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Participatory Development Communication with a Gender Perspective in the Water Access, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) CSR Program of PT Tirta Investama Plant Cianjur

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ABSTRACT

Clean water scarcity around bottled-water industrial sites is not gender-neutral. When household wells decline in the dry season, women carry the heaviest burden because they manage water for domestic needs, childcare, and family sanitation. Previous studies of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) program of PT Tirta Investama Plant Cianjur have treated CSR mainly as an instrument of reputation and branding. This study analyzes participatory development communication in the company's Water Access, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program from a gender perspective. It employs a descriptive qualitative case study that re-analyzes field data from observation, in-depth interviews with seven informants, and documentation, combined with a structured literature review. The data were analyzed using Moser's Gender Planning Framework, Longwe's Women's Empowerment Framework, Arnstein's ladder of participation, and Morsing and Schultz's CSR communication strategies, and triangulated across sources, methods, and theories. The findings indicate that program communication is effective at the welfare and access levels and partly effective at the conscientisation level, but women's equal participation and control over decisions in the Clean Water Facility Management Group (KPSAB) have not been documented. The program meets practical rather than strategic gender needs, and its communication sits between the information and response strategies rather than the involvement strategy. The study proposes a five-stage gender-responsive participatory WASH communication model. Its novelty lies in shifting research on corporate WASH communication from a branding paradigm to a gender-just development communication paradigm.

Keywords: *Development Communication, Participatory Communication, Gender, Corporate Social Responsibility, WASH*

1. INTRODUCTION

Access to clean water is a basic need, yet the burden of securing it is not shared equally between men and women. The 2023 report of the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP), the first in-depth global analysis of gender inequalities in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), found that in seven out of ten households without water on the premises, women and girls aged 15 and over are primarily responsible for water collection [1], [2]. Inadequate WASH services also expose women to additional health and safety risks and reduce the time they can devote to education, work, and rest [2].

In Indonesia, the share of households with access to proper drinking water reached 92.64% in 2024, up from 91.72% in 2023 [3]. National averages, however, conceal sharp regional gaps. West Java, the province where the research site is located, recorded household access to proper sanitation of only around 76% in 2025, placing it among the five provinces with the lowest sanitation coverage, below the national average of 85.37% [4]. These gaps matter for gender relations, because when water

and sanitation services are unreliable, the extra labor of fetching, storing, and rationing water typically falls on women within the household [1].

This problem is tangible in areas where the bottled drinking water (AMDK) industry operates. PT Tirta Investama Plant Cianjur, the producer of the AQUA brand, draws large volumes of water for production. Data from the Danone-AQUA 2021–2022 Sustainability Report cited by Nada and Yulianti show plant water use of around 10,000 m^3 per day, far above the estimated 500 m^3 per day needed by surrounding village communities [5]. During the dry season, the discharge of some residents' wells declines or dries up, prompting complaints against the company [5]. The coexistence of a large industrial water user and households experiencing seasonal scarcity makes the communication of corporate water programs a sensitive matter of legitimacy and social justice.

In response, Danone-AQUA runs a WASH program in several regions. The program reportedly provides clean water access to more than 500,000 people through cross-sector collaboration, including a *Water Credit* scheme with Water.org [6]. In West Java, its clean water and environmental health program reached 66,416 beneficiaries in five regencies, including Cianjur, accompanied by cadre training on Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (PHBS) [7]. The Cianjur plant has also received a West Java Governor's award for its biodiversity park program in Gekbrong Village [8].

Academic studies of this program have so far examined it mostly through the lens of reputation and branding. Nada and Yulianti analyzed the CSR of PT Tirta Investama Plant Cianjur using the Triple Bottom Line concept and brand awareness dimensions such as brand recognition, brand recall, and top of mind [5]. That approach explains what CSR does for the company, but it leaves the core questions of development communication unanswered: who speaks, who decides, and who benefits or bears the costs. The field data themselves contain a strong gender dimension that has not been analyzed, since the health program targets pregnant women and mothers of toddlers, while the WASH program is managed through the Clean Water Facility Management Group (*Kelompok Pengelola Sarana Air Bersih*, KPSAB).

The issue is also urgent from a policy standpoint. Indonesia has mandated gender mainstreaming in national development through Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 [9], and companies operating in natural resource sectors are obliged to carry out Social and Environmental Responsibility under Article 74 of Law No. 40 of 2007 [10]. Cianjur Regency is a priority area for stunting reduction, with prevalence falling from 33.7% in 2021 to 13.6% in 2022 [11], while national prevalence remained at 19.8% in 2024 [12]. Stunting is closely linked to water access, sanitation, and caregiving roles that in many families fall on women.

