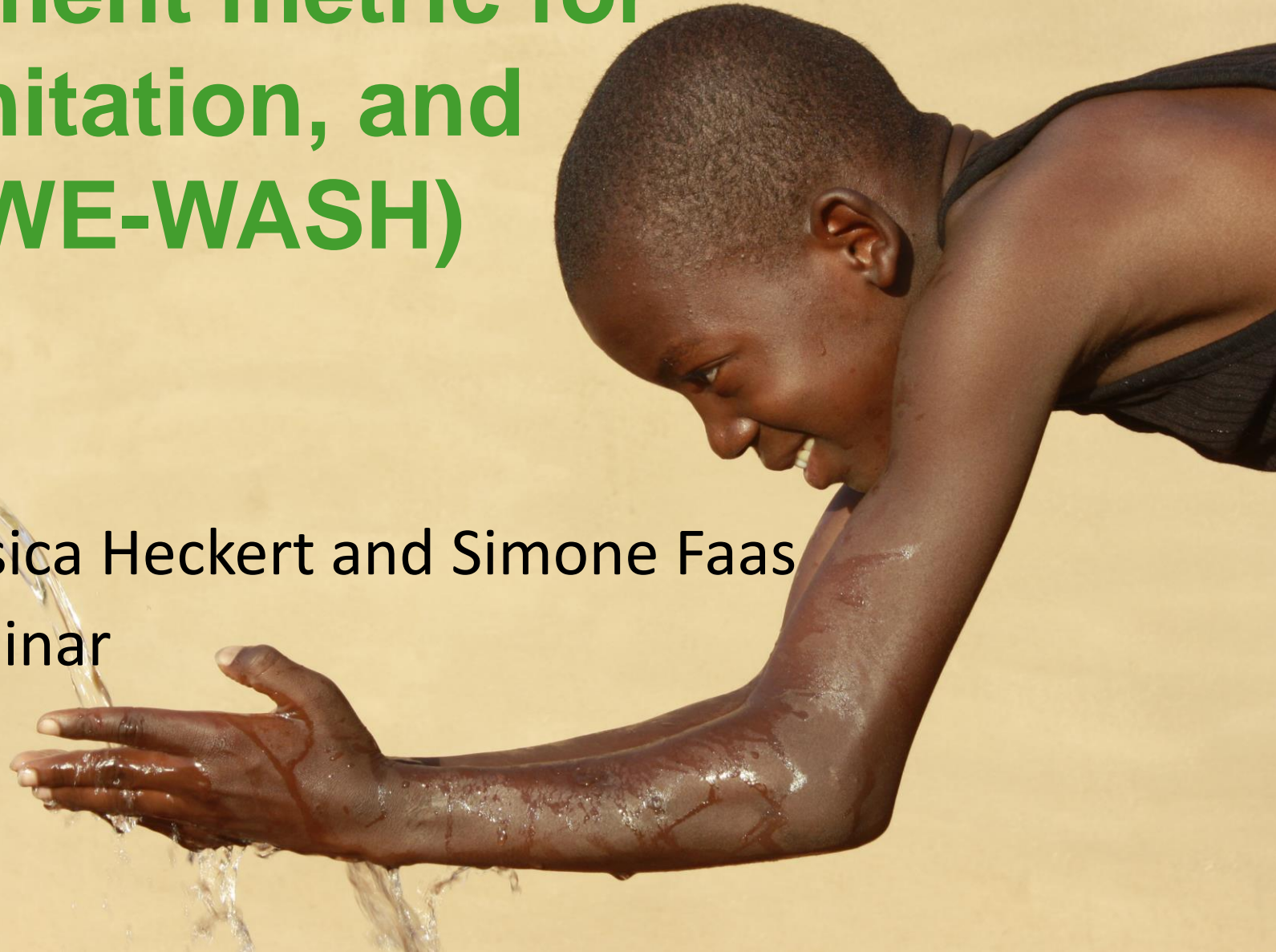




Development of a Women's Empowerment metric for Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WE-WASH)

Presented by Jessica Heckert and Simone Faas
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Importance of gender in the WASH sector

- “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” SDG6
- Targets 6.1 and 6.2 emphasize equitable access to water, sanitation, and hygiene
- Target 6.b focuses on the collective
- Many WASH interventions focus on women, but few focus on empowerment (Caruso et al., 2022; Sinharoy et al., 2023)
- Review of gender-sensitive WASH indicators found only about 10% of 162 indicators measured empowerment (Myers et al., 2022)



Objectives of gender-responsive development programs

Reach

Include women in program activities

Reaching women means ensuring that women have the same opportunity to access the program activities as men.

Benefit

Increase women's well-being (e.g. access to clean water and safe toilets).

