COLLECTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY VOICE RESULTS IN MORE ALLOCATIONS OF GOVERNMENT FINANCES TO THE WASH SECTOR IN ZAMBIA

**Author:** Matilda Shatunka

**Country:** Zambia

**Sector:** WASH

From the time water and sanitation sector reforms started in Zambia in the late 1980s, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations had no defined space for their collective participation. As a result, their influence on policies and service delivery has been limited. Most NGOs have been focusing on implementing community projects with little collaboration with government institutions at national, provincial, district level and with other stakeholders. Similarly, their interactions with communities have largely focused on stimulating community participation and little on voice strengthening.

Thus, despite low access to safe water and improved sanitation communities’ demand for quality WASH services has been low. Their voices have been weak to speak up and table their needs before service providers, law and policy makers. Communities’ silence has continued to hamper equitable provision of WASH services. Meanwhile, outbreaks of cholera and dysentery, especially during rainy periods have been high, threatening national progress towards meeting MDG targets to reduce the proportion of people without access to clean water from about five million in 2005 (with a higher population residing in rural areas) to less than two million. Similarly, national progress towards increasing access to adequate sanitation has been slow.

At the same time, over the years Government has provided less than 20% of total financing to the sector while CPs have provided between 20.9 to 79% which on average is 62% over the period 2002 to 2007. 80% of financing is for investments into infrastructure. The biggest contributors to the sector over the period were the World Bank (WB) contributing approximately US$ 70 million, Germany contributed about US$ 43 million, Denmark about US$12 million & the African Development Bank (AfDB) approx. US$ 70 million.

In August 2007, Oxfam GB, Care International, WaterAid Zambia and UNICEF, initiated the NGO WASH Forum in order to foster effective coordination, collaboration and networking amongst NGOs and strengthen their capacities to fulfil their roles and potential in the water supply and sanitation sector. This was done in consultation with the Ministry of Local Government and Housing, This was to contribute to the national goals to improve water and sanitation coverage and reduce poverty. Eventually, the Forum attracted participation from over twenty NGOs (International, Youth, Local and CBOs).

Seeing the low government investments accorded to the sector, the Zambia NGO WASH Forum decided to focus on lobbying for improved accountability and responsiveness among service providers and increased voice of recipients to demand for sustainable and equitable services and elicit responses from policy and law makers.

SNV began participating in Forum activities in September 2007, as part of its scoping process for the WASH sector. However, from 2009, SNV repositioned its role in the NGO WASH Forum from a participating organisation to the provider of capacity development services to the Forum Secretariat in order to contribute to the improvement in water supply, sanitation and hygiene services in Zambia. As such, SNV supported the Forum to review its performance, map its organisation and institutional framework, position/develop its strategic plan, and develop its governance systems. Currently SNV has signed a one year agreement ending in December 2011 to support the Forum with advocacy and knowledge management activities. The SNV team...
comprises three Advisors with no LCBs or external consultants engaged. As at 28th November 2011 a total of 72 Primary Process Days (PPDs) costing approximately 56,000 Euros have been invested. Thus SNV in close collaboration with WaterAid has supported the Forum prepare and present appeals to Parliament for increased government resource allocation to the sector.

The appeals were in response to dwindling government investments in WASH sector over the past 8 years. According to the African Development Bank’s presentation to the Zambia Water Forum and Exhibition in November 2011, CPs have for a long time been taking lead in investing in WASH as illustrated below:

The Zambia NGO WASH Forum engaged government and other actors in order to improve service delivery to communities. SNV organized a learning partnership with an experienced advocacy membership based CSO (Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) to share ideas and information on parliamentary etiquette, management of expectations and how to conduct follow-ups on appeals presented to parliament.

SNV further assisted the Zambia NGO WASH Forum to engage in prior consultations with relevant government institutions to access vital information and statistics on national WASH coverage, previous national budgets and expenditure on both long-term investments and emergency response to disease outbreaks. Evidence generated from such sources assisted the Forum to justify the need for prioritising long term investments as a measure for improving people’s health and harnessing socio-economic productivity. Working in partnership with WaterAid Zambia, the Zambia NGO WASH Forum was assisted to mentor and coach individual members to prepare the parliamentary presentations so as to convincingly communicate ideas as well as to confidently engage in question and answer sessions with parliamentarians on the need for increased government resource allocation to the WASH sector.

As a result, the Forum presented appeals to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Estimates lobbying for increased financial allocations in the 2008 and 2009 National Budgets. The Forum emphasised improving long term investments to prevent outbreaks of water and sanitation related diseases.

- With spill over effects from the 2008/2009 appeals, Government allocations increased by about 61.4% between 2009 and 2011. The graph presents Government’s sector budget and financing as indicated in the Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP)
- Thus Government fund allocations to the WASH sector through key ministries involved in delivering WASH services, is increasingly responsive to demands for improved delivery of water and sanitation services to communities and schools and is more willing to respond to

OUTCOMES

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1 Increase is equivalent to US$43,392,517 for 2009, 87,900,283 for 2010 and 112,484,799 for 2011 based on the exchange rate of ZMK 4,934 to US$ 1.00. Minister of Finance and National Planning 2009 and 2010 Budget Speeches to Parliament
community calls for equitable services.

- Further, according to the 2011 UNICEF Study Report on Child Friendly Sanitation in Schools, it was reported that improved WASH contributes to encouraging pupils, especially adolescent girls, to attend classroom lessons and teachers to concentrate on teaching.

- Further, improved water and sanitation has contributed to the achievement of quality education.

- The Zambia NGO WASH Forum consultative approach to lobbying and advocacy has resulted in government working with the Forum as an ally in development. The Forum has been assisted to adapt from only performing an implementation role to also performing the advocacy role and relate with other actors towards achievement of results. The Forum has therefore developed working relationships with other civil society organisations, government institutions and currently participates in some Cooperating Partners’ meetings as and when deemed necessary.

- As at 30th June 2011, about 2,890 water points to benefit over 720,000 people in communities and 440,000 sanitation facilities had been constructed.

- Meanwhile 60,000 pupils and teachers are benefiting from 1,500 water facilities and over 650 sanitation facilities in about 160 schools.

- Compared to the same period of November 2009 to February 2010, incidences of cholera reduced from over 200 cases in 2010 to less than 50 cases in 2011.

- When collaborative relationships of CSOs especially with government are based on mutual respect, autonomy and, to some extent, pluralism of CSO views in a transparent, participatory and well-informed manner, non-state actors can jointly and positively influence policy makers, service providers and law makers as the Zambia NGO WASH Forum demonstrated.

- An enabling environment created by government is key to CSO engagement in advocacy. The development of the 2006-2010 Fifth National Development Plan and the WASH sector 2006-2015 national operational frameworks, willingness to share information and dialogue were important for CSOs to effectively articulate their causes within national development aspirations.

- Investing in capacity development of CSOs to understand complex public sector processes including budgeting, financing and procurement are paramount to reorient CSOs to undertake advocacy work in addition to performing their project implementation role.

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2 Martin van Vliet, (2011) Accountability and improved local service delivery in Sub-Saharan Africa-Policy Orientations
3 Ministry of Local Government and Housing presentation to ZAWAFE-Nov 2011