

Case studies:



WaterAid/Abir Abdullah

Water and sanitation for the urban poor
Dushtha Shasthya Kendra (DSK), an NGO partner of WaterAid in Bangladesh, has achieved great success in helping communities living in squatter settlements gain access to public water and sanitation services.

DSK acted as an intermediary between poor urban communities and the Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (DWASA) to facilitate water and sanitation provision at regulated prices. Previously DWASA's policy was to only make connections to households who had legal land tenure. But as this is very rare for Dhaka's poorest inhabitants, this effectively barred them from official water provision.

DSK paid great attention to motivating poor communities and building their capacity so that they could manage and maintain the new facilities themselves. This sense of community cohesion and ownership, previously lacking in the communities was crucial to the programme's success.

Other NGOs and the Dhaka City Corporation have now replicated DSK's approach. Further work will also be carried out with DWASA with the ultimate aim of removing the legal barriers to people living in slum settlements without land tenure so that they can gain access to public water and sanitation services.



Success at the Summit

In the run up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 WaterAid worked hard to ensure water and sanitation were firmly on the agenda. WaterAid's first campaign 'Water Matters' calling for water and sanitation to be prioritised formed a key part of this process. In late August Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, welcomed the Water Matters petition bearing the signatures of 121,770 members of the UK public.

This campaign raised the profile of WaterAid and its issues among UK parliamentarians. Discussions were held with Environment Minister Michael Meacher MP and Clare Short then Secretary of State for International Development. After visiting WaterAid's work in Ethiopia Don Foster MP tabled an early day motion at the House of Commons calling for water and sanitation to be prioritised.

WaterAid was delighted when two of the key aims of the Water Matters campaign were agreed upon at the Summit. A new international development target was set to halve the proportion of people without adequate sanitation by 2015 and the UK Government pledged to urge other governments to prioritise programmes of action to reach the previously agreed target to halve the proportion of people without safe water by 2015.



WaterAid/Caroline Penn

Poverty Reduction Strategy papers (PRSP)

National efforts at addressing poverty reduction in low income countries are increasingly focused on the process of developing Poverty Reduction Strategies papers (PRSPs). The World Bank and the IMF endorsed the preparation and implementation of PRSPs by borrower countries seeking to benefit from the enhanced HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative) for debt relief. Since then, the PRSP model has become the centrepiece for policy dialogue in all countries receiving concessional lending flows from the World Bank and IMF. Out of the 15 countries where WaterAid works 13 are producing PRSPs.

Preliminary analysis of emerging PRSPs in sub-Saharan Africa has shown, that despite the accepted importance of water supply and sanitation, these concerns have not been adequately reflected in the current PRSPs. PRSPs cover a three-year timeframe and WaterAid is advocating for increased attention to water supply and sanitation in the next round of PRSPs.

WaterAid aims to create understanding and knowledge of the issues surrounding water and poverty and will now look at how the roles of civil society groups can be increased to ensure that the voices of poor people are heard in the next PRSP planning phase.



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The UK's only major charity dedicated exclusively to the provision of safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education to the world's poorest people

Advocacy



WaterAid/Daniel O'Leary

WaterAid's vision is of a world where everyone has access to safe water and sanitation. Yet there are currently over one billion people in the world lacking safe water and over two billion without adequate sanitation. Governments have agreed targets to halve the proportion of people without access to safe water and sanitation¹ by 2015 but if these are to be achieved 125,570 people need to gain access to safe water and 274,000 would need to gain access to adequate sanitation every single day until 2015.

WaterAid recognises that it can only feasibly help a fraction of this number through the water, sanitation and hygiene projects it funds through partner organisations. To achieve the targets, governments and international agencies must prioritise water and sanitation so that the necessary resources are committed to this huge task. This requires changes in both policy and practice. Therefore, in addition to supporting water, sanitation and hygiene projects WaterAid aims to influence the policies and practice of the main decision-makers, donors and public, to gain their commitment to the provision of these basic services. This work is called advocacy.

¹Set at the number of people without access in 2000.



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Advocacy

WaterAid's advocacy work is carried out at all levels and is driven by either project or research work. WaterAid will always aim to influence policy when the suggested changes are backed up by either practical experience or careful research that WaterAid has carried out itself.



WaterAid/Caroline Penn

Leading by example

The work that WaterAid and its partners carry out providing safe water and sanitation to poor people has given a wealth of valuable lessons and experience. WaterAid documents the lessons learned from this work and develops good practice models that it then shares with others including partners, others in the sector, local, district and national government, and international agencies.

This means that WaterAid's experience is used to greater effect, having more impact, influencing other project work and helping more poor communities. In this way WaterAid aims to promote solutions to the water and sanitation problems so that the poor gain access to safe, affordable water, sanitation and hygiene education services. For example, the possible scope for community-managed water and sanitation

schemes have been demonstrated through the Hitosa gravity scheme providing water to more than 60,000 people living in 31 rural communities in Ethiopia and the Orangi Pilot Project's large scale provision of sanitation for over 90,000 urban poor people in Pakistan. Both of these have been documented and presented at international policy fora.