Requires more than reaching women:

- *Women value the intervention*
- *Direct benefits accrue to women*
- *Women's needs, preferences and constraints are considered in the intervention design*

Empower

Strengthen ability of women to make strategic life choices and to put those choices into action. Goes beyond reaching and benefiting women:

- *Increases women's agency*
- *Involves men*
- *Shifts gender norms and attitudes among participants*

Transform

Goes beyond the woman and her household to change gender norms and attitudes on a larger scale (changing systems). Goes beyond empowering individual women:

- *Changes gender norms at the household, community and societal levels*
- *Addresses structural and institutional barriers*
- *Mobilizes the power of the collective*

Example: WASH Intervention

Reach

Benefit

Empower

Transform

Objective	Increase women's knowledge of improved menstrual hygiene products	Increase women's well-being by providing improved menstrual hygiene products.	Increase women and girls' belief in and ability to do normal activities when menstruating (not limited by taboos)	Change gender norms and attitudes towards menstrual hygiene at the community and societal levels
Strategies	Target women and girls to attend sessions about improved menstrual hygiene sanitation and products.	Distribution of menstrual hygiene products to women and girls.	Raise awareness about the consequences of exclusion with families. Increase access to menstrual hygiene products and facilities.	Engaging community members to change attitudes towards menstrual taboos and restrictions. Support the integration of women and girls into normal life during menstruation
Indicators	Number of women and girls 15 to 49 who attend informational sessions	Proportion of women and girls 15 to 49 using improved menstrual hygiene products	Whether women and girls can go where they normally go and engage in their normal activities while menstruating	Attitudes of community members related to the inclusion of women and girls during menstruation.

Lack of WASH specific empowerment metrics

- Measuring empowerment has evolved from proxy measures (e.g., education, age at marriage) to questions on input into general decision making, to more nuanced and sector-specific metrics
- Limited focus on empowerment in the WASH sector
 - Empowerment in WASH Index (Dickin et al., 2021)
 - Based on WEAI—although comprehensive, length is a limitation
 - Development limited to Burkina Faso
 - Agency, Resources, and Institutional Structures for Sanitation-related Empowerment (ARISE) scales (Sinharoy et al., 2023)
 - Address resources, agency, and institutions
 - Limited to urban areas, not administered to men (limits intrahousehold comparisons)

What is WE-WASH

- Dashboard of 14 indicators
 - Users can select indicators that make sense for their work
- Cover different domains of agency and different areas of WASH
- Aimed to limit the number of questions required to construct each indicator
- Developed in rural Malawi and Nepal, expect it can be used in a broad range of contexts



Preview of the indicators

- Instrumental agency in WASH
 - Input into household-level WASH infrastructure decisions
 - Receives help on WASH activities (when wanted)
 - Does not spend undue time on WASH activities
- Intrinsic agency in WASH
 - WASH experiences do not generate negative affect
 - Feels lack of water does not limit normal activities
- Collective agency in WASH
 - Community comes together on WASH issues
 - Individual participates in and benefits from community WASH activities
- WASH empowerment environment (resources for empowerment)
 - Feels safe while gathering water and conducting personal hygiene
 - Does not avoid places out concern for a safe place to urinate or defecate
- Instrumental and intrinsic agency related menstrual hygiene
 - Women do not need to be separated while menstruating
 - Menstruation is a normal part of life for women
 - Freedom of movement and to do as desired while menstruating
- Menstrual hygiene empowerment environment (resources for empowerment)
 - Access to facilities for menstrual hygiene needs
 - Access to menstrual products

Methods

- Questionnaire development
 - Informed by review of existing questionnaires
 - Covered different types of agency
 - Feedback from in-country partner
- Cognitive interviewing
 - Examines how respondents interpret and respond to survey questions
 - 36 women and 18 men in Nepal
- Inclusion of the pilot WE-WASH modules in household surveys in Malawi and Nepal
- Indicator development

Cognitive interviewing: Results and revisions

Module	Cognitive error(s) identified	Revision(s) to instrument
Intrinsic and instrumental agency in WASH	Retrieval	Rephrased 18 questions
Collective agency in WASH	Response Comprehension	Reduced Likert scale Eliminated 2 questions Rephrased 1 question
WASH time-use agency	None	None
Freedom of movement in sanitation	Retrieval	Rephrased 1 question
Intrinsic agency in menstruation	Comprehension	Rephrased 3 questions Eliminated 4 questions
Freedom of movement in menstrual health	None	Added 2 questions asking about additional locations
Instrumental agency in menstrual health	Comprehension	Rephrased 2 questions Eliminated 1 question Split 1 question into 2

Household surveys

- Multi-stage cluster randomized sample
- Malawi: Purposefully selected 2 districts from each of the 3 regions, randomly selected 9 rural primary sampling units (PSUs) from each district and 15 households from each PSU (810 households total)
 - Households with at least one woman of the target age were eligible
- Nepal: Randomly selected 11 rural districts, with balance across regions, randomly selected 5 PSUs from each district, and 15 households from each PSU (825 households total)
 - Only households with a woman and a man of the target age were eligible.
- A knowledgeable household member (often the head) responded to questions on household characteristics
- WE-WASH modules administered in individual interviews with one randomly selected woman (aged 18-49) and one randomly selected man (aged 18-64) from each households.
- Interviews conducted via compute-assisted person interviewing, interviewer and respondent matched on gender



Indicator development

- Based on Alkire-Foster approach to indicator development—normative choices informed by empirical evidence
- Adequacy on an indicator = empowerment
- We grouped similar items and defined potential alternative adequacy cut-offs
- For select modules in which questions were asked with multipoint Likert scales, we conducted exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to group items. Indicators were constructed based items that were a single dimension.
- Compared headcount ratios of alternative definitions for women and men in each country to identify the most defensible cut off
- For indicators comprised of more than 3 items, we conducted sensitivity analysis to see if the indicator could be calculated with fewer items



Detailed presentation of select indicators

- Instrumental agency in WASH
 - Input into household-level WASH infrastructure decisions
 - Receives help on WASH activities (when wanted)
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 - Women do not need to be separated while menstruating
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 - Access to facilities for menstrual hygiene needs
 - Access to menstrual products

