



# Gender and socially inclusive co-design of water-sensitive communities

Water for Women is the Australian Government's flagship Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program aimed at improving the health, gender equality and wellbeing of Asian and Pacific communities through inclusive, sustainable WASH.

Research is an important element of Water for Women. It is a key pathway for development innovation and helps to inform policymaking and program delivery. **Monash University, Emory University, Universitas Hasanuddin and University of the South Pacific** are partnering to produce evidence that will lead to more socially inclusive WASH approaches.

The research is examining the ways in which women, girls and diverse communities are engaged when designing water and sanitation infrastructure with their communities, in order to create more inclusive access to the end-benefits these solutions offer. An evidence-based toolkit will help practitioners and organisations bring a socially inclusive lens to future WASH projects.





 RISE program

## How can we ensure equitable access to water and sanitation for the one billion people living in informal settlements today?

There is increasing awareness of the need for more gender-sensitive and socially inclusive approaches to WASH programming, based on different biological and social needs of women and men.

Monash University, Emory University, Universitas Hasanuddin in Indonesia and the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, are generating critical evidence around the roles, needs and priorities of diverse community members when designing water and sanitation infrastructure.

The research is a sub-study within the [Revitalising Informal Settlements and their Environments](#) (RISE) program – an action-research program operating in 24 urban informal settlements in Indonesia and Fiji. Designing with communities, RISE is integrating green infrastructure, like wetlands and bio-filtration gardens, into the settlements, to improve access to essential water and sanitation and transform health and wellbeing.

Our research looks into whether RISE’s intersectional and gender-inclusive co-design process has built social capital among diverse men and women in intervention communities. And further, whether these social resources could in fact dampen the negative impacts of a pandemic on communities.

RISE’s green infrastructure and its unique co-design process has the vast potential to improve the lives of the one billion people living in urban informal settlements. We are providing evidence and a toolkit on how to meaningfully engage women, men and children, including those with a disability and other vulnerabilities, in order for this potential to be achieved.

Water for Women is proud to be partnering with Monash University, Emory University, Universitas Hasanuddin and the University of the South Pacific in this important research work.

**“** We have an opportunity to better understand who in a community nature-based solutions are working for, to ultimately help improve access to the social and health benefits these solutions offer”.

**Monash Law and Monash Sustainable Development Institute:**  
Dr Becky Batagol,  
Associate Professor

**“** The strength of this research is the transdisciplinary knowledge and experience in water, gender equality and design. By documenting and codifying empirical knowledge on the needs and priorities of women and girls during co-design, this research could reshape urban water and sanitation interventions”.

**Emory Rollins School of Public Health :**  
Dr Sheela Sinharoy,  
Assistant Professor



Australia believes that equitable WASH access is of crucial importance to develop communities. Water for Women and our partners provide innovative solutions to WASH delivery and use research to contribute evidence to the global WASH sector. By working together and building evidence, we can create better, more sustainable WASH outcomes whilst also contributing to strengthened gender equality and inclusion.



Type 1 Awards comprise research that answers critical sector questions and examines emerging challenges and trends. They support research that serves the needs of partner governments, donors, CSOs, international agencies and sector stakeholders.