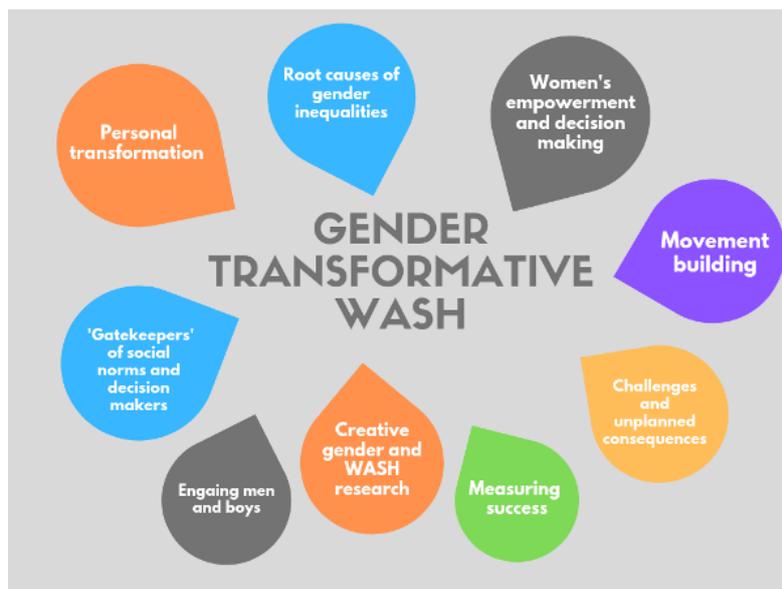




Nine ideas for Gender Transformative WASH programming

Our latest newsletter offers advice for practitioners wanting to apply gender transformative approaches to WASH programming. It has been partly adapted from the workshop 'Gender Transformative WASH' (April 2019) that the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) co-facilitated with Dr Sue Cavill for Plan International. As a sector, we are still gathering evidence on what makes up effective gender transformative programming approaches. In this newsletter we suggest nine ideas for criteria, along with some useful resources. ([Read blog for more resources](#)).

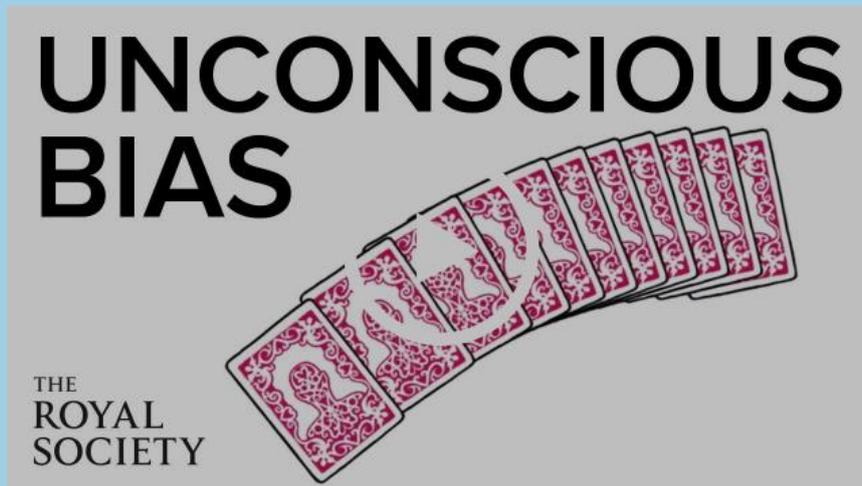


Gender transformation: What are we talking about?

Gender transformative approaches aim to transform the power structures that underlie unequal gender relations and norms. Empowering marginalised women and girls to come into the public domain, share their perspectives, take on leadership roles, set political agendas and form movements is central to this approach. Working with men and boys as allies and champions of change is also vital. Transformative approaches also aim to understand how gender inequalities intersect with and compound other inequalities, striving for more complex and nuanced programming.