A further example of this can be seen in India where previously the governments' funding for latrines given to families was found to be missing targets. WaterAid's lessons from its programme work were documented in a report called 'Making Government Funding Work Harder'. Using two practical case studies this report suggests that focusing support on community based initiatives would be the most appropriate way for government to use its resources to achieve results. This report was used as a model to influence district

governments in their water and sanitation work. Later this work was not only used to influence the Indian government's policy surrounding its Total Rural Sanitation Project (TRSP) but one of WaterAid's partner's projects was also used as a demonstration to explain how 100% sanitation (practically unheard of when less than 13% of India's rural population have latrines), could be achieved through community involvement and participation.

The example above also demonstrates how this good practice advocacy can be used to influence national policies. One of WaterAid's main advocacy goals is to show how water and sanitation work can be improved using existing funds. In the case of the TRSP, described above, WaterAid and its partner's influence and experience led to the inclusion of low cost latrines and flexible low cost credit as part of the policy. This meant that poor communities were able to afford and benefit from these services.

There are many examples where WaterAid's work has influenced the policies of governments in the countries where it works. For example, in Tanzania WaterAid has been working with government departments and other organisations on a DFID-funded project to identify the link between water, sanitation and poverty. The study improved monitoring indicators which provide an accessible way of showing that water supply and sanitation do help to reduce poverty.

Influencing governments

WaterAid believes that water, sanitation and hygiene are the first essential steps to reducing poverty. As such WaterAid encourages national governments to prioritise

spending on water and sanitation within their plans and ensure that these plans look at providing cost effective, sustainable projects that reach the poorest communities.

This work also includes influencing the policies of the UK Government which plays a significant role in water and sanitation through the aid it gives to developing country governments, through its own trade and investment, and through the role it plays in international institutions.

At the International Freshwater Conference in Bonn, Germany, in 2001, WaterAid and other civil society groups lobbied to change the attitude of Ministers to charging a price for water by insisting that water prices should not pose a barrier to poor people accessing water and sanitation services. It also lobbied for the establishment of a multi-stakeholder review of private sector participation in water services which was supported by some European governments, water companies, trade unions and others.

Building networks of influence

WaterAid also aims to increase the influence that its partner organisations have. One way it does this is by facilitating their direct participation in international advocacy activities. WaterAid provides funds or helps them to gain sponsorship so that they can attend large international conferences where voices from local, or non governmental organisations (NGOs), from the developing world are rarely heard.

To aid the sharing of information, skills, experience and resources WaterAid also facilitates and supports networks of organisations within each country where it works. For example in Ethiopia WaterAid chairs both the



WaterAid/Jim Holmes

Rainwater Harvesting Association, which works with institutions in the UK and Kenya to develop indigenous technologies. In the UK, WaterAid works with a range of organisations through the UK Water Network including Tearfund, the Overseas Development Institute and UNISON. WaterAid has also played a key role in the establishment of the Freshwater Action Network (FAN).

WaterAid encourages networks across different countries. Through these international networks and its links with international policy makers and organisations, such as the Water Supply and Collaborative Council, WaterAid feeds into wider policy discussions with the aim to influence donors and governments.

Ensuring voices are heard

In all these areas WaterAid encourages local people to become involved and voice their concerns. For example in the UK WaterAid seeks public support to raise awareness of its issues. In the communities where it works in Africa and Asia people are involved in all stages of the work with the long term aim of ensuring that poor people's voices are heard in debates about policies that will impact upon their lives.

To achieve all of the goals set out in this issue sheet

WaterAid requires a great understanding of the problems, needs, arguments and experience of poor communities and what prevents them getting access to safe water and sanitation. This must be coupled with an understanding of the policy process. WaterAid aims to influence international policy, actors, donors and institutions with the greatest impact on global water policy making. WaterAid will help in building and nurturing the capacity of its partners and citizens to influence public policies at local, national and international level.

WaterAid is working to keep safe water and sanitation at the forefront of national and international development agendas. By using its experience, research and good practice it is able to influence district and national governments and feed into wider development policies. In this way it is generating waves of change far beyond the physical boundaries of its work.

Resources

As WaterAid's advocacy work develops, new work is regularly published on WaterAid's website. To see the current research and published reports visit www.wateraid.org.uk and go to the 'in depth' section. Inside this section there is also WaterAid's advocacy sourcebook. This is a guide to advocacy work in the water and sanitation sector. The sourcebook aims to explain the different advocacy tools, provide practical examples of advocacy work, give information on key policy actors and processes and how to influence them at international levels.

¹ FAN is a global network of environmental and developmental NGOs and community based organisations working to strengthen civil society's participation in international water policy making.

Factfile

WaterAid has chosen five specific areas of research to focus its advocacy work on. These are as follows:

- **Sanitation:** To identify and demonstrate the means by which the sanitation sector can meet the Millennium Development Goals for sanitation
- **Financing water and sanitation:** To ensure that sector funding is used more effectively and equitably, and financial commitments made to the sector by national governments and donors are met
- **Sustainability:** To influence donors, governments and civil society to adopt sustainable approaches to water supply by understanding why water projects fail
- **Water and poverty:** To achieve sustainable and effective investment for water supply and sanitation for the poor by demonstrating the socioeconomic impact of water supply and sanitation on poverty
- **Water sector reform:** To promote the most appropriate methods of water sector reform and to stop the blanket promotion of private sector participation as the single answer to water and sanitation service provision

The Tearfund and WaterAid [Water Matters] campaign has been very effective in raising public awareness of the issues of water and sanitation in developing countries. I greatly appreciate the effort that many of the NGO community have made around the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development 1999-2003