not well defined or developed and it was unclear how the most marginalised groups for example the elderly, those living with disabilities or even poor women, could raise complaints or get feedback.

In view of the above findings, some key recommendations have been put forward for consideration in the WASH sector and in the CARE WASH Programme. These recommendations are made with an assumption that they will be further localised and decentralized on regional specific contexts.

1. Gendered disaggregated Information

It is recommended to progress from gender sensitive programming to gender transformative state where the WASH programme challenges the existing gender roles and relations. To do this effectively, there is need for ***context-specific information about women and men's different experiences****, problems and priorities which is essential to effective gender mainstreaming. Statistical information should be routinely disaggregated into women and men's experiences, with* ***gender analysis being part of the situational analysis****. This will assist in identifying inequalities where they exist and in making a case for developing policies that address these inequalities.*

2. Consultation, advocacy and decision making

It is important that women and marginalised groups have a strong voice to ensure that their views are taken into account. This means promoting the involvement of women and men in consultation and decision making from the community to the highest levels of management. There are three ways in which this can be done.

One: make use of the women service office within the Municipalities, train them and equip them with skills to offer voice to women and marginalised groups on WASH issues of concern. Women's solidarity through their collective action and organization in groups improves their ability to overcome entrenched power structures.

Second: Establish and form WASH Committees. The main functions of a WASH committee is to manage the public water systems within the villages and communities: by overseeing day-to-day operations and setting policies (by-laws), such as whether and how much to charge for usage to cover future maintenance costs. WASH management committees also promote health and sanitation education in the community by passing on the knowledge members gained during trainings, as part of project implementation.

Third: Identify women WASH Ambassadors who will be trained as leaders and provide them with more specialised skills like plumbing which are predominantly male oriented roles. In this way, she will become an ambassador and a role model for other women and girls, that women can do technical works also if they are well trained.

3. **Action to promote gender sensitive organisations**

Build the capacity of staff in local councils/authorities, municipalities and within CBOs and NGOs on gender and governance skills in WASH. Gendered approaches in water governance will depend on the skills, knowledge and commitment of staff involved in implementation and management. Developing appropriate capacity in staff as well as addressing gender difference and inequality in organisations is crucial to creating inclusive water sector organisations.

4. Initiate policy and regulatory framework dialogue

A dialogue on necessity in putting in place policy and regulatory frameworks in the regions within Syria should commence sooner rather than later. This will harmonise interventions goals, inputs, outcomes and impacts and help to put limited resources into effective use. In regulating the service provider, key WASH sector performance indicators are set against which to measure performance such as drinking water quality, quality of wastewater discharged, and how often the service is interrupted. A good monitoring and reporting system will monitor standards and performance as part of the regulatory function. This accountability can help to clarify the commitments of actors involved in WASH governance and lead to efficient management of fiscal resources.

5. Strengthen WASH Coordination Forums in the regions

The already existing WASH Coordination mechanisms is a step in the right direction. Strengthen these forums by building their capacity in coordination and leadership skills. Other capacity building topics worth considering would include training on gender and WASH Governance as well as on minimum commitments for gender and WASH in emergencies, among others. By so doing, the programme will help to bridge the gap between different users and institutions and unite them in a belief that water and sanitation is a common good that needs to be sustainably managed for present and future human and non-human needs.

6. Work with and Engage the local media in strengthening information and communication mechanisms

As communication and information channels are already being used especially through the social media platforms, engage and work with the local media to explore different ways in which these channels could be utilised further to bring information closer to the stakeholders especially those with high interest but low power. These channels of communication could be utilised effectively to bridge the gap between the users and service providers and encourage further participation and voice in governance.

7. Strengthen complaints and feedback mechanisms

Support the local authorities and the soon-to-be established WASH Committees/Kumin with complaints and feedback systems that is context and regional based. As you do this, ensure that this system is clear, transparent, and sufficiently independent to ensure that there is no bias or interference and the process can be conducted fairly with respect to all parties. Ensure also that this is publicised and provides adequate assistance to those who wish to access it, including specific groups such as children, women and the disabled—accessibility needs to take into consideration language, literacy, awareness, finance, distance, or fear of reprisal. Work jointly with the MEAL team in establishing, and if already existing, strengthening it and making it WASH user friendly.

8. Support in the creation of women and girls friendly spaces

Work with existing women associations to build safe spaces for women movements where women and girl (young and old) can strengthen their leadership capacity, encourage their critical awareness and develop their capacity to be community organisers. In these spaces, women are encouraged to learn about (or taught) the different dimensions of power and how power works, and to analyse the situations in which they feel powerful and powerless. They then try to build a strategy based on this power analysis to respond to rules, written and unwritten (social/cultural) barriers that hold back their participation in public spaces. They learn that power can transform and empower rather than oppress people. They also learn about their own internalised gender biases, which illuminate why women in positions of power do not always represent the interests of women.

Section 2: Background and Context

2.1 Brief background

Providing people with access to essential services such as water and sanitation demands a combination of solutions in the face of a wide range of problems including rehabilitating obsolete infrastructure and developing existing networks, price of water, provision of adequate and safe sanitation and solid waste management structures, lack of specific sectoral policies, management and maintenance challenges, among others. In addition, sector players today increasingly view the governance of water and sanitation as a fundamental condition for establishing lasting access to water, sanitation and hygiene for the people their projects are designed to benefit.

Water and sanitation governance has been largely overlooked within the WASH response in Syria. Before the crisis, the relevant ministries and water and sanitation authorities in Syria managed WASH infrastructure and services effectively. However, with the collapse of those centralized institutions in opposition-held areas, it is the private sector and humanitarian actors who have been left to fill the void. Unfortunately, for-profit water and sanitation services in the south and central regions of Syria are highly inequitable and there are no systems of accountability or oversight in place to ensure they operate to any kind of standard. Happily, and as noted above, many technical water and sanitation experts and former employees of water and other ministries are still present in the targeted areas. This provides humanitarian actors with an opportunity to invest in these experts and help communities to develop appropriate WASH governance structures, and to better link those kinds of structures with broader governance actors in order to strengthen chains of accountability on behalf of end users.

On the other hand, Gender issues related to WASH in south, central and north-eastern Syria are a product of deeper gender inequalities and social norms. Society asks girls and women to take on reproductive labour in the private sphere, with strict division between this work and men's activity in the public sphere. Men are considered key breadwinners. Men are also given control over key assets, including water and sanitation management and systems. While women may use water in the private sphere, it is considered acceptable for men to participate in public water management activities and to make overall management decisions. Social norms also put the burden of risk mitigation and safety on women, who must somehow access water, hygiene and sanitation resources without putting themselves at risk of socially unacceptable exposure, harassment or gender based violence, for which they (and not perpetrators) will be blamed. Almost 100% of local area council members are men. In this instance, men continue to make decisions about WASH infrastructure and management in ways that do not meet women's and girls' needs, partially because men cannot see what those needs are or lack either the skill or the political will to address them. As a consequence, WASH elements remain unsafe and inconvenient for women and girls.