This research builds on four bodies of theory. The first is CSR and CSR communication. Carroll's pyramid places economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities in a hierarchy, with community programs often located at the philanthropic level [13]. Morsing and Schultz distinguish three CSR communication strategies: a stakeholder information strategy based on one-way sense-giving, a stakeholder response strategy based on two-way asymmetric communication in which the company listens mainly to adjust its message, and a stakeholder involvement strategy based on two-way symmetric dialogue in which stakeholders co-construct CSR initiatives [14]. These strategies correspond to Grunig and Hunt's models of public relations, which move from public information toward two-way symmetric communication [15].

The second body of theory is participatory development communication. Development communication has shifted from a one-way modernization paradigm, in which communication is

the diffusion of innovations from experts to communities [16], toward a participatory paradigm that treats communities as subjects who define problems, goals, and means [17], [18]. Its roots lie in Freire's dialogical model, in which critical consciousness emerges from dialogue among equals rather than from one-way messages [19], and Melkote and Steeves frame development communication as a process of empowerment and social justice that attends to marginalized groups, including women [20]. Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation distinguishes tokenistic participation (informing, consultation, placation) from genuine partnership, delegated power, and citizen control [21], while Cornwall warns that the word participation is often used to describe processes in which communities are present but have little influence over decisions [22].

The third body of theory is gender and development. The Gender and Development (GAD) approach moves beyond the Women in Development (WID) approach, which treated women as beneficiaries without questioning power relations and often added to their workload [23]. Moser distinguishes women's triple role (reproductive, productive, and community managing) and separates practical gender needs, such as water, food, and health, from strategic gender needs, such as access to decision-making [23]. Longwe's framework assesses an intervention across five levels of equality, namely welfare, access, conscientisation, participation, and control [24]. Longwe and Clarke illustrate its relevance with a borehole program in Zambia that was meant to ease women's water-fetching burden but ended up increasing their labor [25], and the framework has been applied in qualitative evaluations of rural development programs [26]. Kabeer complements it by defining empowerment as the combination of resources, agency, and achievements [27], and March, Smyth, and Mukhopadhyay show that these frameworks are most useful when combined, since each reveals a different layer of gender relations [28].

The fourth body of literature concerns gender in WASH and CSR in Indonesia. Studies of gender in WASH show that participation is usually strong at the stage of using facilities but weak in planning, maintenance, and decision-making. The JMP recommends integrating gender considerations and collecting sex-disaggregated data in WASH programs [2], and the Indonesian Ministry of Public Works uses Access, Participation, Control, and Benefit (APKM) indicators to identify gender gaps in community water programs [29]. Research on the government's Pamsimas program confirms these participation gaps and the under-representation of women in formal decision-making [30], [31], [32], [33]. In the CSR field, studies have examined CSR as a tool for community empowerment [34], [35] and for women's empowerment [36], [37]. Closer to the focus of this study, research on the Program for Enhancing the Role of Women toward Healthy and Prosperous Families (P2WKSS) in Bekasi shows that gender communication through face-to-face persuasion, informal meetings, and WhatsApp groups helped shift women from household caregivers to economic participants and decision-makers [38], while a participatory empowerment program built around a village cooperative demonstrated how P2WKSS cadres, village officials, and cooperative boards can be engaged together to strengthen family economies [39]. Evaluations of corporate WASH programs, including Danone-AQUA's program in Nanggerang Village, have focused on technical success and multi-party partnership [40].

These Indonesian studies show that gender-sensitive and participatory communication can change women's roles in community programs [38], [39], but they examine government-initiated programs rather than corporate CSR. The research gap therefore lies in the absence of studies that bring together CSR communication, participatory development communication, gender analysis, and corporate WASH programs in the bottled-water industry. The novelty of this study is threefold.

First, it shifts the analysis of CSR communication in this industry from a corporate reputation paradigm to a gender-just development communication paradigm. Second, it applies the Moser and Longwe frameworks to a corporate program rather than to government programs, as is common. Third, it proposes a gender-responsive participatory communication model that can guide corporate WASH programs. Four questions guide this research: what development communication strategy is used in the WASH program, how women and men participate in planning, implementation, and decision-making, to what extent the program addresses practical and strategic gender needs, and what gender-based communication barriers arise.

2. METHODS

This research employed a descriptive qualitative single case study design. A case study is appropriate when the boundary between a phenomenon and its context is not clearly evident and when the research asks how and why questions about a contemporary process [41]. The object of the study is the practice of development communication in the WASH CSR program of PT Tirta Investama Plant Cianjur, and its subjects are program managers and beneficiaries in the program's assisted areas in Cianjur Regency, West Java. The case was selected because it combines three conditions that rarely occur together: a large industrial water user, communities that experience seasonal water scarcity, and a long-running corporate WASH program managed through community institutions.

