# Role of Water in Women's Economic Engagement: A Qualitative Investigation in Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, and Zimbabwe

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| Background & Objective  | Findings  |   |
|---|---|---|
| Background  | Conceptual model on Water and Women's Economic Engagement | Water impacts women's physical & mental wellbeing,  |
| <ul> <li>Water is essential for life and development.<br/>Insufficient access to quality water impacts<br/>women's health, wellbeing, time, and<br/>economic opportunities.</li> <li>However, little is known about specific role<br/>of water on women's ability to engage in</li> </ul> | Societal Level (Gender Norms)                             | further limiting opportunities  |
|   | Environment Level (Climate, Season)                       | Women can experience physical<br>injuries, pain, fatigue, body     "We get chronic diseases   |
|   | Individual Level  | weakness, etc. from carrying<br>heavy water loads over long<br>distances, further diminishinglike chest pains because as<br>you drag the jerrican, you<br>use the hand and even<br>sometimes you are carrying |

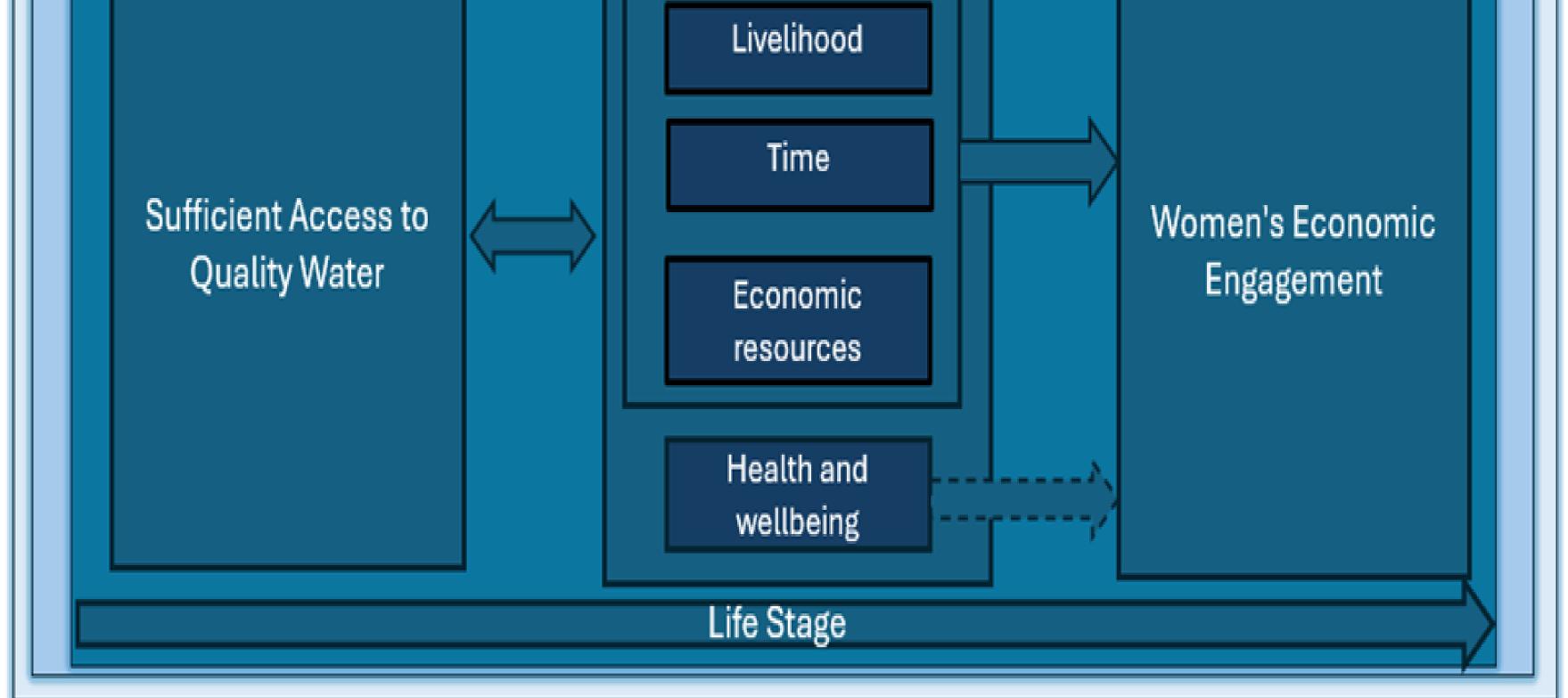
### economic opportunities.