This research focuses on water governance in Syrian by conducting a gender sensitive mapping and analysis of existing WASH stakeholders; identifying potential ways in which WASH governance may be strengthened, and establishing links between WASH governance actors and political governance actors – the local councils.

2.2 Some basic definition of the concept of "WASH Governance"

Governance shapes the way a service or set of services are planned, managed and regulated within a set of political social and economic systems to ensure sustainable services. How societies choose to govern their water resources and services has profound impacts on people's livelihood and the sustainability of water resources. Access to water is, for many people, a matter of daily survival, or can

help to break the vicious circle of poverty. Improving water governance is therefore essential to alleviating global poverty.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines 'Water governance' as a set of rules and practices for decision-making about water policy and their implementation, i.e. the range of political, institutional, and administrative processes through which stakeholders articulate their interests, their concerns, where decisions are taken and implemented, and decision-makers are held accountable in the development and management of water resources and delivery of water services. It essentially addresses issues related to who gets what water, when and how, and who has the right to water and related services, and their benefits. It determines the equity and efficiency in water resource and services allocation and distribution, and balances water use between socio-economic activities and ecosystems.

Governance operates at different levels, from the national level to households within a community. At local level, stakeholders include local government (councillors and officials), community based organizations, NGOs, water services providers, community representatives, local associations and possibly traditional leadership. Not least, stakeholders at local level include the users of services. The outcomes depend on how the stakeholders act in relation to the rules and roles that have been taken or assigned to them. Good water governance is based on principles of good governance, which include equity, efficiency, participation, decentralization, integration, transparency and accountability.

Section 3 – The Methodology

The main aim of the gender sensitive WASH governance and stakeholder mapping and analysis study is to understand the ways in which the WASH programme/sector could support in strengthening and/or retaining available WASH capacities; strengthen oversight and regulation of WASH activities and service providers as well as the development of links and stronger accountability with other levels of governance, such as local councils – the de facto governance actors in opposition-held communities from a gender lens.

3.1 Scope of work

The overall tasks for this study were:

- Mapping of stakeholders currently involved in WASH service delivery and governance in Syria
    - Systematic review and in depth analysis of WASH service delivery and governance stakeholders
- Identify ways that water and sanitation governance and chains of accountability might be established and/or strengthened in relation to (but not limited to):
    - Coordination and engagement with other WASH stakeholders
    - Technical assessments, design, installation and maintenance of WASH facilities
    - Monitoring and Evaluation of WASH services
    - Involvement and consideration of vulnerable groups such as women, girls, PLWD and the elderly
    - Integrity and transparency
    - Roles and responsibilities
    - Cost recovery mechanisms / financing

This report presents the results and recommendations of the gender sensitive WASH governance and stakeholder mapping and analysis which was carried out in Dar'a and Quinetra governorates of southern Syria and in Al Hassakah governorate in north-eastern Syria, in collaboration with other WASH partners inside Syria between November and December 2017. It was supervised remotely by a CARE International WASH Advisor working with CARE International jointly with its cross-border teams in Amman, Jordan and with close engagement with CARE's WASH and MEAL teams and partner agencies inside Syria.

3.2 Pre-WASH Governance Study Preparation Stage

The process started with pre-WASH Governance preparatory activities that included a series of skype calls to discuss and agree on target areas, target population numbers, priorities and response preferences not only as a starting point to identify the possible stakeholders but also to set the basis for the rest of the analysis. Secondary data from previous reports was also analysed to beef up the information that was to be collected through primary data gathering method.

3.3 Sampling and Data Collection Stage

Study/target locations were selected based on purposive sampling which was dependent on their accessibility in terms of security and safety concerns within Syria. The field work study was conducted in southern and north-eastern regions of Syria from 14th November to 12th of December, 2017. The methodology used in this context is both qualitative and quantitative and followed a 'good enough' principle of sampling. Therefore, a quick but sufficiently representative sample for the purpose of the study was used. This sample size was selected based on the judgement of CARE experts who have been working with the target population, and because it allowed data saturation, it did not follow the methodological rigor of academic research for instance. The methodology used also relies on triangulation of information from different sources (Household interviews; Key Informant interviews; focus group discussions (with community leaders including women groups etc), as well as both primary and secondary data. Consequently, the availability of some initial data that led to the water governance study, in addition to the primary data collected, made it possible to meet the objectives of this study.

This analysis used both secondary data from previous reports and primary data obtained from communities within study target locations in southern and north-eastern Syria. Partner organizations supported in the data collection and organized teams inside Syria to conduct interviews. The team in southern Syria comprised of 12 team members (8 male and 4 females) and conducted interviews within the target locations. Another team of 11 members (5 females and 6 males) undertook the data collection in north-eastern Syria. These field teams were identified and trained during two days (13th&14th November for southern Syria) and (3rd December for north-eastern Syria) on how to use the data collection tools through skype.

In southern Syria, a total of 100 Interviews were conducted targeting households, 50 interviews targeting water trucking and water source operators, and in addition Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with local council members in charge of WASH services as well as with women groups and community leaders. Key Informant interviews were also carried out for the local media, the local leaders as well as local CBOs and NGOs (See Table 1A below).

Table 1A: Key target sample in southern Syria

Southern Syria	
Type of Actor	**# Interviewed**
Household Water Consumers	100
Water Trucking operators/water source operators	50
Community Members (FGDs with women groups and community leaders)	21
FGDs with local councils	21
KII with Community leaders (Town and rural)	21
KII with CBOs and NGOs	14
KII with local Media	16

In north-eastern Syria, due to security concerns, the study was limited to Al Hassakah Governorate and mainly to Areesha camp and the surrounding 4 villages/towns (Areesha town; Al Hole, Tal Tamer and Tal Hamis). A total of 30 Interviews were conducted targeting households, 20 interviews targeting water trucking and water source operators, and in addition Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with coumeen members in charge of WASH services as well as with women groups and community leaders. Key Informant interviews were also carried out for the local media, the local leaders, the Governorate as well as local CBOs and NGOs (See Table 1B below).