The study combined two data sources. Primary field data, comprising observation of CSR activities, in-depth interviews using a semi-structured guide, transcripts, and documentation, came from the earlier fieldwork of Nada and Yulianti [5] and were re-analyzed through a gender lens that the original analysis did not use. Observation covered the environment around the plant, ongoing CSR activities such as maternal health and stunting prevention outreach, interactions between facilitators and beneficiaries, and the clean water facilities provided under the WASH program. Secondary data came from a structured literature review of national and international journals, reports of international agencies, company publications, regulations, and credible media, prioritizing publications from 2020–2025 alongside classic theoretical works. Documents were treated as data in their own right and examined for their purpose, authorship, and context [42]. Informants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the program, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Research informants

Category	Informant	Role in the program
Internal	CSR Manager	Planning and strategic decisions
Internal	CSR Supervisor	Coordination and field implementation
Internal	WASH program facilitator	Assisting clean water and sanitation management
Internal	Health and stunting program facilitator	Assisting pregnant women and toddlers
Internal	Integrated Farming System facilitator	Assisting farmer groups
External	KPSAB representative	Managing WASH clean water facilities
External	Representative of mothers of toddlers	Beneficiary of the health program

Source: Field data, processed by the authors, 2026.

The analytical frameworks were operationalized into guiding questions and the types of evidence sought, as summarized in Table 2. Combining several frameworks follows the recommendation that gender analysis tools be used together, since each captures a different aspect of gender relations and communication practice [28].

Table 2. Operationalization of the analytical frameworks

Framework	Dimension	Guiding question	Evidence sought
Morsing and Schultz	Information, response, involvement	Does communication inform, consult, or co-create with stakeholders?	Message design, feedback channels, joint decision forums
Arnstein	Rungs of participation	How much influence do residents have over program decisions?	Who sets agendas, fees, and schedules
Moser	Triple role; practical and strategic needs	Which roles of women does the program engage, and which needs does it meet?	Program targets, activity types, leadership positions
Longwe	Welfare, access, conscientisation, participation, control	At which level of equality does the program operate?	Facilities, outreach, messages on gender, KPSAB composition, decision records

Source: Compiled by the authors from [14], [21], [23], [24], 2026.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification [43]. In the condensation stage, interview transcripts, field notes, and documents were read repeatedly, and passages related to communication processes, program targets, and the roles of men and women were coded. In the display stage, the coded data were arranged into matrices following the frameworks in Table 2. In the conclusion stage, patterns were interpreted and compared with the literature. Each Longwe level was rated in one of three categories: achieved (evidence exists in the data), partial (indications exist but are weak), and not documented (no evidence in the available data). The last category does not mean that the program has failed; it indicates that the aspect has not been explicitly designed, recorded, or communicated.

Trustworthiness was addressed using the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability [44]. Credibility was supported by triangulation of sources (internal and external informants), methods (interviews, observation, and documentation), and theories (Longwe, Moser, Arnstein, and Morsing and Schultz). Transferability was supported by describing the case context in detail so that readers can judge its relevance to other settings. Dependability and confirmability were supported by keeping an audit trail that links each analytical claim to its data source. Informants are reported by role only to protect their identities.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main finding of this research is that the communication of the WASH program is participatory in the form of group involvement but is not yet gender-transformative. The program reaches women as users and beneficiaries, but it does not yet appear to position them as decision-makers. The following sections present the findings according to the research questions and then discuss their implications.

3.1 Overview of the Case

PT Tirta Investama, the company behind the AQUA brand, was founded in 1973 by Tirto Utomo and pioneered the bottled drinking water industry in Indonesia [5]. The Cianjur plant is one of several Danone-AQUA plants in West Java that have received recognition for sustained CSR implementation, including a TOP CSR Award in 2023 [7]. Its CSR portfolio is organized around the Triple Bottom Line, with environmental, social, and economic programs that run alongside one another, as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. CSR program portfolio of PT Tirta Investama Plant Cianjur

Pillar	Main programs	Communication approach	Relevance to gender
Planet (environment)	WASH, Integrated Farming System, spring conservation, waste management education	Group socialization, facilitation, conservation activities	Water and waste practices are largely managed by women at home
People (social)	WASH clean water and sanitation; stunting prevention; maternal and toddler health	Informative, persuasive, and emotional messages; outreach to mothers	Women are the main target through their reproductive role
Profit (economic)	Skills training, MSME development, support for farmer groups	Persuasive communication on shared value and self-reliance	Participation by sex not recorded

Source: Field data [5], processed by the authors, 2026.

