

## EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS THROUGH WASH AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

**BY THE NUMBERS****BUDGET:** \$12 million**Goal**

Women and girls experience an increased sense of self-worth, ability to determine their own choices, and right to influence social change for themselves and others

**Objectives**

1. Increased opportunities to advance well-being
2. Improved learning environment
3. Increased business opportunities
4. More equitable decision-making

**DONOR:** Clean Water Here  
**LOCATION:** Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, and Zimbabwe  
**PROJECT TIME FRAME:** April 2022-March 2025  
**PARTNERS:** Emory University

**Overview**

Strong Women Strong World™ (SWSW) is a program that focuses on the empowerment of women and girls through intentionally integrating water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) with economic empowerment interventions. The program is inspired and catalyzed through the vision and generosity of Lani Dolifka and her foundation, Clean Water Here. Through her catalytic \$12 million, three-year gift, World Vision is implementing the SWSW program in key World Vision area programs in four countries—Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, and Zimbabwe.

Vulnerable populations, including women and girls, are among those disproportionately affected by poor access to economic empowerment opportunities and inadequate WASH services. This increases their risk of injury, illness, harassment, and violence, among other issues. World Vision's past work has accommodated the needs of women and girls, specifically considering their needs in infrastructure design. Our vision going forward is to provide transformative WASH services that appropriately respond to and reflect the choices and desires of the most vulnerable members of communities where we work.

Through SWSW, World Vision is designing, implementing, and measuring the impact of WASH and economic empowerment interventions to remove barriers and build a supportive foundation so women and girls can shine. Over the first three years of the program, we will implement activities to apply gender transformative principles in varying country contexts. An intentional learning plan is being developed with Emory University to ensure the project captures learnings on the best approaches for greatest transformative impact on women and girls that can be scaled across different regions and countries.

This program is critical to realizing World Vision's WASH business plan goal to deepen our focus on the most vulnerable people. We are accelerating access to equitable WASH services for all by deepening our focus on the most vulnerable, especially in fragile and extremely fragile contexts. This includes the aim to ensure that inclusivity and equity permeate our work to meet the needs of women, children, and the most vulnerable, especially persons living with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

World Vision's emphasis on equity and inclusion strengthens our focus on access to WASH and builds a strong foundation to realize our commitment to women's economic empowerment. Beyond just access, equitable and inclusive WASH and economic empowerment services enable meaningful participation of marginalized groups by removing barriers, enabling decision-making and personal agency, and reinforcing positive and equitable social norms.

Ensuring that WASH and economic empowerment programs are effectively integrated and focused on the same population in the same communities, at the individual, household, and community levels, means that this project will have an even greater impact on the empowerment of women and girls.

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### Approach

WASH services will build the foundation for empowerment by improving family health outcomes and decreasing the household labor burden for women and girls. WASH efforts will include a focus on girl-friendly school WASH infrastructure and various school- and community-based behavior-change interventions focusing on healthy WASH behaviors as well as healthier and more equitable relationships between boys and girls, as well as women and men.



Activities also will include core components of World Vision's Economic Empowerment business plan:

- Training on Empowered Worldview—an approach that includes faith leaders and promotes a mindset of self-led development
- Training on technical and business skills
- Strengthening community cohesion and building basic financial knowledge through savings groups
- Supporting the development of local value chains
- Increasing access to capital (including microloans through VisionFund and other microfinance institutions) for business launch and development

### Program distinctives

#### Learning partnership

World Vision has selected Emory University as our learning partner for the SWSW program. The Emory team has a strong background in research and learning around effective measurements for empowerment. The Emory research team also brings a strong WASH and economic empowerment background, so World Vision is confident in their ability to ensure strong learning for impact and scale-up.

Specifically, Emory University will advise on program impact measurement and support the analysis and synthesis of program learnings to allow World Vision to document:

1. Process learnings to support program quality and scale
2. Promising practices that help to define and refine an evidence-based approach to integrated programming focused on the empowerment of women and girls

#### Multisectoral approach

A key innovation of this program lies in its approach to integration across sectors, targeting activities and program measures in the same population over a specific period, with shared learning goals. This program integrates WASH with gender equality and social inclusion, economic empowerment, and faith and development sectors to holistically affect change for women and girls. This approach recognizes WASH as a key entry point to empowerment while also recognizing the multifaceted nature of empowerment and the numerous sectors and stakeholders involved.

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## Results and scale-up

Results will be measured against a set of core indicators across all four countries, with contextually specific indicators as well. Indicators are compiled with the expertise of a technical advisory group comprised of members from each collaborating sector program. Emory University will provide expertise in measurements of empowerment for assessing progress toward our goal.

Program results will contribute to the strengthening of World Vision’s overarching approach to the empowerment of women and girls through an iterative review process. Through this program, World Vision intends to develop a stronger framework for integrating WASH and economic empowerment for women and girls that extends beyond this initial three-year investment, leveraging funds to expand and scale-up programmatic opportunities as we continue helping women and girls experience fullness of life, in a supportive environment where they can thrive.

## GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Strong Women Strong World™ draws upon principles of gender quality and social inclusion (GESI) as defined through our GESI theory of change. This highlights the five GESI domains that help communities and vulnerable children experience life in its fullness: access, participation, decision-making, systems, and well-being. SWSW seeks to address each of these domains to achieve the empowerment of women and girls.

In measuring our approach, World Vision also has developed a GESI Continuum, which describes the degree of GESI responsiveness in programs. All World Vision programs should be in the realm of GESI responsive, progressing from GESI accommodating to GESI transformative. SWSW is actively engaged in transforming gender and social inequalities in the long term to promote sustainable change, making this a GESI transformative program.