Table 1B: Key target sample in north-eastern Syria

North-eastern Syria	
Type of Actor	**# Interviewed**
Household Water Consumers	30
Water Trucking operators/water source operators	20
Community Members (FGDs with women groups and community leaders)	5
FGDs with local councils (Kumin)	5
KII with Community leaders (Town and rural)	5
KII with CBOs and NGOs	5
KII with local Media	5
KII with Governorate	1

Like stated above, findings from the existing literature about WASH Governance in Syria was also reviewed to triangulate and complete information collected through interviews. Information gathered was analysed on a daily basis to make sure that the key questions were being answered and information updated.

3.4 Data Analysis

The results included in this report do not represent frequencies of responses but recurrent themes, perceptions, beliefs and practices among respondents in the study locations. The intrinsic nature of qualitative research is not to provide numbers as quantitative research does, but to provide insights and depth about the issues explored.

The analysis followed standard qualitative methodologies of thematic ordering and interpretation to identify key gender based governance trends; issues and stakeholders in WASH. A three-stage data-analysis process was conducted. In the first analysis stage, verbatim notes from each group discussion and interviews were organised according to the type of respondents (FGDs, KII etc). All responses from

each question were brought together and then raw data was synthesised and cleaned to remove inconsistencies and make it as concise as possible. In this phase, the researcher identified key thematic areas using both inductive and deductive methods. The recurrent information was classified using the categories that had been anticipated in the study design as well as new ones that emerged during content analysis. The second analysis stage consisted in transferring the compiled data into sections through which draft narrative storylines were developed. In the third phase, conclusions were drawn based on analysis verification of the recurrent themes, regularities, patterns, and causal flows observed.

In this sense, the results represent insights into the underlying motivations and barriers regarding gender sensitivity with respect to WASH governance and stakeholder analysis as perceived by respondents.

3.5 Limitations

Locations for the assessment were chosen by CARE's team, based on population data, access considerations, and the need to include a mix of rural and urban populations. Access limited the assessment to opposition held areas in southern Syria and thus results should not be seen as representative to populations in government controlled or in inaccessible locations.

As mentioned previously, the field teams could not physically attend the training in Amman as they were inside Syria. They had to be trained remotely. However, communication constraints (weak network coverage) made it difficult to be in constant contact and adjust fieldwork as necessary and promptly.

Secondly, due to security concerns, it was impossible to conduct the study in central Syria as earlier planned while in north-eastern Syria, the study was mainly limited to one Governorate and mainly in Areesha Camp and 4 surrounding villages/towns (Areesha town; Al Hole, Tal Tamer and Tal Hamis). Even then, the permission to conduct the study in these locations was only granted in early December. So the findings in these 5 locations may not be quite representative of the entire north-eastern Syria region.

Thirdly, translation of interview data collection tools from English to Arabic and consequently raw data from Arabic to English also hindered the capacity of the consultant to review progress promptly. It therefore meant that when data was received periodically, feedback was not promptly given. However, the CARE team is commended for putting all measures in place including hiring external translators to ensure that translations went smoothly and speedily.

In addition, the data enumeration team from north-eastern Syria was newly recruited for the sole purpose of the data gathering and had no prior experience in conducting similar exercises. This was the first time that the majority of the enumerators were undertaking a survey that contained more narratives than the usual quantitative features. This meant that they needed more support on how to capture the narrative responses a factor which slowed down the data collection exercise at the beginning of the field study. But this was considered as a learning exercise and was worth investing in for future similar studies.

Section 4: Key Findings

4.1: Stakeholder mapping and analysis

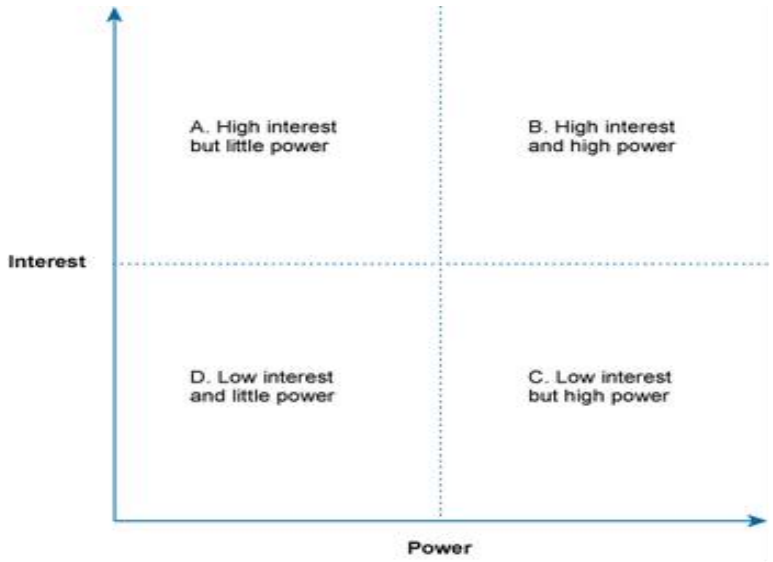
For the purposes of this study, a **key stakeholder** is a person or a group of people with significant influence over a programme or who will be significantly impacted by it. For the programme to be successful, their interests and influences must be recognised. Key stakeholders may include individuals, organisations and businesses in the public, private and non-profit sectors. These could be local community representatives, municipal sector offices (for example, water services office, health, sanitation engineers and education) and development partners including donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and private sector groups. Further, **Stakeholder mapping** was taken as the process of systematically identifying and analysing the relevant stakeholders, their relationship to each other, their level of power and capacity to influence decisions, and their roles and responsibilities in relation to the power they hold.

Table 2: Three categories of stakeholders identified

Primary stakeholders	Secondary stakeholders	External (Tertiary) stakeholders
These include direct beneficiaries and direct concerned person mainly comprising of end users/consumers (for example male, female, children, elderly, people living with disabilities etc. Vulnerable persons or groups for example: • Families with disabled members • Women headed households • The elderly • Displaced families • Women	These include intermediaries in the process of delivering WASH services to primary stakeholders These include: • Professional WASH Consultants who are either retired or working privately • Local council members in charge of WASH services at the Municipal, district and sub district level • The local Kumin as they are locally known in north-eastern Syria • Municipality technical services actors, for example technical/sanitary engineers in charge of repairs, rehabilitations and technical designs • Women service office at the Municipal level • Local Community based organizations)CBOs • Local NGOs • Water sellers including water truckers; bottled water sellers and borehole operators • Local traders and business persons trading water, sanitation and hygiene products and equipment	These include decision, policy makers at the Governorate and Municipal levels. These include: • Financial and donor institutions • Senior civil servants at Governorate and Municipal levels) • Politicians • Traditional authorities like the village elders and opinion leaders • Local Media • INGOs and UN agencies • Religious authorities in the mosques like the Imams
Schools and other public institutions like the hospitals		

The key stakeholders identified from the study above were then mapped based on their relative power and interest in influencing decisions and polices with regards to WASH services and governance and categorised into four groups: those with high interest but little power (A), those with high interest and high power (B), those with low interest but high power (C) and those with low interest and little power (D). Please see table 3 below for reference.

