



 D. Gonzalez Botero / International WaterCentre

Promoting Safe Child Faeces Management in Solomon Islands

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 policy-making and program delivery.

The lack of safe child faeces management (CFM) is a critical issue in Solomon Islands, as it is in many countries. Unsafe CFM, or the failure to separate and contain child faeces, causes significant human health risks.

Led by the **International WaterCentre (IWC)**, this research project will promote safe CFM through a behaviour change intervention that leverages local ways-of-knowing and addresses inequitable WASH gender norms in Solomon Islands



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Promoting safe child faeces management: behaviour change interventions that leverage local ways-of-knowing and address inequitable WASH gender norms in Solomon Islands

In Solomon Islands, children currently suffer from high rates of WASH-related diarrhoea, mortality and morbidity.

Many situational factors feed into the way child faeces is managed, including low rates of access to safe sanitation facilities, varying knowledge and beliefs around children's faeces, and the higher potential for transmission of pathogens from child faeces to children because of hand-to-mouth behaviours.

The Solomon Islands Government is committed to improving sanitation across all rural areas and is implementing community-led total sanitation (CLTS). At present, the CLTS approach doesn't explicitly address CFM, and there is an opportunity to design a CFM intervention that complements CLTS.

A complicating factor in improving CFM is that currently, women and older children have responsibility for childcare activities, and an improvement in CFM practices could further increase the burden or work and responsibility on women and children. Challenging entrenched gender norms is a long and slow process and, in some instances, can create risk of harmful backlash to women and children, if not done safely.

This research aims to answer the question: Can an intervention based on psycho-social, technological and epistemological determinants improve safe CFM in rural Solomon Island villages and also safely improve inequitable gender norms associated with safe CFM?

“This is an extremely important project addressing an issue of great magnitude, culturally, environmentally and otherwise, in Solomon Islands... The strength of engaging an interdisciplinary research team in the project is that the collection of field data and, hence, construction of knowledge about the topic will be approached from both a Solomon Islands indigenous as well as metro-centrist or Western methodologies and epistemologies.”

Dr David Welchman Gegeo,
Associate Professor & Director,
Office of Research and Postgraduate
Studies, **Solomon Islands National
University**

The expected research outcomes include:

- CFM behaviour intervention that maximises the possibility to achieve safe CFM in rural Solomon Islands.
- Demonstration of a WASH behaviour change intervention that challenges inequitable gendered roles for CFM in Solomon Islands in a safe way
- Lessons to inform communication strategies for WASH behaviours in Solomon Islands

If successful, this intervention can be incorporated into the Solomon Islands Government's national guidelines for sanitation promotion (CLTS) as well as adoption or trialling by other local and international WASH sector actors.

Large-scale roll-out of an effective CFM behaviour change intervention, such as through a national CLTS program, would significantly benefit human health, in particular, that of infants and children of Solomon Islands.

Water for Women is proud to be partnering with the **International WaterCentre**, Griffith University, Solomon Islands National University and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in this important research work.



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.