Input in household's WASH infrastructure decisions

		If your household needed to make a decision whether or not to [ACTIVITY] and how to do it, who would most likely make that decision? ENTER UP TO THREE (3) MEMBER IDs IF RESPONSE IS MEMBER ID (SELF) ONLY → NEXT ACTIVITY	How often do you think that your input would be part of the decisions whether to [ACTIVITY] and how to do to? SELECT ONE
ACTIVITY		A19	A20
A	Build, install, or improve your households' latrine or toilet facility	[][][][] 1. 2. 3. Others Code: NON-HH MEMBER.....96 NOT APPLICABLE.....98	Never0 Rarely1 Sometimes.....2 Always3 Refused95 Doesn't know97 Not applicable.....98
B	Build, install, or improve a cistern or large water storage drum	[][][][] 1. 2. 3. Others Code: NON-HH MEMBER.....96 NOT APPLICABLE.....98	Never0 Rarely1 Sometimes.....2 Always3 Refused95 Doesn't know97 Not applicable.....98
C	Build, install, or improve a water source, for example a well, pipe, tap, or pump	[][][][] 1. 2. 3. Others Code: NON-HH MEMBER.....96 NOT APPLICABLE.....98	Never0 Rarely1 Sometimes.....2 Always3 Refused95 Doesn't know97 Not applicable.....98
D	Purchase equipment or materials for treating household drinking water	[][][][] 1. 2. 3. Others Code: NON-HH MEMBER.....96 NOT APPLICABLE.....98	Never0 Rarely1 Sometimes.....2 Always3 Refused95 Doesn't know97 Not applicable.....98

Module Module A: Intrinsic and Instrumental agency in WASH

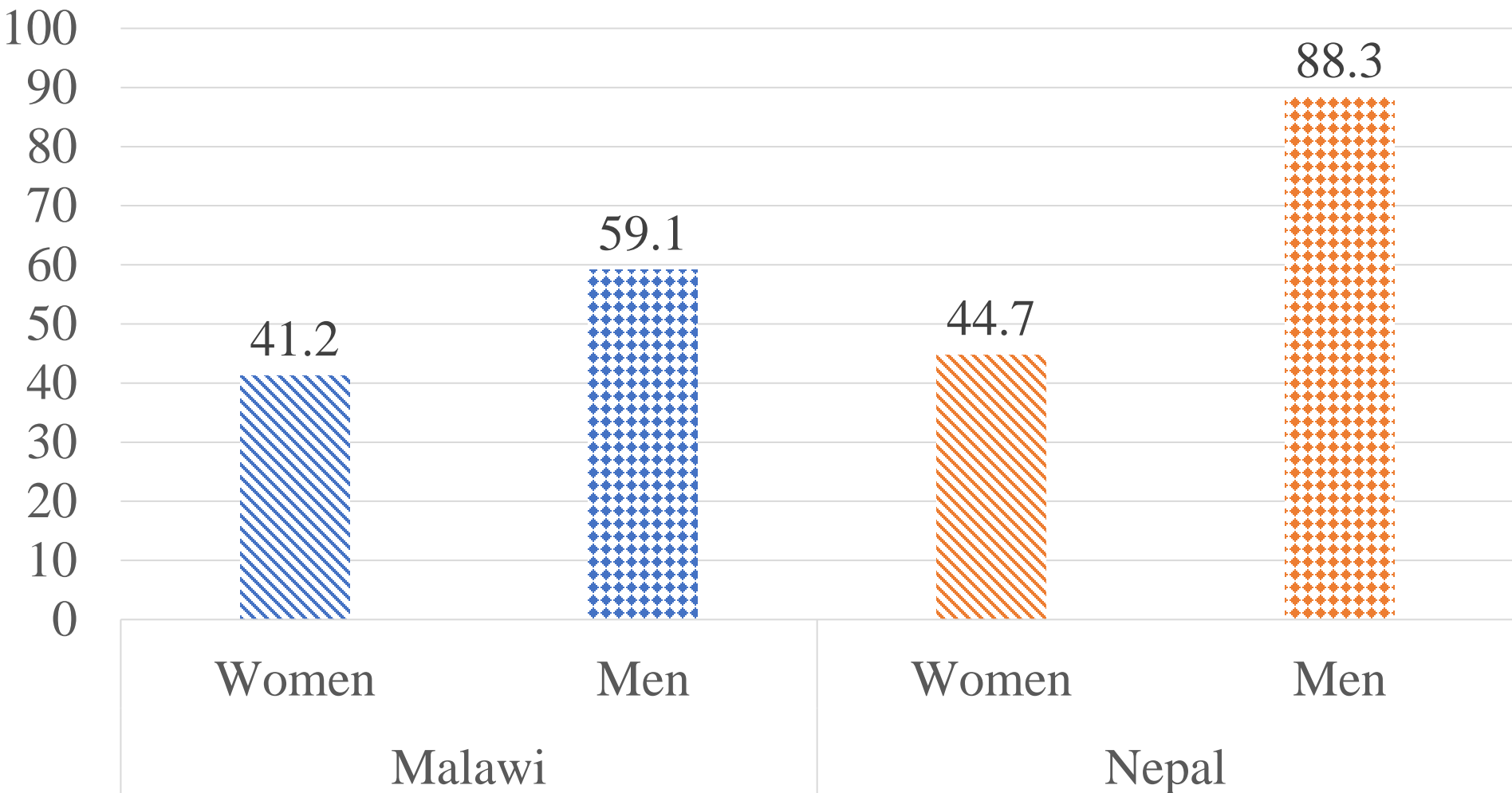
Questions for Indicator Questions A19A,B,C,D
Questions A20A,B,C,D