Table 3: Mapping stakeholders on a power/interest grid.



Source: Mapping stakeholders on a power/interest grid. (Adapted from DfID, 2003)

Using this power analysis model the following were the results based on the outcomes of the discussions with various respondents

Table 4: Stakeholder power interest and influence analysis

A. High interest but little power	B. High interest and high power
• Families with disabled members • Women headed households • The elderly • Displaced families • Women and girls • Women service office at the Municipal level	• Male members of families • Professional WASH Consultants who are either retired or working privately • Local council members in charge of WASH services at the Municipal, district and sub district level • The local Kumin as they are locally known in north-eastern Syria • Municipality technical services actors, for example technical/sanitary engineers in charge of repairs, rehabilitations and technical designs • Local Community based organizations (CBOs) • Local NGOs • Water sellers including water truckers; bottled water sellers and borehole operators • Local traders and business persons trading in water, sanitation and hygiene products and equipment

	• INGOs and UN agencies • Schools and other public institutions like the hospitals •
C. Low interest but high power	**D. Low interest little power**
• Religious authorities in the mosques like the Imams • Politicians • Local traditional elders and opinion leaders • Financial and donor institutions • Senior civil servants at Governorate and Municipal levels)	• Local Media

Even though all stakeholders are important and play a role in the WASH services delivery and management, some are more directly engaged and affected than others. From the outcomes of the discussions at household level as well as through focus group discussions and key informant interviews, it was clear that the primary stakeholders especially the ones identified in Box A in the above table, are the least engaged in the WASH governance in terms of power and influence but whose effect is greatly affected by the WASH services provided. This should be the group that should be focused on as first priority when putting strategies in place to develop and strengthen stronger community participation and engagement in WASH governance beyond being just users of services. In the second box (Box B), this is the secondary stakeholders' group that plays crucial role in providing WASH services to the primary stakeholders as they have both high influence and high power to influence WASH service provision. They will need to be focused upon to build and strengthen their capacity to play their oversight and regulation role including accountability to users as the primary stakeholders. From the study findings, at the moment, there are no rules and regulations governing the WASH service delivery, it is a free for all service. The primary stakeholders are impacted negatively by this scenario especially in relation to access to quality and affordable WASH services delivery. On the other hand, those in Box C may not have a direct role in WASH delivery but they are the key decision makers at community and higher levels, they should be engaged in WASH services management and should be targeted for advocacy, strategy and policy stages of WASH service delivery and governance. Those in Box D may not have any direct role in WASH service delivery but they play an important role in communication and information services and if properly integrated they may serve to link and coordinate all stakeholders through their various forums like we shall see later in this report.

4.2: Gendered Roles and Social Norms in Household and Community Water Management

Men and women uniformly identified gendered roles in household and community water management – suggesting that women were 'water managers' in the household and men were in the public sphere. Beyond water uses for basic hygiene and drinking, men were said to use water only for ablutions before praying and occasionally for watering gardens or trees and washing cars. Women were also said to be much more aware about saving water at home than the men. Women were described as teaching their husbands and children on measures on how to save water. Indeed one old woman passionate about water conservation was quoted saying "I make fights with people about water conservation…but the community doesn't listen to me, they say I am trying to be selfish. This is a consumptive community rather than an aware community." Hence, women are currently acting as

household water managers and some have the motivation to participate in engaging with their local authorities/municipalities over water management, yet do not feel empowered to do so.

This lack of empowerment was evident throughout the discussions with households, focus groups, key informant interviews at various levels, where the role of the women as key players in the WASH Governance outside of the home, was not evident or clear. It was therefore not surprising that the Local councils in charge of WASH services that were interviewed, 87% of them had all male members. In north-eastern Syria, the situation was much better with 80% of the Local Kumin interviewed having members comprising both male and female. However, in both instances the number of the female members in both local councils and the Kumin was almost insignificant, for example in one local Kumin, out of a membership of 5, only one was female.

When asked to state the role of these women in the local council/ Kumin, it was stated that women do not generally have any specific role that they play as members. The few female members interviewed stated that their roles were limited to:

- Receiving complaints and forwarding them to the head of the local council for action
- Suggesting solutions to problems but their suggestions are not necessarily followed.

This was well collaborated by the responses from the households and focus group discussions on the same question regarding the roles of female members of the local council/ Kumin.

At the household level, the women's status was not any different. It was noted that in most cases where the head of the household was not present to answer questions, any of the male members took over even if they were just youth. It was stated clearly that the male members of the family were the spokespersons of the family and were the only ones who could speak on behalf of the family.

Water trucks service delivery modalities are disaggregated as water is only piped to households irregularly and unreliably. Many order tanker trucks to deliver water after running out of piped water in many districts, towns and villages. In addition, water trucks will only deliver a full tank of water so it is necessary for families to share the delivery between neighbours. Men said that they often coordinated to share and arrange a water truck delivery, often meeting informally in the street to discuss it, though some women reported to calling their neighbours before requesting a water tanker. However, when asked if the women members of the families had opportunity to raise complaints regarding water or sanitation services, even though they are the "household water managers", the responses were unanimous that due to the strict cultures and traditions, women had no right to raise any complaints with regards to water or sanitation issues. If they had any issue, for example they had run out of water at home and needed to call for a water truck, they were supposed to alert a male member who would then call for the truck service. It was even reported that it was customary that whenever the water truck received a call from a woman, most of the times they would not take it seriously until they heard from a man. In almost all interviews and focus group discussions, women said that it was their sons or husbands' responsibility to call and arrange a water truck delivery and that it was necessary for a male relative to be present during delivery. Some women added that it was 'shameful for a woman to speak to a man on the phone' though most women said that if no male was present in the household then it was acceptable for an older woman to arrange for the water delivery. This seemed to reinforce the major role that older women can play in water delivery and management.

Plumbing services

If a plumber was requested, then a male relative would need to arrange to be present during the visit. This often led to delays in fixing household water leaks as women said they waited until their husbands

or sons returned home before leaks could be fixed. When asked if there were women plumbers, the response was generally to say that women did not have the skills or ability to be plumbers. They however were positive that they would like to receive that kind of skill as women were more readily at home and the increased mobility for the women plumbers would allow for leaks and pipes to be fixed more quickly, though most said that they doubted women's skills, physical strength and ability to be successful in this non- traditional role.

