

THE EQUITY TOOL CASE STUDY



Ensuring equitable access to clean water with



Water Mission builds customized solutions to provide access to clean water and sanitation to all community members, and they know that the affordability of these programs is key to ensuring equitable access and use. In the past, the organization's ability to measure household wealth in their service populations had been hampered by difficulties in employing data from the complex USAID Demographic Health Surveys (DHS). The EquityTool empowered the organization to overcome these challenges, producing data that was easy to both collect and use, while benchmarked to the same DHS data they had previously found inaccessible. Water Mission incorporated EquityTool questions into their existing evaluations of two projects: a household water treatment program in Peru, and a solar-powered prepaid water system project in Tanzania. In both cases, the EquityTool allowed Water Mission to **better understand their client profile, to verify affordability of service costs, and to determine that programs were reaching the poorest citizens.**

In Peru, Water Mission learned that almost all households participating in their study fell into the first or second wealth quintile, indicating that program clients were among the poorest in the nation. However, despite this low relative wealth, over 90% of the clients reported that the monthly tariff for program participation was fair—some even noted that it seemed too low! In comparing equity data to other responses, Water Mission also learned that there was a strong positive correlation between wealth and high WASH practices (hand washing at appropriate times using soap, using safe water and sanitation techniques, etc.) Paired with the ability to easily identify a household's relative wealth, this known weakness among lower wealth quintiles could potentially be used to better target future Water Mission WASH promotion projects.

In Tanzania, the EquityTool enabled Water Mission to show that users of their solar-powered prepaid water systems were evenly distributed across all wealth quintiles, which was not the case for alternative water sources in the area. Further, there was no difference in water use, water expenditure, or perception of price fairness between quintiles, speaking to the accessibility and affordability of the water program across all program clients.

Water Mission is currently using the EquityTool in an additional evaluation in Honduras, with plans to further expand use by incorporating the EquityTool into all routine country evaluations starting in summer 2018. **Water Mission credits the EquityTool with enabling the first-ever analyses of affordability of their water services across wealth quintiles. In addition to being invaluable for project management, this cost and equity data provides strong, scientific justification for future grant proposals.** Water Mission can now say with confidence that they are serving the poorest citizens, and that their solutions are universally affordable.

Learn more at <https://watermission.org>.

“ The EquityTool has been a blessing! It's so easy for us to put it into what we're already working with. ”

-Kristen Check
Program Evaluation Coordinator