Proposed adequacy definition Respondent considered adequate if:

- 1) If activity is applicable to HH (A19 is not 98), if respondent is joint decision maker, and their input is taken into consideration sometimes or always (A20 = 2 or 3)
- 2) If activity is applicable to HH and respondent is sole decision maker
- 3) If activity is applicable to HH (A19 is not 98), if respondent is not a primary decision maker but their input is taken into consideration sometimes or always (A20 = 2 or 3)

Notes & assumptions Don't know, Refused, Not applicable equal missing.

Input in household's WASH infrastructure decisions

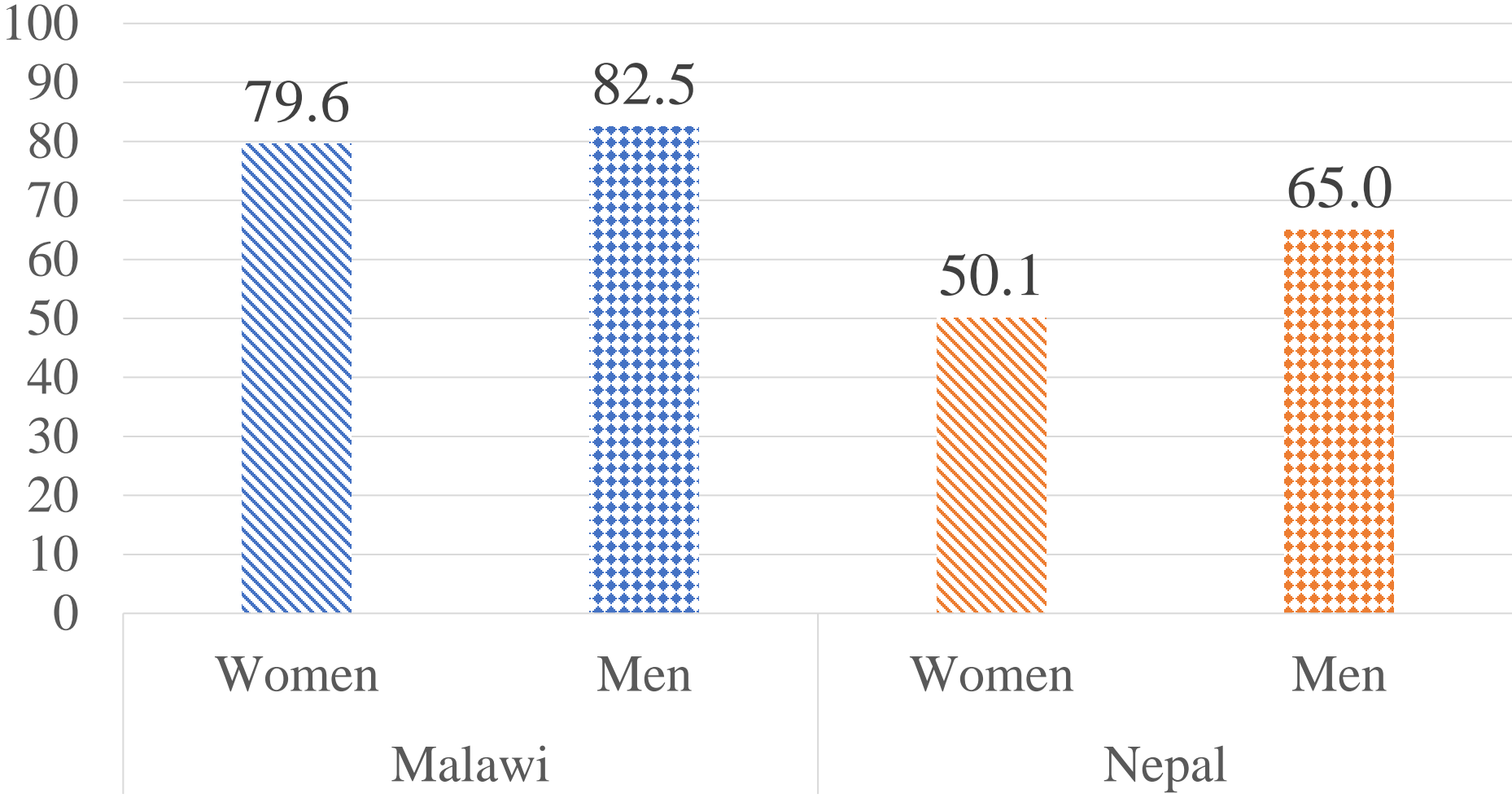


Community comes together on WASH issues

#	STATEMENT	RESPONSE
B01	When there is a problem with water, sanitation, or hygiene in your community, people in your community come together to find a solution.	Completely disagree1 Partially disagree2 Partially agree3 Completely agree4 Refused95 Don't know97 Not applicable98
B02	When there is a problem with human waste, such as urine or feces, management in your community, people in your community come together to discuss how it should be solved.	Completely disagree1 Partially disagree2 Partially agree3 Completely agree4 Refused95 Don't know97 Not applicable98
B03	People in your community share new information about water, sanitation, and hygiene issues with other community members if they learn something new	Completely disagree1 Partially disagree2 Partially agree3 Completely agree4 Refused95 Don't know97 Not applicable98

Module	Module B: Collective agency in WASH
Questions for Indicator	Questions B01, B02, B03
Proposed adequacy definition	Respondent considered adequate if: 1) Partially agrees (=2) or fully agrees (=3) with three statements
Notes & assumptions	Don't know, Refused, Not applicable equal missing.