Gendered Spaces for Community Participation

There were examples of considerable unofficial community mobilization over water problems. Men meet spontaneously with neighbours on the street or in community meeting houses, to discuss ways to solve community water problems among other problems when an issue arises. Women however said that they had few forums to participate in decision making let alone to meet for discussions or leisure. The places where women suggested that they could meet to discuss community problems were at the homes of neighbours or family members, in local CBOs, in Mosques or Koran groups or after school meetings for mothers at their children's schools. The 'Koran club', reading sessions followed by socializing, seemed to provide the most common forum for women to meet and discuss, so connecting religion to community water management could have the effect of opening up more spaces for women to participate.

When asked about women leaders in the community, men said that there were no women in positions of leadership, whereas women were usually were able to name one or two unofficial women leaders in the community. Women often shared the same names of women who they considered strong and active, usually elderly widows, religious teachers or leaders of CBOs. When prompted about spaces for women's participation in the water sector, women generally focused on their participation in workshops or training sessions for household water conservation as opposed to participation in decision-making though only a minority had participated in any such events. This again was another opportunity where the role of elderly women in decision making was reinforced and therefore providing opportunities for further engagement.

Community Receptivity to Participatory Spaces for Water Governance

Men respondents were supportive of the idea of a WASH Committee as they thought it would be a useful way to liaise with District and local councils/ Kumin over water problems, to share information and to improve water services. Though they were overall quite resistant of women's participation in proposed committees, often suggesting that it would make them less effective. Many respondents doubted women's ability to participate due to domestic responsibilities, mobility restrictions and a traditional culture that discouraged women from interacting directly with men. The women, however expressed reservations as most of the local council members had only male members and according to them, dealing with men as a woman was very different from dealing with a fellow woman.

Clearly this is an area that will require much attention and focus to remove the stereotype that when women engage in mixed committee meetings, they would be exposed to "bad manners' including challenging their husbands or men generally in meetings and forums.

Institutional Support for Participation

Water service providers, governing bodies, community groups and influential community leaders were consulted on their receptivity to increasing women's participation in community water governance. Most of the CBO's and NGOs who participated in the interviews expressed support for the WASH Committee programmes, though the CBO's with more religious affiliations were hesitant at

the idea of women participating in mixed committees. However, for the most part they believed that the programs would be effective. One of the key informant village elder remarked that *"the community and culture would be receptive to the idea of WASH Committee. We are open---minded people, men hear the voice of women and would accept this as all the stress and pressure of water problems is on women".*

Consultations with the water service providers including local NGOs and local councils suggested that they were committed to increasing women's participation in the sector. They were very supportive of the idea of WASH committees as they felt that these committees would get commitment and buy in from different stakeholders. They felt that the keeper of water at home was the woman and water preservation was really the responsibility of the women at home. They suggested that it would be necessary to select/elect open-minded men and women for these roles, with at least half of the committee participants being women.

It was also indeed inspiring to see the commitment that the NGOs interviewed had in giving women opportunities to be of service in the WASH sector. All these agencies had an almost equal number/ratio of male and female staff members. It would have been best if we had learnt deeper in terms of positions that these women held, but this could be an opportunity for another study.

4.3: Water supply services

As at the time of the study, the primary source used for water for drinking was water trucking at an average of 80% followed by piped water network at 19% while only 1% used unprotected water sources including open wells. In Areesha camp, the primary source was, understandably 100% through water trucking. Water trucking is commonly used in communities where water networks are not functional for both drinking and for other domestic water purposes like cooking, washing and bathing. While the piped network is the preferred option for bulk water, a lack of continuous 24 hour water supply through this system requires people to supplement their water needs through private water vendors. Water supplied through water trucking is paid directly to the water vendor's except in Areesha camp where water is supplied free of charge. In southern Syria, one cubic meter (1000 liters) of water was sold at an average range of 600 SYP - 680 SYP/ m^3 based primarily on the distance the water is transported as well as the availability of fuel in the markets while 1 m^3 of piped water supply was sold at an average of 250 SYP as at the time of the study. In north-eastern Syria one cubic meter of water was sold at an average range of 200 SYP – 300 SYP for water trucked to the villages.

Water trucks are operated by individual owners, who own from one to several trucks. Most water trucks have "regular" customers to whom they regularly supply water. Large businesses (water filtering shops, hotels, hospitals, restaurants, NGOs etc) and some households (long-standing customers who regularly procure water through trucks) are connected to local trucks, and as such are prioritized in terms of delivery during times of high demand. During summer months the trucks can make as much as 12 trips in a day. From the Study, 96% of water truckers run their own business and they own at least 1 tanker with a capacity of an average of 6 – 7 cubic meters per tanker. During these times of high demand, it sometimes becomes difficult for lower income and displaced people to organize a water delivery, and can involve a wait of 1 – 2 days. This is exacerbated by the fact that trucks will only sell the entire quantity of water that they are transporting (a minimum of 3 – 5 m^3 for smaller trucks, and 6 – 10 m^3 for bigger trucks), and most IDPs and vulnerable households only possess 1 – 2 m^3 of water storage capacity. This means that these vulnerable households either purchase more water than they actually receive (purchasing the truckload but only receiving 1 – 2 m^3), or must organize themselves into groups with neighbours to share a water delivery, which can be problematic especially depending on the relationship with other neighbours.

During the winter months, the water trucking market operates at approximately 50% of its capacity (approximately 6 trips/day), as demand is low during this period. Better-off households which receive water several times per week from the piped network, and possess adequate storage volume, many times do not require water trucking services during this time.

The Service office within the local council is charged with monitoring piped networks and repair when there is a breakdown or leakage. Money for repairs is normally generated through private donations and through the water tariff collected from those that are served with piped water. There are no official monitoring mechanisms to ensure proper water usage or conservation mechanisms.

4.4: Policy and Regulatory Framework

The local authority is typically responsible for ensuring compliance with by-laws. It is also responsible for monitoring the quality, quantity and overall delivery of the services. In regulating the service provider, key performance indicators are set against which to measure performance such as drinking water quality, quality of wastewater discharged, and how often the service is interrupted. A good monitoring and reporting system monitors standards and performance as part of the regulatory function.

From the findings of the study, it was evident that there was no policy or regulatory framework in place governing WASH service delivery and its management, right from the governorate to the village level. This implies that there are no service standards, work ethics or accountability mechanisms to adhere to. This was evidenced through discussions with water truckers; borehole service operators as well as with the local councils, the local CBOS/NGOs and the governorate. Because of this absence of policy or standards, service providers operated without any guidelines which in turn affected the quality and impacts of their investments as there was no cohesive structures to bring everyone together.