## Objective

• We conducted qualitative research to understand the role of water in women's economic engagement in Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, and Zimbabwe.

# **Methods**

- All research took place in communities engaged in World Vision's Strong Women Strong World: Beyond Access program, which were purposively identified by local World Vision teams
- Participants were purposively identified by local learning partners in each



Gender norms determine women's household roles & responsibilities

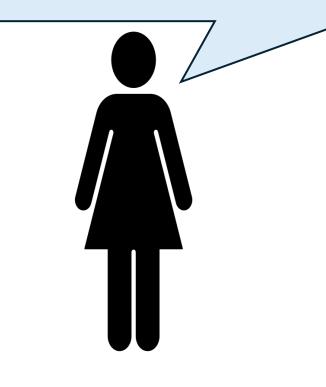
Water collection is primary responsibility of

their energy and capacity to pursue economic opportunities

- Women experience stress thinking about water collection processes and related roles
- Lack of sufficient water quantity can affect women's nutrition and personal hygiene, further influencing economic engagement

baby on your belly and a jerrican on your back, so it is a real problem to us."

(FGD with women, Kenya)



Water access can shape the type of livelihood & economic activities women engage

> • Water source distance and supply influence economic engagement options for women

 Women noted that improved water access and supply could allow women to raise livestock and grow produce to sell

country including Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras, St. Paul's University, Kenya, and Datalyst Africa, Zimbabwe

**38 Focus Groups with Women** 

46 Participants 7 FGDs 46 Participants Honduras 11 FGDs 88 Participants Kenya 13 FGDs Zimbabwe 101 Participants

#### 34 Focus Groups with Men

FGDs 29 Participants 6 FGDs 35 Participants Honduras 96 Participants 12 FGDs Kenya 9 FGDs 68 Participants Zimbabwe

women & girls

- Men as household heads, dictate what women can and cannot do
- Widowed, single and unmarried women make all the decisions on water related activities

Access to water & water work influence the time women have to engage in economic & other activities

> Long distances to water sources decrease time and energy to engage in economic and other activities

makers."

Guatemala)

(FGD with women,

• Water related work, including mandatory

options such as purchasing "Women, like me, take animals, such as a piglet, care of this. The men go without having to worry about out to work and come the difficulty of providing them back tired, while we take with the necessary water. In care of the water and addition, we would avoid the everything at home, additional physical burden of since we are the home carrying water and arriving

home exhausted." (FGD with women, Honduras)

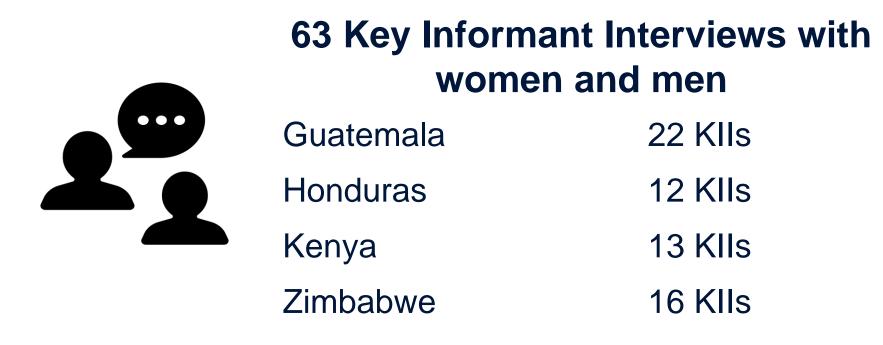
"The importance of having a

would allow us to consider

constant and safe water supply

- Prioritization of water collection over livelihood activities hindered sustainability of specific activities
- Flourishing agriculture and livestock production is dependent on water availability

# Discussion



## more time to rest our old bodies and consider money-making projects like poultry, selling eggs, and making more money." (FGD with women, Zimbabwe)

"I would engage in

poultry farming and avoid

the long journeys to fetch

water. It would give us

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service on water boards & committees, can add substantial burden to already limited

time.

 Women shared that planning for other activities is difficult when they spend so much time collecting water & doing water work

Women said they would save time & engage in economic activities if water was closer

• Water collection impacts health, specifically energy and risk of injury. These negative health impacts, coupled with time and opportunity costs, constrain women's abilities to engage in other facets of life, including economic engagement, which could provide well-being benefits to them and their families.

 Programming is necessary that specifically aims to reducing the water-related burdens women face, opening opportunities for economic engagement.