

# WHAT PROGRESS LOOKS LIKE

## WORLD – COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

### (SDG TARGET 6.B)

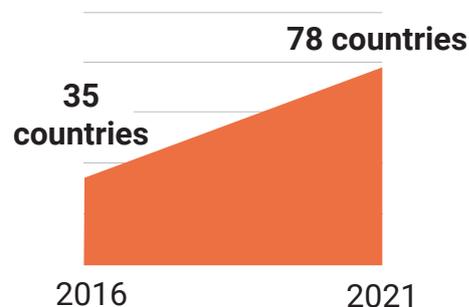


**Progress indicator:** Number of countries that mention women’s participation in water and sanitation management in law or policy

**Level of impact:** Global

**Result:** The percentage of countries that report having laws or policies that mention women’s participation has improved by at least 10% in all water and sanitation subsectors, and at least 25% of reporting countries saw an improvement in the extent to which women participate.

**Progress 2016–2021:**



## SITUATION

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 6.b aims to support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management. Strengthening community participation is fundamental to adapting and sustaining SDG 6 solutions to local community contexts and ensuring no one is left behind.

Links between gender and water and sanitation include women’s participation in the sector and menstrual health and hygiene. For water and sanitation services to be suitable for all, special attention should be paid to women and girls.

The UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) country survey compiles data on women’s participation in different water and sanitation subsectors and settings, including urban sanitation, rural sanitation, urban drinking water, rural drinking water, hygiene, and water resources planning and management.

The extent to which women participate in water and sanitation management is measured using a six-point scale, where lower scores indicate little to no communication or collaboration with women, and higher scores indicate that women have regular opportunities for formal participation and play an active role in decision-making on water and sanitation management.

This snapshot presents the progress made in women’s participation at the global level.

## PROGRESS MADE

Across the world, there has been significant progress in women’s participation in water and sanitation management since the start of the SDG period.

The number of countries that report having laws or policies that mention women’s participation has more than doubled during the last five years. On average across the six subsectors, 78 countries (representing 64 per cent of reporting countries) reported having laws or policies mentioning women’s participation in 2021, as



compared to only 35 countries in 2016. Between 2018 and 2021, an increase of at least 10 per cent was seen in all subsectors and settings, but this improvement was most apparent in the hygiene sector where the number of countries that reported having laws or policies mentioning women's participation increased from 47 to 88.

Some of the countries that reported having laws or policies mentioning women's participation across subsectors for the first time in 2021 were Honduras, the Philippines, Syria, Thailand and Tuvalu.

Between 2018 and 2021, over 25 per cent of reporting countries (29 countries) improved the extent to which women participate in water and sanitation. The urban drinking water sector showed the greatest improvement, with 37 countries showing an improvement in the level of women's participation. At the same time, fewer countries reported lower levels of women's participation across subsectors. For example, with regard to drinking water in rural areas, the number of countries reporting lower scores was more than halved, from 34 countries in 2018 to just 16 in 2021.

Some of the countries that reported an increase in the level of women's participation across subsectors between 2018 and 2021 include Cambodia, Comoros, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Indonesia. Examples of women's participation in these countries include ensuring that affected populations are informed about and engaged in national, regional and local decision-making processes for water infrastructure development, that public hearings are held when regulations, rights or rates are being issued, that community organizations participate in service providers' board meetings, and that policy development is subject to external consultations.

Moreover, a growing number of countries are able to provide data on women's participation in water and sanitation management. Between 2017 and 2022, the number of countries able to answer GLAAS survey questions relating to women's participation has more than doubled, from 60 to 121. This suggests that there is greater emphasis on and awareness of the need to monitor gender-related data and the need to set and work towards gender-related targets that intersect with SDG 6.

## KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

- Increased awareness of the importance of community participation for sustainable solutions
- Increased awareness of the linkages between water and gender issues
- Regular data requests to and engagement from countries on women's participation

## LEARN MORE

- [Strong systems and sound investments, GLAAS report 2022](#)
- [Latest available country data on SDG indicator 6.b.1](#)
- [Snapshot of global progress towards SDG target 6.b](#)