None of the water trucks are registered as there is no registration facility in Syria. The tankers deliver and supply water to various actors including households, institutions, and camps as well as for livestock among others. There is no agency in charge of price control. Prices are set and controlled by the owners and are determined by fuel availability, distances covered as well as low consumption of water during winter in which time the prices increase. According to the truckers, fuel price increases affects the price of water and consumers normally complain about this but the truck operators claimed their hands were tied.

In addition, some of the truckers expressed concern that some of the tankers were not suitable for water for drinking purposes as they were not sterilised and were usually converted from other uses and they therefore expressed doubt about the safety of the water for domestic purposes especially for drinking. This fear was also expressed by borehole water operators and the local councils, but since there were no official regulations and no agency that is in charge of quality control, it was difficult to enforce anything.

The truckers cited non availability of spare parts as well as fuel shortages as some of the key challenges that hinder their smooth delivery service. Just like the water source operators had indicated, availability of spare parts and fuel was hampered by the fact that they were not available locally and those that was locally available, was of poor quality and often caused breakdowns of the truck engines. The borehole operators complemented this finding by adding that in general, spare parts especially of the type of brands of the generators in use are unavailable locally and must come from outside the

town and mainly in Damascus which is out of reach of most operators. These were usually sold in foreign currency which translates into higher costs because of the foreign currency exchange and fluctuations. Therefore most of the operators who could not afford to buy new ones or imported ones, mostly resulted to buying second hand spare parts available locally whose lifespan was shorter than new ones and were attributed to the frequent breakdowns of the equipment.

Additionally, for those operating diesel fuel generators, the average amount of fuel used for every 24hrs was about 188 litres of diesel. A liter of diesel goes for between 100 SYP– 166 SYP (0.50 - 077 US$) depending on the quality of the diesel.

With regards to formal registration of agencies/institutions wishing to operate in Syria, it was stated that most of the CBOs had not been registered as there was no clear office which would carry out this function within Syria. As for the local NGOs, most were registered outside of Syria as many were affiliated with INGOs with bases outside Syria mostly in Amman, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Similarly, the Local Media were mostly registered at the Governorate level while the international agencies were registered outside of Syria. The NGOs and CBOs also stated that the local councils, municipalities and the governorates, depending on the location of the agency and its areas of operations, had the mandate of coordinating and monitoring the operations of all agencies working in WASH and other sectors, but had limited capacity in terms of skills and expertise to perform this role as expected.

4.5: Sanitation services and management

From the findings, most of the towns did not have any formal sewerage service. It was stated that when a household needed to desludge its toilet, they organised with private truck operators for this service and the families paid directly to the operator. The price range for this service was an average range of 300SYP to 350 SYP in the north-eastern Syria and an average of 500SYP in southern Syria depending on the agreement with the truck operator. Similarly, there was no designated place for final disposal of the raw sewage and it was indicated that in most towns, this was disposed off in the far off valleys and mountains. This was a point of major concern for many household consumers as they feared for the resulting contamination of water sources and pollution of the environment. For those towns and villages where this service does not exist, the household owners empty the waste manually and dispose the raw sewage in the nearby drains and rivers.

With regards to the solid waste management structures, the local service office of the local council was in charge of this service in most towns and villages. It was indicated that the households usually emptied their household waste in plastic bags which were then disposed of in communal garbage bins. These were then collected by trucks operated by the Local Service office through the local council to the landfill, where it was then periodically burned. This service was done every two weeks (bi-weekly). This service was generally offered free of charge even though in some few towns like Nassib, the users were charged a nominal fee of an average of 250SYP per month. For those towns and villages where this service does not exist, the household members either disposed it outside the compound or burned it.

4.6: WASH coordination, information and communication mechanisms

From the findings, the local councils/authorities and the municipalities took charge of WASH Coordination activities, while in some instances, the UN agency was also said to be calling for meetings on a regular basis especially in relation to WASH service delivery to the IDPs and marginalised communities. It was reported that most NGOs and local CBOs held meetings with the local council/municipality on a monthly. Some of the issues discussed during these meetings included:

- Sanitation problems especially sewerage network
- Develop a monthly plan in the field of water and Sewage
- Discuss the evaluation of completed works, follow-up work in progress and plan for future work
- Finding support to activate water stations
- Developing joint proposals for attracting more funding
- The WASH related problems that the town and villages were facing and possible solutions
- Discuss the roles and responsibilities of each involved parties
- Discuss ways of better coordination with all parties involved
- Discuss financial support to sustain water provision

The CBOs and NGOs also indicated that they normally worked with Individual consultants comprising mainly of retired or private sector experts like engineers or social community workers, who offer the much needed technical and social expertise which is lacking within Syria. Some of the key qualities that they look for in hiring the individual consultants is experience, technical skills as well as integrity and accountability. They said that these qualities were necessary as sometimes they would be called upon to work in remote areas often with remote technical support.

With regards to information and communication mechanisms, it was clear from the findings that most NGOs, CBOs and the local council had put some form of communication in place to ensure smooth coordination of the different stakeholders. Most of the household respondents as well as the key informants stated that they had attended at least one meeting in a month to discuss water, sanitation and hygiene related issues in their villages. An average of 65% of the households indicated that they were able to get information about water services every time they needed it and cited examples of pumping times for piped networks. The 35% who said that they did not receive timely information when they needed it gave examples including the fact that they were unable to know the times when the water truck would arrive so that they could plan to wait for it.

For most household respondents, face to face mode of communication was most preferred. Asked why they preferred this mode, they indicated that it provided for physical discussions where they could ask questions and get responses directly. However, internet based communication mechanisms for example a Facebook page operated by the local councils was available for consumer usage; Whatsapp, as well as Friday sermon (speech), or posters posted on the mosques doors were widely used.

The local media was also a key player in providing information and communication and offered a useful link between the users and the service providers. Discussions with some of Local Media that participated in this study, revealed that most were keen to publish news on WASH aspects especially hygiene issues, water availability and access as well as on water quality issues as these, according to them, had major direct impact on people's health if not addressed. To cover their costs, some of them indicated that if an agency invited them to cover an event, they normally charged about 400$ (USD) per event. They also indicated that they had been invited to attend some WASH Coordination meetings on several occasions where major issues of concern for example, proposed projects, projects under implementation and their progress, quality of services, and internal issues as well as drilling wells in random manner and their negative effects in lowering the water level, were discussed. When an issue such as this is brought to their attention or they become aware about it, they then make it their mandate to follow it up and inform the public in its progress.

Some of the key challenges that the media faced included being refused to document and take photographs of projects which are not going well, for example if there is an issue with a water truck that is accused of delivering polluted water, they are refused to cover these kind of news, or where drilling is being undertaken without proper consultations they are refused to document these kind of news.