Community comes together on WASH issues

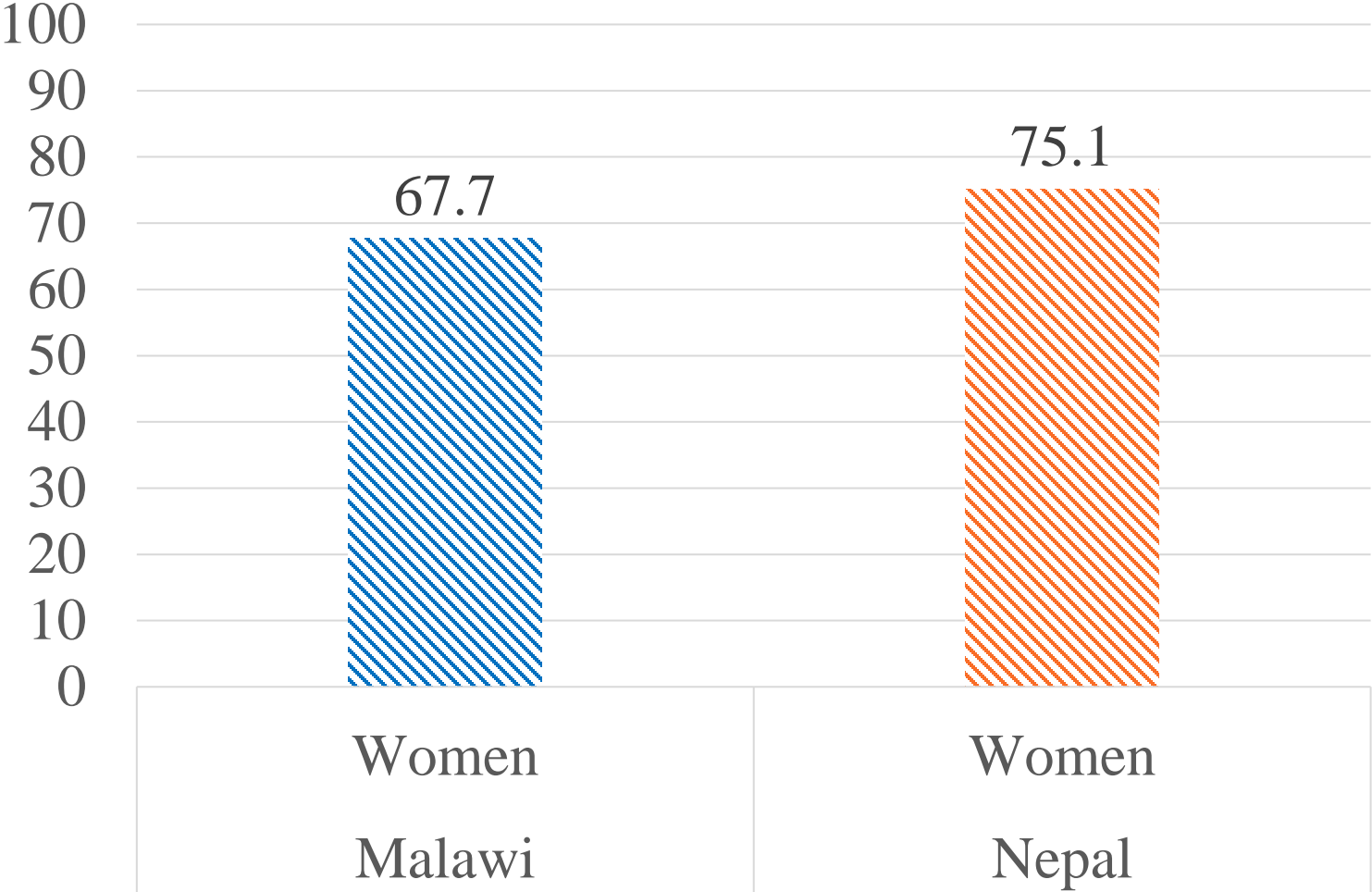


Does not avoid places for concern of safe place to urinate or defecate

D01	These days, do you avoid traveling to or spending time at [PLACE] because you are concerned about the availability of a place to safely or comfortably urinate or defecate?	
	PLACE	
A	The closest market to either buy or sell goods	Yes1 No.....2 Not applicable98
B	A place to do work for several hours, such as a field, fishery/fishpond, a market, or your place of business	Yes1 No.....2 Not applicable98
E	A religious site, such a temple, church, or sacred site	Yes1 No.....2 Not applicable98
F	Another village or community	Yes1 No.....2 Not applicable98

Module	Module D: Freedom of Movement in Sanitation
Questions for Indicator	Questions D01 A,B,E,F
Proposed adequacy definition	Respondent considered adequate if: 1) Respondent does not avoid any locations (=2) for all applicable locations
Notes & assumptions	Don't know, Refused, Not applicable equal missing.