Within this portfolio, the WASH program occupies a pivotal position because it addresses the very resource on which both the company and the community depend. It also bridges the environmental and social pillars, since it combines the provision of water infrastructure with hygiene education and community institution building. This dual position makes the WASH program the most appropriate entry point for examining how the company communicates with communities about water and how the burdens and benefits of water are distributed between women and men.

3.2 Development Communication Strategy in the WASH Program

The WASH program of PT Tirta Investama Plant Cianjur covers the provision of clean water access, the construction of sanitation facilities, and hygiene and health education [5]. Its communication strategy relies on a group approach through socialization, facilitation, and the involvement of residents in conservation activities, while facility management is handed over to the KPSAB. From the standpoint of development communication, this strategy has three characteristics. First, it contains a dialogical element because facilitators interact directly and repeatedly with residents. Second, it institutionalizes participation through the KPSAB, in line with the principle of community-based development. Third, one-way diffusion remains strong, because most messages consist of company-designed education on wise water use, hygiene, and waste management.

The third characteristic is evident in how the company frames the program. The goal of CSR communication is formulated as building trust, maintaining reputation, and strengthening the AQUA brand, and its success is measured through brand recall and top of mind [5]. In Servaes's terms, such an orientation positions the community as an audience for messages rather than as a partner that shapes the direction of development [17]. In Rogers's terms, the education component resembles the diffusion of an innovation from a change agent to adopters [16], which is effective for spreading knowledge but leaves little room for communities to redefine the problem itself.

3.3 CSR Communication through the Morsing and Schultz Lens

Reading the same evidence through Morsing and Schultz's typology clarifies where the program stands between one-way and two-way communication. Table 4 maps the program's communication practices onto the three strategies.

Table 4. Mapping of WASH program communication onto CSR communication strategies

Strategy	Communication ideal	Evidence in the WASH program	Assessment
Information	One-way sense-giving; company informs stakeholders	Education on water use, hygiene, and waste; banners and local media; brand-oriented messages	Dominant
Response	Two-way asymmetric; company listens to adjust its message	Facilitators interact repeatedly with beneficiaries; two-way communication with residents reported	Present
Involvement	Two-way symmetric; stakeholders co-construct CSR	KPSAB manages facilities, but joint agenda-setting and women's voice in program design not documented	Limited

Source: Authors' analysis based on [14] and field data [5], 2026.

The mapping shows that the program has moved beyond pure information, because facilitators maintain regular contact with residents and the management of facilities has been handed to a community institution. However, the involvement strategy, in which stakeholders co-construct the program, is not yet visible, particularly for women. In Grunig and Hunt's terms, communication remains closer to the two-way asymmetric model, in which feedback is gathered mainly to make the company's messages more persuasive [15]. This position helps explain why the program has succeeded in building awareness and brand recall but has not yet opened space for communities, and women in particular, to influence decisions.

3.4 Positioning Participation on Arnstein's Ladder

Arnstein's ladder provides a further test of how deep participation goes. The handover of facility management to the KPSAB is a meaningful step, because it moves part of the operational responsibility from the company to the community. Yet handing over operational tasks is not the same as sharing power over program design. The available data show residents involved in socialization, conservation activities, and facility maintenance, but they do not show residents, and women in particular, setting the agenda of the program or deciding on its priorities [5]. On Arnstein's ladder, this situation lies between consultation and placation, the upper rungs of tokenism, rather than at partnership [21]. Cornwall's caution is relevant here: participation can be real at the level of presence and labor while remaining limited at the level of influence [22].

3.5 Women's Triple Role in the Program

Moser's framework shows that the CSR programs at the research site largely engage women through their reproductive role, as summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Mapping of CSR programs by women's triple role (Moser)

Role	Program activities	Main target	Analytical note
Reproductive	Hygiene, sanitation, and PHBS education; stunting prevention; maternal and child health	Pregnant women, mothers of toddlers, households	Domestic role is the entry point of the program
Productive	Integrated Farming System, skills training, MSMEs	Farmer groups, small entrepreneurs	No sex-disaggregated data
Community managing	KPSAB, maintenance of water facilities	KPSAB board	Gender composition of the board not documented

Source: Authors' analysis, 2026.

This pattern is consistent with the JMP finding that women bear primary responsibility for household water and hygiene [1]. Targeting women through their domestic role is appropriate for family health needs, and in a regency that has made stunting reduction a priority, it is understandable that maternal and child health has become the main entry point [11]. Without gender

analysis, however, the approach risks reinforcing the assumption that water and hygiene are solely women's tasks. This is the WID trap criticized by Moser [23] and illustrated by Longwe and Clarke through the Zambian borehole case, in which a program intended to reduce women's labor ended up increasing it [25].