Complaints and feedback mechanisms were also not clearly defined within the sector players. The majority of the households interviewed indicated that whenever they raised complaints to the local council regarding an issue, for example lack of water, or quality of service, most of the times their complaints were never acted upon and they had no opportunity for recourse. In other times, when an issue was responded upon, the feedback was usually sent through the Imams in Mosques if the issue was public (for public announcement) but it became complicated if the issue was privately raised as there was no specific person to receive back the feedback, and would sometimes go un-responded to. This tended to affect more vulnerable homes with the elderly or people living with disabilities as they had no voice to express their issues of concerns or receive feedback to their issues. This is where the issue of community representation becomes crucial and a WASH Committee would be a good opportunity to address this. From the NGOs/CBOs perspectives, they take the opportunity during public meetings to inform the users of any new events/infrastructure or to respond to issues or feedback directly. Whenever there was a conflict within the community members or indeed between the community users and the service providers, they tended to go to the local councils for resolution. However, it turned out that most of the local council members had not been trained on how to handle complaints, feedback mechanisms or conflict resolution mechanisms. Many times, they resulted into involving the police for such.

4.7: Key roles and responsibilities of Local councils/ Kumin /CBOs and NGOs in the provision and management of WASH services

Some of the key roles and responsibilities that the local councils/ Kumin /CBOs and NGOs were carrying out in the WASH service delivery and management included but not limited to:

Local Councils/ Kumin:

- Operate and Maintenance the network.
- Operate the motors of wells pumps and Water sterilizing
- Monitoring the tractors which collects the garbage of the town
- Maintain and run the water networks as well as sewer lines
- Run the pump engines from the spring and purify water
- Periodically carry our repair and maintenance of pipe networks
- Ensure fuel for water pumping
- Collect garbage and dispose off in the landfills
- Receive and respond to complaints from the consumers (water users)
- Cleaning wastes and throw it in a barrels (Areesha camp)
- Filling water tanks (Areesha camp)
- Checking the water cleanliness (Areesha camp)

When asked if they had received any form of training in WASH service management, the findings showed that only 40% of the Kumin in north-eastern Syria had received some kind of training in WASH Management. Some of the training that they had received included:

- Hygiene and personal cleanliness
- How to address sanitation problems in camps and in the villages
- Solid waste garbage disposal in garbage bins provided (in the camp)
- Monitoring of water quality and quantity in the tanks (in the camp)

This training had been conducted by NGOs for a period of 4 days.

In the southern region of Syria, it was reported that only about 20% of the local councils had received any form of training on WASH service delivery and management. For those who had received some form of training, the following were the topics covered:

- Management of the draft traction line from the Kahil station and work on its implementation. This training run for 10 days and conducted by local NGOs.
- Water safety and sterilization methods, again run by local NGOs

With regards to Local CBOs and NGOs, the following key roles and responsibilities were identified in the WASH service delivery and management:

- Conducting awareness sessions especially with regards to hygiene promotion
- Open and maintain the sewerage throughout the area periodically
- Monitor the cleaners at all times
- Extension of water network by digging/drilling wells.
- Activating the role of women through their participation in the WASH sector
- Preparing water wells by analysing the water well before connecting it to the main network and through the use of modern filtering equipment and supervising specialized engineers in the field of drinking water
- Restoration of some of the sewage points, especially those points that could have leaked to the main drinking water.
- Collecting garbage and spraying landfills

In terms of training received, again only 10% of the NGOs indicated having received some of training which included training on health and hygiene promotion for communities. This was a training for 1 day offered remotely by an INGO based in Amman.

When asked to indicate what factors they took into consideration when deciding on the area to operate in, the following were cited as key factors:

- The neighbourhoods that are not serviced.
- Cleanliness campaigns implemented by UN
- Poor sewage network and frequent complaints
- Lack of pipe network maintenance
- Areas prone to water borne diseases
- Access of drinking water to remote places that were not reached by the water through the drilling and preparing of wells
- The severe need for sanitation projects.

Some of the expertise or specialised skill that the NGOs were proud of included:

- Having a team of experts
- The availability of special mechanisms in sewage matters

- Dealing with contractors and specialists with sufficient experience
- Following basic humanitarian standards as guiding principles
- Selecting the areas that are most in need
- Having monitoring and future plans (a strategy)

4.8: Key challenges that key WASH service providers faced in their operations

When the key WASH service providers, for example the CBOs and NGOs as well as the local councils/Kumin were asked to state some of their key challenges that they face a day to day basis, the following were mentioned:

i. Low groundwater level in the boreholes thus affecting quantity of water delivered
ii. The high prices of fuels and spare parts thus impacting on the high water tariff
iii. Lack of financial capacity at the council in order to conduct regular maintenance of water sources like the pipe networks as well as the servicing of boreholes
iv. unavailability of electricity to offer alternative options to diesel pumps which were expensive to run due to inadequate supply of fuel
v. Inadequate technical expertise to address the frequent pipe breakdowns leading to frequent leakages
vi. Inadequate number of reservoir tanks to store water for pumping to the networks
vii. Inadequate capacity (expertise and finance) to address the sewerage problems in the towns leading to frequent spillage of raw sewage into the streets
viii. Lack of any specific role for women to play in water management even though they are the custodians of water at home was a gap as their main concerns were never addressed
ix. Inadequate community representation in water management coupled with absence of regulations for control and accountability

When asked to provide suggestions on how these issues could be addressed, the following were offered as suitable suggestions

i. Stopping the random drilling boreholes
ii. Providing the alternative energy
iii. Providing support for buying fuel.
iv. Installation of solar panels at water unit as the alternative energy.
v. Extension of the network to access all citizens
vi. Ensure sufficient money to maintain the network periodically
vii. Ensure salaries for the water's employee
viii. Provide fuel and spare parts for trucks to collect solid wastes
ix. Complete the sewage networks in various towns

Section 5: Main conclusions & recommendations

5.1 Main Conclusions

Good water governance designed to ensure effective WASH management that allows for decision making from all stakeholders, including poor women and men, should provide access to safe and affordable drinking water and basic sanitation for all, and meet water and sanitation needs for improved livelihoods. It would also allow for the development of an enabling environment including supportive policies, legal instruments and fair pricing structures. An effective gender sensitive WASH governance can have positive impacts on gender inequalities, including the following:

- Ensuring that poor women and men's human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected, allowing them to live with dignity.
- Introducing inclusive and fair rules, institutions and practices governing social interactions to improve outreach to the vulnerable, such as poor women and men, and the younger and older generations.
- Ensuring that women are equal partners with men in decision making over development, use, technology choice, financing, and other aspects of water management.
- Ensuring that the environmental and social needs of future generations are reflected in current policies and practices and
- Focusing water development policies towards eradicating poverty and improving the livelihoods of women and men.

