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WASH IN CRISES RESEARCH AGENDA 2023-2030

LONDON
SCHOOL OF
HYGIENE
& TROPICAL
MEDICINE



WASH Cluster
Water Sanitation Hygiene

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UNIVERSITY

Goal: The WASH in Crises Research Agenda sought to generate a consensus-based research agenda that can steer the WASH in humanitarian crises field for the next 10 years (up to 2030)

Methods

Questions taken from research articles and systematic reviews, interviews with key WASH actors, and focus groups discussions with technical working groups

Questions reviewed by 14 humanitarian and development WASH advisors (including academic, donor, NGO, and multilateral agencies)

Generated a list of 128 research questions of interest

Questions were ranked and prioritised, via an online survey and scores calculated, by 286 individuals from all regions globally

Generated a list of 20 priority questions from a total 128 questions

Final list aims to steer investments in WASH in crises research and learning

Call to Action

All stakeholders are invited to use this research agenda to encourage, inspire and enable relevant and high-quality research

Academics can adopt this research agenda and address priority evidence gaps, that are appropriate and relevant to the sector

Collaborative research teams – comprising academics and practitioners, including from countries affected by crises – can be established to ensure evidence generated is relevant and appropriate to contexts

Humanitarian organisations can promote the importance of staff engagement with evidence and and be supported to use new evidence generated

WASH stakeholders, collectively, can promote the use of knowledge brokers to bridge the gap between research and practice, and support research synthesis and translation to ensure evidence is accessible and available to end users.

Donors can adopt this agenda to guide research investments and ensure funds are used efficiently to address the priority challenges and research questions identified.

The WASH community, collectively, can use the WASH in crises research agenda to align efforts to build the evidence base, and guide investments in appropriate and effective WASH programmes.

#	Top 20 Prioritised Research Questions
1	What are the best strategies for maintenance and operational sustainability of handwashing infrastructure (e.g., handwashing stations, facilities or stands) in crises contexts?
2	What adaptations to WASH programmes or WASH services (including hardware and software) are appropriate, inclusive and effective for people affected by disabilities (PWDs) in crises contexts?
3	What WASH non-food items (NFIs) are appropriate, effective, and cost-effective for distribution to households during outbreaks (e.g., cholera, Ebola, Hepatitis E, typhoid, COVID-19)?
4	How can we improve consultation with the women and girls to design and provide safe, accessible WASH facilities and infrastructure (e.g., sufficient water access, locks to sanitation facilities, bathing areas, appropriate menstrual hygiene (MH) products and disposal, appropriate to needs and cultural beliefs) in crises contexts?
5	What additional features can improve the experience and utilisation of sanitation in humanitarian contexts (e.g., lighting, locks, privacy screens, space for menstrual hygiene (MH), roof, torches), and particularly by women and girls?
6	How effective are existing technologies and approaches in improving sanitation uptake among populations affected by crises, and particularly among people with disabilities (PWDs) and young children in humanitarian crises?
7	How can we identify, define, and categorise the determinants and motives of hand hygiene behaviour in crises contexts and among different population groups (e.g., children, adults, people with disabilities (PWDs), etc.) and at different stages of an emergency (acute or protracted phase)?
8	How can we improve and sustain hygiene practices within different humanitarian contexts (e.g., natural disasters, protracted crises outbreaks (e.g., cholera, Ebola, Hepatitis E, typhoid, COVID-19, etc.))?
9	How can we improve the satisfaction and use of sanitation facilities among crises-affected populations, particularly among women and girls regarding menstrual hygiene (MH) infrastructure and services?
10	What is the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of in-kind distribution of WASH items (e.g., soap, hygiene kits, menstrual hygiene (MH) materials, chlorine water treatment, water containers, etc.) on health and non-health outcomes among populations affected by crises?
11	What are the most effective methods to identify/monitor WASH needs in host communities and urban centres impacted by population influxes?
12	How effective is improved access to safe water (e.g., coverage of water points and distribution networks) in controlling and preventing outbreaks (e.g., cholera, Ebola, Hepatitis E, typhoid, and COVID-19)?
13	How does poor access to WASH contribute to increased risk of gender-based violence (GBV) in humanitarian settings?
14	How can hygiene promoters or promotion reduce disinformation or myths associated to outbreak-prone diseases (e.g., cholera, Ebola, Hepatitis E, typhoid, and COVID-19)?
15	What are the health outcomes (e.g., increased incidence of disease, increased morbidity, increased mortality and/or increased incidence of poor mental health outcomes etc.) related to WASH experienced by populations affected by crises?
16	What designs or adaptations are required for climate change resilient water supply and sanitation infrastructure that are appropriate and effective in humanitarian contexts?
17	How can organisations work with the population to determine what are the most appropriate products to be included in hygiene kits in different responses phases (e.g., acute, and post-acute phase) or for different population groups (e.g., families with young children, child-headed households, people with disabilities (PWDs), adults with incontinence, etc.)?
18	What are effective mechanisms to build the capacity of WASH professionals who work in emergency contexts?
19	What is the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of sanitation promotion campaigns on health and non-health outcomes among populations affected by crises?
20	How can organisations support affected populations in accessing safe, sufficient, and reliable drinking water supplies at reasonable cost in crises contexts?

Full report and publication to be found via QR code or here: <https://www.elrha.org/wash-research-agenda/>