The productive and community managing roles reveal a different problem: invisibility. The Integrated Farming System, skills training, and MSME support are described as community programs without reference to who participates, and the KPSAB is described as a community institution without reference to the gender composition of its board. Kabeer's framework suggests that this invisibility matters, because empowerment depends not only on resources such as training and facilities but also on agency, namely the ability to define goals and act on them [27]. When records do not show whether women hold positions in the KPSAB or participate in productive programs, it becomes impossible to know whether resources are being converted into agency.

3.6 Levels of Empowerment According to the Longwe Framework

Table 6 summarizes the assessment of the WASH program across the five Longwe levels, from the lowest to the highest, and Figure 1 visualizes the program's position on this empowerment ladder.

Table 6. Assessment of the WASH program using the Longwe framework

Level	Indicator	Finding	Rating
1. Welfare	Improved material conditions: water, sanitation, health	Clean water and sanitation facilities built; nutrition education for mothers and toddlers in place	Achieved
2. Access	Women reach facilities, information, and training	Women are direct targets of outreach; households can access facilities	Achieved
3. Conscientisation	Awareness that the division of water labor is social	Awareness of water quality, waste, and hygiene improved; no messages on gender relations	Partial
4. Participation	Equal involvement in planning and management	Women's composition and roles on the KPSAB board not recorded	Not documented
5. Control	Women decide on fees, schedules, and maintenance	No data on decisions made by women	Not documented

Source: Authors' analysis, 2026.

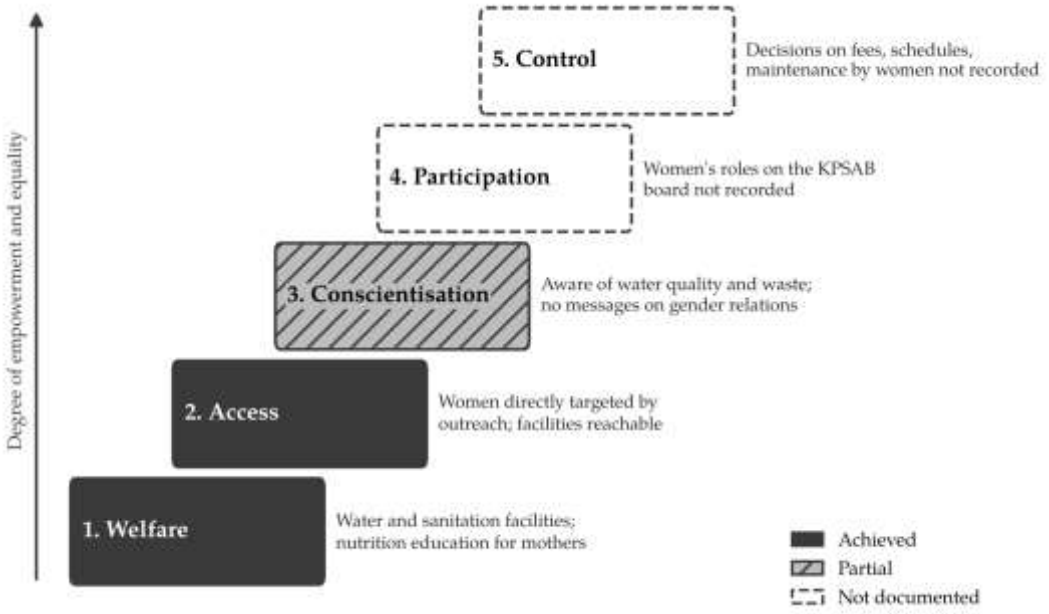


Figure 1. Position of the WASH CSR program on the Longwe empowerment ladder
Source: Authors' analysis, 2026, adapted from the Longwe framework [24].

At the welfare and access levels, the program shows clear results. Clean water closer to home can reduce the time and energy women spend fetching water. This is consistent with the experience of WASH beneficiaries of Danone-AQUA in another area, who previously had to use rice-field water during the dry season and now receive piped water at home [45]. Field observation in Cianjur likewise recorded clean water facilities provided under the WASH program and ongoing outreach on maternal health and stunting prevention [5].

At the conscientisation level, the program has increased knowledge of water quality, plastic waste reduction, and biodiversity [5]. Conscientisation in the sense of Longwe and Freire, however, requires more than technical knowledge [19], [24]. Gender conscientisation means that both men and women understand the division of the water burden as a social construction that can be changed, and no such messages were found in the program's communication materials. Because the messages are addressed mainly to mothers, men are rarely positioned as an audience for change in household water and hygiene practices.