Does not avoid places for concern of safe place to urinate or defecate

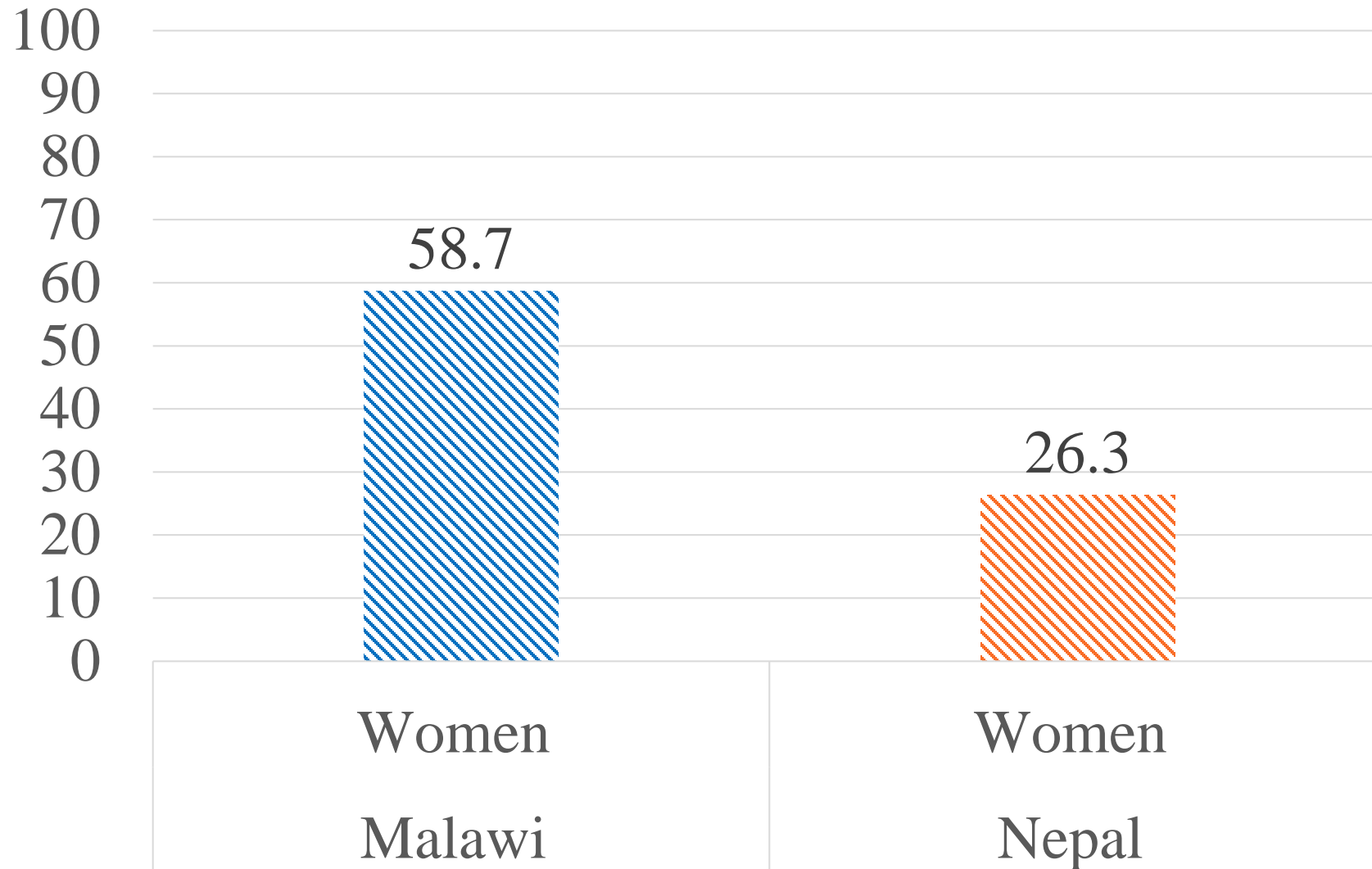


Women do not need to be separate when menstruating







E12a	Women need to be separated from others when they are menstruating.	Completely disagree.....	1
		Partially disagree.....	2
		Partially agree.....	3
		Completely agree.....	3
		Refused.....	95
		Doesn't know.....	97
E12b	Women need to be separated from certain places when they are menstruating.	Completely disagree.....	1
		Partially disagree.....	2
		Partially agree.....	3
		Completely agree.....	3
		Refused.....	95
		Doesn't know.....	97
E13a	You feel that you should not prepare food when you are menstruating.	Completely disagree.....	1
		Partially disagree.....	2
		Partially agree.....	3
		Completely agree.....	3
		Refused.....	95
		Doesn't know.....	97
		Not applicable.....	98

Module	Module E: Intrinsic agency in Menstrual Health
Questions for Indicator	Questions E12a, E12b, E13a
Proposed adequacy definition	Respondent considered adequate if: 1) Completely disagrees (=0) or partially disagrees (=1) with all three statements
Notes & assumptions	Don't know, Refused, Not applicable equal missing.





