In humanitarian emergencies, providing a high-quality WASH response relies on staff making good decisions on a wide range of interdependent factors in contexts that are dynamic and challenging. From technical decisions about the design and placement of latrines to agreeing which actors will work where; from how we understand the needs of affected people to how we prioritise strategic objectives.

National Humanitarian WASH Coordination Platforms (NHWCPs) and partners work together to ensure that WASH responses:

- provide women, men and children safe and dignified access to WASH services and facilities in a systematic and predictable way;
- respond and adapt to the needs of the affected population;
- are relevant and appropriate;
- are effective and timely;
- are based on the meaningful participation of affected people.

All WASH partners work towards achieving high quality programming, ensuring that humanitarian standards are met. However, often there are no agreed methods for measuring programme quality in a way that supports partners to identify where to prioritise their efforts. Where we do collectively fall short of agreed standards, this information is either not accessible, or only available once project evaluations are conducted at the end of the project – by which time it is too late for field staff to take corrective action.

By developing a way for operational agencies and coordination platforms to measure the quality of response being provided, this project aims to help teams identify where quality standards are not being met, and to empower them to take prompt corrective action. The project will be based upon existing standards as well as evidence from a literature review and stakeholder input to ensure that the resulting methods are effective, useful and well adapted the context in which they will be used, without further overburdening field teams.

The project, implemented on behalf of the Global WASH Cluster, is a collaboration between Oxfam, Solidarités International, Tufts University and UNICEF as the Cluster Lead Agency. Over the course of the project we aim to define, develop and field-test quality assurance systems that are context-specific and can be used by organisations implementing and coordinating WASH responses to both guide and monitor quality at the national and field levels. The project team will:

- undertake a literature review to support the development of a draft quality assurance framework for review;
- carry out two visits to each of three countries to help NHWCPs and WASH partners contextualise and implement the framework;
- using the learning from field projects, produce a WASH quality assurance system template and guidance pack to support NHWCPs and partners implement their own systems, as well as an advocacy document with recommendations for expanding the roll out of the toolkit over the next two years.

During the initial phase of the project we are interested to hear from organisations or individuals who have experience in monitoring and evaluating quality in WASH programmes. We are also very keen to hear from WaSH Coordination platforms who are interested in benefitting from the field support visits and would be able to support the pilot phase of this project.

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