At the participation and control levels, the data do not allow a definitive assessment, and this is itself an important finding. The absence of sex-disaggregated data indicates that gender has not yet become a category in program planning and reporting. Studies of Pamsimas reveal a recurring pattern in which women are active as users but under-represented in management and formal decisions [30], [31]. If the same pattern occurs in the KPSAB, decisions on fees, distribution schedules, and maintenance, which directly affect women's daily water labor, may be made without women's voice.

3.7 Practical and Strategic Gender Needs

The WASH program strongly addresses women's practical gender needs, namely closer clean water, adequate sanitation, and family health knowledge. These needs are real and pressing, especially in Cianjur, a priority area for stunting reduction [11], and in West Java, where sanitation coverage remains below the national average [4]. Strategic gender needs, by contrast, have not been explicitly addressed. They include women's positions on the core KPSAB board, women's voice in setting fees and water distribution schedules, and recognition of women's knowledge of household water use. As Moser argues, programs that address only practical needs improve women's condition but do not change their position [23].

Addressing strategic needs does not require a separate program. It can be built into the existing WASH cycle by changing who is invited to plan, who is trained to operate and maintain facilities, and whose knowledge is used to set distribution rules. This is consistent with Tufte and Mefalopulos's view that participatory communication should be embedded in every phase of a project rather than added at the end as an awareness campaign [18].

3.8 Gender-Based Communication Barriers

This study identifies four communication barriers. First, an orientation toward corporate reputation makes brand recognition, rather than changes in social relations, the measure of success. Second, the absence of sex-disaggregated data prevents the company from knowing who attends, speaks, and decides in program forums, even though such data are recommended globally [2]. Third, the burden of the triple role limits women's time to attend meetings and training, so activity schedules that are not gender-sensitive may exclude women unintentionally [23]. Fourth, social norms and gender discrimination still constrain women's participation in water management decisions, particularly in mixed forums dominated by male figures [29], [33]. Similar cultural and language barriers were found in women's empowerment programs in Bekasi, where they were partly overcome through informal, face-to-face, and digital communication channels that women found easier to join [38].

3.9 Facilitators as Gender-Aware Development Communicators

The findings also highlight the strategic position of CSR facilitators. In the WASH, health, and farming programs, facilitators are the main interface between the company and the community, and the original study emphasized that effective communication between facilitators and beneficiaries determines whether programs are realized [5]. In development communication terms, facilitators act as change agents who translate program goals into everyday practice [16]. Their position gives them the opportunity to notice who attends meetings, who speaks, and who remains silent, and to adjust communication accordingly.

Turning this opportunity into practice requires that facilitators be equipped as gender-aware communicators. Tufte and Mefalopulos describe the facilitator in participatory communication as someone who creates space for dialogue rather than someone who delivers messages [18]. For the WASH program, this means training facilitators to conduct gender analysis, to organize separate discussions with women, to encourage women to take on leadership roles in the KPSAB, and to record sex-disaggregated data as part of routine reporting. Experience from the P2WKSS program suggests that such facilitation works best when it combines face-to-face persuasion with informal meetings and digital channels, and when it uses symbolic resources such as group identity and stories of success to strengthen women's confidence [38]. Without such capacity, even well-intentioned facilitators are likely to reproduce existing patterns in which women are reached as mothers but not engaged as decision-makers [22].

3.10Reputation, Legitimacy, and Gender Justice

A possible objection to the argument of this study is that a company's CSR communication is legitimately concerned with reputation. This study does not deny that concern. Carroll's pyramid recognizes that companies operate with economic and legal responsibilities alongside ethical and philanthropic ones [13], and reputation is a reasonable outcome of responsible conduct. The problem arises when reputation becomes the main measure of success, because measures such as brand recall and top of mind say little about whether communities, and women in particular, have gained influence over the resources that shape their lives [5].

Morsing and Schultz argue that the involvement strategy, rather than the information strategy, is more likely to build durable legitimacy, because stakeholders who help shape CSR initiatives are more likely to recognize them as their own [14]. For a company whose core business depends on water drawn from the same landscape as surrounding communities, this argument has

particular weight. Involving women as decision-makers in water programs is therefore not only a matter of gender justice but also a way of building a more robust social license to operate. In this sense, gender-responsive participatory communication can align the company's reputational interests with the community's interest in fair access to water.

3.11 Comparison with Previous Studies

Table 7 compares the focus and findings of this study with those of earlier research on CSR, WASH, and gender. The comparison shows how the present study connects strands of research that have so far developed separately.

