

Sanitation Learning Hub blog writing guidance (22nd September 2020)

1) Step one: Developing your blog idea

Submit a brief outline of your blog idea: if you haven't yet written your blog but have a good idea for one, we encourage you to submit an outline of your idea in a short paragraph or few bullet points (150 words max). We can then provide feedback on the concept and structure of the blog before you start writing. You can submit your outline via the blog submission form.

You can use the list below to help develop your blog idea. Also, if you plan to submit a blog that you have previously written it is still worth considering these points below to determine if it is suitable for our website:

- Does your blog fit with our approach and values? We are more likely to publish it if it does. If your blog addresses one (or more) of the points below you are on the right track:
 - Does it draw attention to knowledge gaps, blind spots and emerging questions in the sanitation and hygiene sector?
 - Does it support learning through sharing good practices, methodologies and innovations in programming and policy?
 - Does it reflect on participatory learning and research capturing ground level realities and community perspectives?
 - Does it reflect on experiences of innovating and testing action-orientated and/or adaptable approaches to support the sector in taking appropriate and timely action?
- Does your blog provide a unique or less heard perspective on an S&H issue? It can be useful to do a search online to check if a similar blog or resource has already made the point you are making. If it has already been covered how can you bring a unique perspective to your blog to make it stand out and add to the conversation?
- Know your audience. Who are you blogging for? Who is the one person you really want to read your blog? SLH have target audiences that are worth bearing in mind:
 - In-country Sanitation and Hygiene practitioners
 - Sanitation and Hygiene Specialist/Consultant (International but with extensive field experience)
 - Policymakers
 - Sanitation and Hygiene academics
 - Donors

How would you tailor your messaging and language to best communicate with one (or more) of these different audiences?

- Make it clear what you want readers to do after reading your blog. For example, think differently, act differently, come to an event, sign up for a short course. What is your call to action?
- Be sure that a blog is the best way to convey your idea to your target audiences. Would a meeting, press article, series of social media updates, or short video for social media be better?

2) Step two: Writing the content

If we accept your blog idea here are guidelines on how to write your blog. Again, these guidelines are also useful if you are planning to submit a previously written blog as you may be able to tweak it to better fit our requirements.

- Recommended word count: we suggest when writing you aim for 750 words, but somewhere between 400-1200 words is fine.
- Use keywords, no jargon, check facts, use clear subheadings throughout, keep it short and succinct.
- Structure it so that it is easy to skim, using highlights, good examples, relevant/stand-out stats or images (where relevant) to enable someone to get the thrust of a position in under 60 seconds.
- Make sure it is interesting, thought-provoking and fresh.
- Keep titles under 70 characters (including spaces). We encourage the use of key words in titles and sub-headings, and recommend sub-headings for each new section or idea in the blog.
- Please reference key resources that you are basing your blog on. This can be done simply with hyperlinks in the text or more traditionally with a short reference section at the end.
- Please include a 40-word overview of who you are and the work you do. This will help to contextualise the blog content.

3) Step three: Images and graphics (optional but recommended)

Submitting a great image or photo can really help to grab people's attention and encourage them to read your blog. Below are guidelines on what kinds of photos and images we can accept.

- We follow strict photographic consent guidelines. If your photo includes clearly recognisable people, we will need a statement of consent from them. If you are unable to share this due to [GDPR](#) but your organisation has a clear photographic consent policy, please send this on to us.
- Alternatively choose photos where people aren't recognisable (e.g. an image that doesn't show their face) or chose an image without people in it.
- Or you could use an infographic, illustration or alternative graphic.
- The size of the photo or image needs to be 1200px across as a minimum.
- Please include a short description (10 words max) of what the photo is depicting to add context for the viewer.
- Include the name of the photographer (or designer/artist) for the credit. If appropriate link to photographers' website or Flickr page.
- Please include any [Creative Commons](#) details and link to relevant license.

4) Step four: Editorial support

We can provide editorial support to help get your blog into shape to publish. Your English does not have to be perfect – we can help here if necessary. Elaine Mercer e.mercer@ids.ac.uk and Alice Webb a.webb@ids.ac.uk from the Sanitation Learning Hub will help with editorial support providing comments, suggestions and edits where appropriate.

Disclaimer: We reserve the right to reject blog ideas and blog submissions if we decide that the content or quality is not suitable for our website.