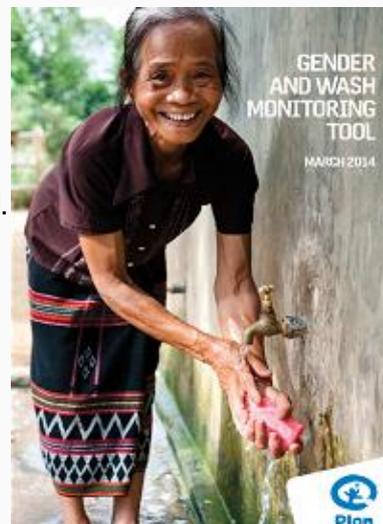
1. A level of personal transformation is needed

Gender issues and dynamics affect everyone individually, every day. Our judgements and decisions around gender and sexuality are often so deeply ingrained that we make them unconsciously. This short **video** 'Understanding Unconscious Bias' encourages us to think about the unconscious decisions we make. (Click image to view video)



2. Know what success looks like and how to measure it

Gender transformation in programming can be difficult to monitor as it is a multi-layered process rather than an end goal. However, there are a few tools available, for example, Plan's 'Gender and WASH Monitoring Tool' enables users to explore and monitor gendered relations through facilitated community dialogue. [Read more here.](#)



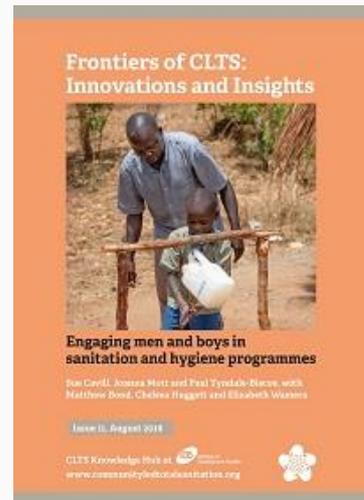
3. Research intersecting gender and WASH issues

Gender equality and WASH issues intersect in many ways that need better understanding through research. In this short video interview Dr Alison Parker talks about the importance of researching both men's and women's sanitation and hygiene needs separately when designing toilets. (Click image to view video)



4. Work with men and boys as allies and 'change champions'

Our recent edition of Frontiers reviews approaches that facilitate men to support women's leaderships, voice and participation in WASH. It also looks at how programming can support more positive masculine norms and relations between men and women, boys and girls. [Read more here.](#)



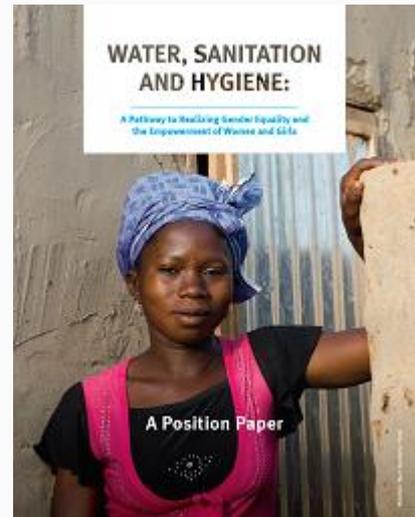
5. Facilitate stronger women's participation and engagement

The barriers to women's participation and engagement, at all levels including leadership, need to be critically examined and transformed. Hanh Nguyen Hong talks about the WOBA programme in Vietnam empowering women to be involved in the decision-making and design of WASH processes. The programme partners with the Vietnam Women's Union, a fantastic mobilising force with over 17 million members across the country. (Click image to view video)



6. A rights-based theory of change is useful

Water, sanitation and gender equality are fundamental human rights and integral to a rights-based approach to development. This position paper draws on diverse examples from the WASH sector and demonstrates how to take an evidence-based, innovative, gendered and rights-based approach to transforming the lives of women and girls, and the communities in which they live. [Read more here.](#)



7. Work with the 'gatekeepers' of social norms

Traditional leaders hold a great amount of power in many communities especially when it comes to influencing social norms. This blog 'Practitioner Tips: Transforming Harmful Gender Norms with Traditional Leaders' offers some thoughts on working with traditional leaders. [Read more here.](#) (Photo Credit: [Jeffrey Barbee/Thomson Reuters Foundation](#))



8. Know the challenges and potential unplanned consequences

Working on gender issues, especially using an approach that aims to transform harmful power dynamics will always be welcomed by some more than others. These presentation slides list some potential



challenges and unplanned consequences of using a gender transformative approach and ideas for how to overcome these. [Read more here.](#)

9. Grapple with the tensions!

It is also vital to highlight questions that we are still grappling within this relatively new area, for example: *How do we address tensions that may arise between WASH programming aims (which are primarily health gains) and those of a gender transformative approach, which are more about redressing power inequalities?*

[Read more about these ideas in our latest blog \(10 mins\)](#)

What next? Your thoughts please!

Are you working on gender transformative WASH programming? Or maybe thinking about it? We would love to hear from you! Tell us about the issues you face, approaches you've used (or plan to use), successes you've had and the questions that you are grappling with. It would be great to open up a discussion!

Many good wishes,
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