Table 7. Comparison with previous studies

Study	Focus	Main finding	Difference from this study
Nada and Yulianti [5]	CSR communication of AQUA Cianjur; Triple Bottom Line and brand awareness	CSR strengthens reputation and top-of-mind position of the AQUA brand	This study re-reads the same case through gender and participation lenses
Pratama and Rudito [40]	Evaluation of Danone-AQUA WASH in Nanggerang Village	Program successful through multi-party partnership	Focuses on technical success; no gender analysis
Nasution et al. [30]	Women's participation in Pamsimas	Women's participation limited in formal decisions	Government program, not corporate CSR
Rezeki and Nasdian [36]	CSR of PT Unilever and rural women's empowerment	CSR success related to women's empowerment	Agricultural CSR; not water or development communication
Yulianti et al. [38]	Gender communication in the P2WKSS program, Bekasi	Gender-sensitive communication shifted women toward economic and decision-making roles	Government program; this study examines corporate CSR in water
Yuda et al. [39]	Cooperative-based empowerment for family economy (P2WKSS)	Participatory empowerment strengthened cooperative governance and family economy	Economic institution; this study examines a water institution (KPSAB)
Putri and Witarti [37]	CSR communication of L'Oréal Indonesia on women's empowerment	CSR communication framed as a strategic and ethical tool	Urban corporate PR; not community-based WASH

Source: Compiled by the authors, 2026.

Compared with Nada and Yulianti [5], this study does not dispute that CSR has strengthened the AQUA brand, but it shows that the same communication practices look different when examined from the perspective of those who carry the water burden. Compared with Pratama and Rudito [40], it moves from asking whether the WASH program works technically to asking for whom it works and who decides. Compared with studies of Pamsimas [30], [31], [32], it shows that the gender gaps documented in government programs are also likely to appear in corporate programs when gender is not made an explicit category of planning. Compared with studies of gender communication and participatory empowerment in P2WKSS [38], [39], it carries their insights into a corporate setting, where the communicator is a company with its own reputational interests and the resource at stake is water. Compared with studies of CSR and women's empowerment [36], [37], it adds the dimension of development communication and the specific context of water.

3.12 Toward a Gender-Responsive Participatory Communication Model

Drawing on the findings and the literature, this study proposes a five-stage model of gender-responsive participatory WASH communication, shown in Figure 2. The model is designed to move the program from the information and response strategies toward the involvement strategy [14], and

from the welfare and access levels toward the participation and control levels of the Longwe framework [24].

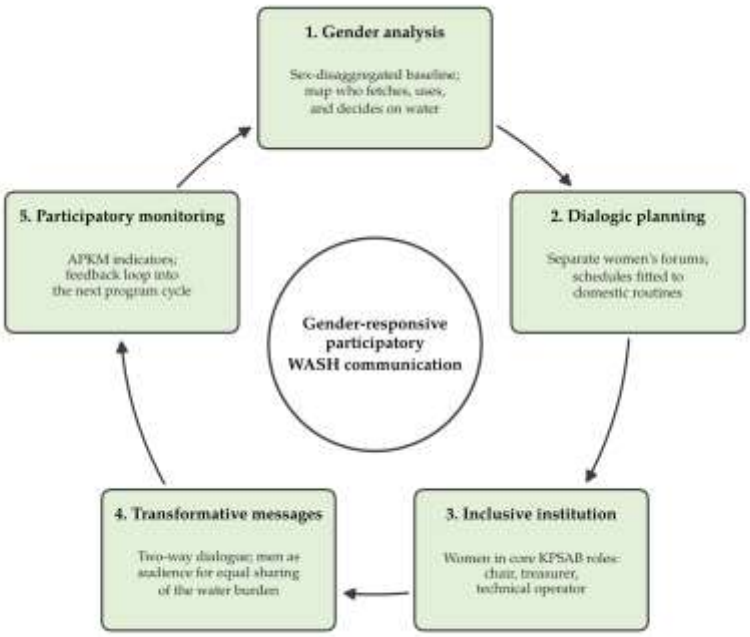


Figure 2. Proposed model of gender-responsive participatory WASH communication
Source: Developed by the authors, 2026, based on [23], [24], [14], [18].

The first stage is gender analysis, which establishes a sex-disaggregated baseline of who fetches, uses, and decides on water in each household and community. The second stage is dialogic planning, in which women's forums are held separately from mixed forums and scheduled to fit domestic routines, so that women's priorities are heard before program decisions are made [18], [19]; informal meetings and messaging groups can widen the space for women who cannot attend formal forums [38]. The third stage is an inclusive institution, in which women are encouraged and trained to take core KPSAB positions such as chair, treasurer, and technical operator, in the same way that community cooperatives have been strengthened through training in administration, record-keeping, and governance for women-led family economic programs [39]. The fourth stage is transformative messaging, in which communication moves from one-way education addressed mainly to mothers toward two-way dialogue that also involves men as an audience for equal sharing of the water burden. The fifth stage is participatory monitoring using APKM indicators [29], whose results feed back into the next program cycle.