A major focus will be on communities' active participation and engagement in water management. By building the capacities of local communities and raising the awareness of local women and men on sustainable water use, a social change and sustainable influence on water practices can be achieved and utilized to ensure that the WASH programme works at all levels and encourages women participation and contribution in all of its dimensions. Effective gender-sensitive WASH management will require:

- A conscious effort to consult with men and women at all stages of the project cycle. This can be achieved through the use of gender-inclusive participatory tools designed to engage grassroots women and men, for example rapid gender analysis exercises.
- A focus on gender in WASH Management should not only target the local authorities, but should also address all water management structures and institutions, recognising the different constraints faced by men and women, and ensuring that there is equity.
- Capacity building at all levels is a critical component of water governance and for the incorporation of gender concerns.
- Issues of gender, governance and water management should not be viewed as women's issues only but should be recognised as broad issues of power relations, control and access to resources by disadvantaged groups, who may be women, children or men.
- The importance of social aspects of water management also needs to be taken into account. Women play a central role in managing water for social, hygiene, health and productive uses.

5.2 Key recommendations

From the foregoing, the following recommendations are therefore made for consideration by the WASH programme and sector in general:

1. **Gendered disaggregated Information**
   Context-specific information about women and men's different experiences, problems and priorities is essential to effective gender mainstreaming. Statistical information should be routinely disaggregated into women and men's experiences, with gender analysis being part of the situational analysis. This will assist in identifying inequalities where they exist and in making a case for developing policies that address these inequalities. Action to promote greater equality in decision making and opportunity for poor women and men based on context specific sex-disaggregated data and gender analytical information.

2. **Consultation, advocacy and decision making**
   It is important that women and marginalised groups have a strong voice to ensure that their views are taken into account. This means promoting the involvement of women and men in consultation and decision making from the community to the highest levels of management. There are three ways in which this can be done.

   One: make use of the women service office within the Municipalities, train them and equip them with skills to offer voice to women and marginalised groups on WASH issues of concern. Women's solidarity through their collective action and organization in groups improves their ability to overcome entrenched power structures.

   Second: Establish and form WASH Committees. The main function of a WASH committee is to manage the public water systems within the villages and communities: by overseeing day-to-day operations and setting policies, such as whether and how much to charge for usage to cover future maintenance costs. WASH management committees also promote health and sanitation education in the community by passing on the knowledge members gained during trainings, as part of project implementation.

   The role of a water committee extends beyond mere management and logistics. It also serves to elevate the position of women within the community, as the composition of the committee should be at least 50% female. Establishing leadership roles for women within project requirements helps to facilitate a shift in attitudes on gender and traditional roles, allowing for greater social mobility. When women serve on WASH committees, it gives them more power and influence, which creates a ripple effect of change in a community. In this committee, all groups of persons in the community should be represented including the elderly women and men, people living with disabilities as well the youthful girls and boys. Train the members of the WASH Committee and equip them with skills to be able to perform their roles effectively. The comprehensive training, could include extensive operation and maintenance of water systems, hygiene and sanitation education, recording of financial flows, planning of weekly and monthly meetings about progress, and managing community use of the water system, including arbitration of any disputes and prevention against damage.

   Third: Identify women WASH Ambassadors who will be trained as leaders in and provided with more specialised skills like plumbing which are predominantly male oriented roles. In this

way, she will become an ambassador and a role model for other women and girls, that women can do technical works also if they are well trained.

3. **Action to promote gender sensitive organisations**
   Gendered approaches in water governance will depend on the skills, knowledge and commitment of staff involved in implementation and management. Developing appropriate capacity in staff as well as addressing gender difference and inequality in organisations is crucial to creating inclusive water sector organisations.

4. **Initiate policy and regulatory framework dialogue**
   A dialogue on necessity of putting in place policy and regulatory frameworks in the regions within Syria should commence sooner rather than later. This will harmonise interventions goals, inputs, outcomes and impacts and help to put into effective use of limited resources. In regulating the service provider, key WASH sector performance indicators are set against which to measure performance such as drinking water quality, quality of wastewater discharged, and how often the service is interrupted. A good monitoring and reporting system will monitor standards and performance as part of the regulatory function.

   In the WASH sector, well-functioning accountability mechanisms can help to clarify the commitments of actors involved in WASH governance and lead to efficient management of fiscal resources. They can also help protect water resources and increase control over the actions of public and private stakeholders, while ensuring minimum quality standards.

5. **Strengthen WASH Coordination Forums in the regions**
   The already existing WASH Coordination mechanisms is a step in the right direction. Strengthen these forums by building their capacity in coordination and leadership skills. Other capacity building topics worth considering would include training on gender and WASH Governance as well as on minimum commitments for gender and WASH in emergencies, among others. By so doing, the programme will help to bridge the gap between different users and institutions and unite them in a belief that water and sanitation is a common good that needs to be sustainably managed for present and future human and non-human needs.

6. **Work with and Engage the local media in strengthening information and communication mechanisms**

As communication and information channels are already being used especially through the social media platforms, engage and work with the local media to explore different ways in which these channels could be utilised further to bring information closer to the stakeholders especially those with high interest but low power. These channels of communication could be utilised effectively to bridge the gap between the users and service providers and encourage further participation and voice in governance.

7. **Strengthen complaints and feedback mechanisms**

Support the local authorities and the soon-to-be established WASH Committees/Kumin with complaints and feedback systems that is context and regional based. As you do this, ensure that this system is clear, transparent, and sufficiently independent to ensure that there is no bias or interference and the process can be conducted fairly with respect to all parties. Ensure also that this is publicised and provides adequate assistance to those who wish to access it, including specific groups such as children, women and the disabled—accessibility needs to take into consideration language, literacy, awareness, finance, distance, or fear of reprisal. Work jointly with the MEAL team in establishing, and if already existing, strengthening it and making it WASH user friendly.

8. Support in the creation of women and girls friendly spaces

Work with existing women associations to build safe spaces for women movements where women and girl (young and old) can strengthen their leadership capacity, encourage their critical awareness and develop their capacity to be community organisers. In these spaces, women are encouraged to learn about (or taught) the different dimensions of power and how power works, and to analyse the situations in which they feel powerful and powerless. They then try to build a strategy based on this power analysis to respond to rules, written and unwritten (social/cultural) barriers that hold back their participation in public spaces. They learn that power can transform and empower rather than oppress people. They also learn about their own internalised gender biases, which illuminate why women in positions of power do not always represent the interests of women.

Annexes