Women do not need to be separate when menstruating





Suggested indicators for projects focused on strengthening WASH infrastructure

- Instrumental agency in WASH
 -  • Input into household-level WASH infrastructure decisions
 - Receives help on WASH activities (when wanted)
 -  • Does not spend undue time on WASH activities
- Intrinsic agency in WASH
 -  • WASH experiences do not generate negative affect
 -  • Feels lack of water does not limit normal activities
- Collective agency in WASH
 - Community comes together on WASH issues
 - Individual participates in and benefits from community WASH activities
- WASH empowerment environment (resources for empowerment)
 -  • Feels safe while gathering water and conducting personal hygiene
 -  • Does not avoid places out concern for a safe place to urinate or defecate
- Instrumental and intrinsic agency related menstrual hygiene
 - Women do not need to be separated while menstruating
 - Menstruation is a normal part of life for women
 - Freedom of movement and to do as desired while menstruating
- Menstrual hygiene empowerment environment (resources for empowerment)
 - Access to facilities for menstrual hygiene needs
 - Access to menstrual products



Suggested indicators for projects focused on hygiene promotion

- Instrumental agency in WASH
 - Input into household-level WASH infrastructure decisions
 -  • Receives help on WASH activities (when wanted)
 -  • Does not spend undue time on WASH activities
- Intrinsic agency in WASH
 -  • WASH experiences do not generate negative affect
 -  • Feels lack of water does not limit normal activities
- Collective agency in WASH
 - Community comes together on WASH issues
 - Individual participates in and benefits from community WASH activities
- WASH empowerment environment (resources for empowerment)
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- Menstrual hygiene empowerment environment (resources for empowerment)
 - Access to facilities for menstrual hygiene needs
 - Access to menstrual products

Suggested indicators for projects with a community focus

- Instrumental agency in WASH
 - Input into household-level WASH infrastructure decisions
 - Receives help on WASH activities (when wanted)
 - Does not spend undue time on WASH activities
- Intrinsic agency in WASH
 - WASH experiences do not generate negative affect
 - Feels lack of water does not limit normal activities
- Collective agency in WASH
 -  • Community comes together on WASH issues
 -  • Individual participates in and benefits from community WASH activities
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 - Feels safe while gathering water and conducting personal hygiene
 - Does not avoid places out concern for a safe place to urinate or defecate
- Instrumental and intrinsic agency related menstrual hygiene
 - Women do not need to be separated while menstruating
 - Menstruation is a normal part of life for women
 - Freedom of movement and to do as desired while menstruating
- Menstrual hygiene empowerment environment (resources for empowerment)
 - Access to facilities for menstrual hygiene needs
 - Access to menstrual products

Suggested indicators for projects where there are safety concerns

- Instrumental agency in WASH
 - Input into household-level WASH infrastructure decisions
 - Receives help on WASH activities (when wanted)
 - Does not spend undue time on WASH activities
- Intrinsic agency in WASH
 - WASH experiences do not generate negative affect
 - Feels lack of water does not limit normal activities
- Collective agency in WASH
 - Community comes together on WASH issues
 - Individual participates in and benefits from community WASH activities
- WASH empowerment environment (resources for empowerment)
 -  • Feels safe while gathering water and conducting personal hygiene
 -  • Does not avoid places out concern for a safe place to urinate or defecate
- Instrumental and intrinsic agency related menstrual hygiene
 - Women do not need to be separated while menstruating
 - Menstruation is a normal part of life for women
 - Freedom of movement and to do as desired while menstruating
- Menstrual hygiene empowerment environment (resources for empowerment)
 - Access to facilities for menstrual hygiene needs
 - Access to menstrual products

Suggested indicators for projects with a menstrual hygiene focus

- Instrumental agency in WASH
 - Input into household-level WASH infrastructure decisions
 - Receives help on WASH activities (when wanted)
 - Does not spend undue time on WASH activities
- Intrinsic agency in WASH
 - WASH experiences do not generate negative affect
 - Feels lack of water does not limit normal activities
- Collective agency in WASH
 - Community comes together on WASH issues
 - Individual participates in and benefits from community WASH activities
- WASH empowerment environment (resources for empowerment)
 - Feels safe while gathering water and conducting personal hygiene
 - Does not avoid places out concern for a safe place to urinate or defecate
- Instrumental and intrinsic agency related menstrual hygiene
 - ♀ • Women do not need to be separated while menstruating
 - ♀ • Menstruation is a normal part of life for women
 - ♀ • Freedom of movement and to do as desired while menstruating
- Menstrual hygiene empowerment environment (resources for empowerment)
 - ♀ • Access to facilities for menstrual hygiene needs
 - ♀ • Access to menstrual products

Conclusions

- Developed suite of 14 indicators that measure empowerment across different domains of agency and different areas of WASH
- Indicators can be selected based on project needs (i.e., dashboard, not an index)
 - Word of caution: Using a few indicators may mean that they don't provide a full picture of women's and men's empowerment, which may ignore backlash and spillovers
- Addresses gap in current metrics
 - Focuses on empowerment in WASH sector (not just gender-related indicators)
 - Flexible for surveys with limited space
 - Focused on rural areas
- Future work
 - Assessment of divergent and convergent validity
 - Data from other contexts would help us strengthen indicator selection and cut-offs
 - Indicators should be put to use in impact evaluations

Table A1. Adequacy on “Input into household WASH infrastructure decisions”, by individual characteristics