To make the model operational, Table 8 sets out the main actions, responsible actors, and indicators for each stage. The indicators are deliberately simple so that they can be recorded by facilitators and KPSAB boards as part of routine program reporting.

Table 8. Implementation plan for the proposed model

Stage	Main actions	Responsible actors	Indicators
1. Gender analysis	Household mapping of water collection, use, and decision-making	CSR team, facilitators, village government	Sex-disaggregated baseline available
2. Dialogic planning	Women-only forums before mixed forums; meeting times agreed with women	Facilitators, PKK, P2WKSS and posyandu cadres	Share of program priorities proposed by women
3. Inclusive institution	Leadership and technical training for women; nomination to KPSAB core posts	KPSAB, CSR team, village government	Share of women in KPSAB core positions
4. Transformative messages	Two-way dialogue; messages on shared water and hygiene work addressed to men and women	Facilitators, community leaders	Men's participation in hygiene and water activities
5. Participatory monitoring	Joint review of APKM indicators each program cycle	KPSAB, CSR team, local government	APKM gaps reduced between cycles

Source: Developed by the authors, 2026, based on [29], [18].

The model does not replace the existing WASH program but reorganizes its communication around the question of power. Each stage corresponds to a gap identified in this study: the absence of sex-disaggregated data, the dominance of one-way messages, the invisibility of women in the KPSAB, the absence of messages on gender relations, and the lack of gender indicators in monitoring. In this sense, the model translates the analytical findings into a practical agenda that companies, KPSAB boards, and local governments can test.

3.13Research Implications

Theoretically, this research shows that the Triple Bottom Line framework [46] used in the earlier study [5] is insufficient for assessing CSR programs from a social justice perspective, because its people dimension tends to treat the community as a homogeneous whole. The Longwe and Moser frameworks open up the layer of gender relations within that dimension, revealing who bears the heaviest water burden and who has the least voice. Combining these frameworks with Morsing and Schultz's typology also shows that the depth of CSR communication and the depth of gender empowerment are linked, because the involvement strategy is a precondition for reaching the participation and control levels. This extends CSR communication research from its reputational function toward the emancipatory function envisioned by the participatory development communication paradigm [17], [20].

Practically, the findings point to the need for a gender audit of the WASH program, sex-disaggregated monitoring, and the integration of corporate water programs into regional gender mainstreaming frameworks [9]. For the company, the findings suggest that a more participatory and gender-responsive communication strategy need not conflict with reputation goals; legitimacy built through genuine involvement is likely to be more durable than legitimacy built through brand recall alone [14].

3.14Research Limitations and Further Agenda

The main limitation of this study is that the original field data were not collected with a guide designed for gender analysis and were not disaggregated by sex. Findings at the participation and control levels are therefore exploratory and should be read as indicators of what remains undocumented rather than as a verdict on program performance. The study also relies on a single case and a limited number of informants, so its findings are analytically rather than statistically generalizable [41]. Further research is recommended to collect field data using interview and focus group guides designed for gender analysis, including separate groups for women and men, to apply

mixed methods to measure women's time allocation for water management before and after the program, to test the proposed model in KPSAB communities, and to compare corporate WASH programs with government programs such as Pamsimas.

CONCLUSION

Development communication in the WASH CSR program of PT Tirta Investama Plant Cianjur is participatory at the level of group involvement through direct facilitation and the institutionalization of the KPSAB, but it does not yet carry an explicit gender perspective, because its communication remains oriented toward strengthening reputation and brand. In Morsing and Schultz's terms, the program combines the information and response strategies but has not yet reached the involvement strategy, and on Arnstein's ladder its participation sits between consultation and placation. Women are strongly involved as targets and users through their reproductive role, while their involvement in planning and in the KPSAB board has not been documented. The program effectively addresses practical gender needs but has not touched strategic gender needs; within the Longwe framework, it has reached the welfare and access levels, partly reached the conscientisation level, and remains undocumented at the participation and control levels. The main barriers are a reputation-oriented message, the absence of sex-disaggregated data, women's time burden, and social norms in mixed forums.

The study's main contribution lies in reframing corporate WASH communication from a branding instrument into a matter of gender-just development communication and in proposing a five-stage gender-responsive participatory communication model. It is recommended that PT Tirta Investama Plant Cianjur conduct a gender audit of the WASH program using Access, Participation, Control, and Benefit indicators, record sex-disaggregated data, encourage women's representation in core KPSAB positions, hold separate dialogue forums for women at times that fit domestic routines, involve men as audiences for messages on equal role sharing, and measure success through empowerment indicators rather than brand indicators alone. The Cianjur Regency Government is advised to integrate corporate clean water programs into regional gender mainstreaming frameworks.

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