Malawi			Nepal		
Characteristics	Input into household-level WASH infrastructure decisions		Characteristics	Input into household-level WASH infrastructure decisions	
	Women (1)	Men (2)		Women (1)	Men (2)
Regions			Regions		
Central	54.8***	66.3***	Mountain	54.7***	82.0**
North	31.9	48.0	Hills	58.0	90.7
South	36.9	62.2	Terai	30.1	88.8
Education			Education		
No school or some primary	38.7*	59.9	No school or some primary	45.3	90.1**
Primary complete	46.5	57.6	Primary complete	43.0	88.3
Completed secondary or more	47.7	59.5	Completed secondary or more	45.4	80.7
Age			Age		
18-29	34.8***	53.0	18-29	35.3***	72.6***
30-39	45.1	61.0	30-39	49.1	94.3
40-49	51.8	65.8	40-49	53.8	94.2
50-64	--	62.5	50-64	--	90.8
Wealth quintile			Wealth quintile		
Poorest	41.7***	60.6	Poorest	46.4**	86.7
Poor	31.7	63.3	Poor	50.6	88.5
Middle	42.6	56.1	Middle	47.9	87.3
High	51.6	65.6	High	44.2	86.7
Highest	38.5	50.8	Highest	34.5	92.1
Type of household			Caste¹		
Dual headed	39.3***	--	Dalit	37.7***	88.6
Woman-only headed	53.1	--	Janiati	51.9	89.9
			Madhesi	21.1	88.8
			Brahman/Chhetri	59.5	85.2
Total	41.2	59.1	Total	44.7	88.3
N	808	548	N	825	826

Table A2. Adequacy on “Community comes together about WASH issues”, by individual characteristics

Malawi

Characteristics	Community comes together on WASH issues	
	Women (1)	Men (2)
Regions		
Central	81.1**	84.0
North	74.4	85.3
South	83.2	77.6
Education		
No school or some primary	78.4	85.2*
Primary complete	83.6	80.6
Completed secondary or more	75.0	74.7
Age		
18-29	77.9	80.9
30-39	82.0	78.9
40-49	80.5	84.4
50-64	--	90.3
Wealth quintile		
Poorest	77.9	86.2
Poor	80.7	81.0
Middle	80.9	80.7
High	79.5	82.8
Highest	78.9	81.8
Type of household		
Dual headed	79.3	--
Woman-only headed	81.4	--
Total	79.6	82.5
N	808	551

Nepal

Characteristics	Community comes together on WASH issues	
	Women (1)	Men (2)
Regions		
Mountain	55.3***	81.3***
Hill	75.3	78.7
Terai	27.9	47.6
Education		
No school or some primary	45.9***	59.8***
Primary complete	53.0	71.9
Completed secondary or more	63.9	68.8
Age		
18-29	47.3	59.9*
30-39	47.9	66.5
40-49	57.0	64.6
50-64	--	68.9
Wealth quintile		
Poorest	56.0	68.7
Poor	47.3	61.2
Middle	52.7	69.1
High	47.3	61.8
Highest	47.3	64.2
Caste ¹		
Dalit	49.1***	64.0***
Janjati	50.5	70.0
Madhesi	18.6	48.4
Brahman/Chhetri	75.7	79.0
Total	50.1	65.0
N	826	826

Table A3. Adequacy on “Does not avoid places out of concern for a safe place to urinate or defecate”, by individual characteristics, women only

Malawi	
Does not avoid places out of a concern for a safe place to urinate or defecate	
Characteristics	Women
Regions	
Central	71.5**
North	70.0
South	61.6
Education	
No school or some primary	67.9
Primary complete	66.2
Completed secondary or more	72.7
Age	
18-29	66.9
30-39	67.0
40-49	70.7
50-64	
Wealth quintile	
Poorest	66.3
Poor	72.0
Middle	59.9
High	69.6
Highest	70.8
Type of household	
Dual headed	67.5
Woman-only headed	69.0
Total	67.7
N	808

Nepal	
Does not avoid places out of a concern for a safe place to urinate or defecate	
Characteristics	Women (1)
Regions	
Mountain	50.7***
Hills	95.0
Terai	70.4
Education	
No school or some primary	74.0
Primary complete	78.0
Completed secondary or more	79.6
Age	
18-29	73.6
30-39	76.8
40-49	77.8
50-64	
Wealth quintile	
Poorest	69.3*
Poor	77.4
Middle	82.4
High	75.2
Highest	74.5
Caste ¹	
Dalit	77.2*
Janjati	80.8
Madhesi	75.2
Brahman/Chhetri	69.5
Total	75.6
N	825

Table A4. Adequacy on “Women do not need to be separate when menstruating”, by individual characteristics, women only

Malawi		Nepal	
Characteristics	No need for women to be separated while menstruating	Characteristics	No need for women to be separated while menstruating
	Women (1)		Women (1)
Regions		Regions	
Central	60.0**	Mountain	30.7**
North	63.3	Hills	30.3
South	52.6	Terai	21.3
Education		Education	
No school or some primary	54.6***	No school or some primary	22.9***
Primary complete	64.8	Primary complete	26.2
Completed secondary or more	79.5	Completed secondary or more	42.6
Age		Age	
18-29	56.7	18-29	29.7
30-39	60.1	30-39	22.1
40-49	61.6	40-49	26.2
Wealth quintile		Wealth quintile	
Poorest	48.5***	Poorest	18.1**
Poor	52.8	Poor	24.4
Middle	60.5	Middle	31.5
High	64.6	High	26.7
Highest	67.1	Highest	30.9
Type of household		Caste¹	
Dual headed	58.6	Dalit	21.9***
Woman-only headed	59.3	Janjati	38.7
Total	58.7	Madhesi	27.3
N	808	Brahman/Chhetri	11.0
		Total	26.3
		N	825