

Sustainability in WASH governance programmes

05



Contents

Background	3
1. What is sustainability?	5
2. Achieving sustainability: Lessons from WaterAid and FAN's experience	11
3. National-level sustainability – approaches and challenges	18
4. Sustainability for NGOs and their networks	21
5. Limits on the reach of NGOs and INGOs and implications for their sustainability strategies	25
6. Conclusions	27
Appendix 1: Sustainability of WASH systems and hardware	28
Appendix 2: Case studies	29
References	37

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Background

Based on experience from WaterAid/Freshwater Action Network (FAN)'s Governance and Transparency Fund (GTF) programme¹, this handbook explores the elements needed to improve governance and make it sustainable².

The GTF programme believes that unless improvements are made to governance, the current problems of unequal provision of services³ and inappropriate, unaffordable, poor quality facilities that are never properly maintained will continue. Opportunities for citizens to engage with governments or service providers, and hold them to account, need to be institutionalised.

This handbook focuses on:

- **Sustainability definitions and frameworks.**
- **Achieving sustainability (at local and national levels).**
- **Sustainability for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and their networks.**
- **Limits on the reach of NGOs and international NGOs (INGOs) and implications for their sustainability strategies.**

The WaterAid/FAN GTF programme is still in progress, so it remains to be seen whether its achievements will be sustainable. However, this handbook looks at the ways sustainability has been addressed by the programme and aims to contribute to thinking about which approaches and strategies are likely to be most effective in making long-lasting changes to how governments relate to their citizens in terms of accountability and responsiveness. The experiences in this document reflect those of the GTF

programme, though many of the issues raised could apply to other governance programmes. Other handbooks in the series discuss in more detail the tools, approaches and methods that were used.

The primary audience for the handbook is NGOs and networks working on governance issues, including WASH governance, but a wider range of stakeholders concerned with issues of accountability, transparency, participation and responsiveness between governments and citizens should also find it of interest.

The handbook is the **fifth** in a series of five GTF learning handbooks produced by the WaterAid/FAN GTF Learning Project. All five handbooks can be found online at: www.wateraid.org/gtfllearninghandbooks

¹ The primary source of information for this, and the other papers in the learning handbook series, is research undertaken by regional consultants that focused on ten countries and 16 partners.

² Reviews and evaluations of the performance of the WaterAid/FAN GTF programme can be found elsewhere.

³ While NGOs working with communities within their project areas can successfully obtain access to services from the government without doing anything to improve overall governance, these changes will always be limited to the specific areas where they operate. In some circumstances, their activities and successes may pull services away from other areas, or from services in other sectors.

About the WaterAid/FAN Governance and Transparency Fund programme

Working with 33 partners in 16 countries, the programme has combined bottom up, demand-led approaches at community level with supporting advocacy at national level to achieve its goal to: 'improve the accountability and responsiveness of duty bearers to ensure equitable and sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services for the poorest and most marginalised.'

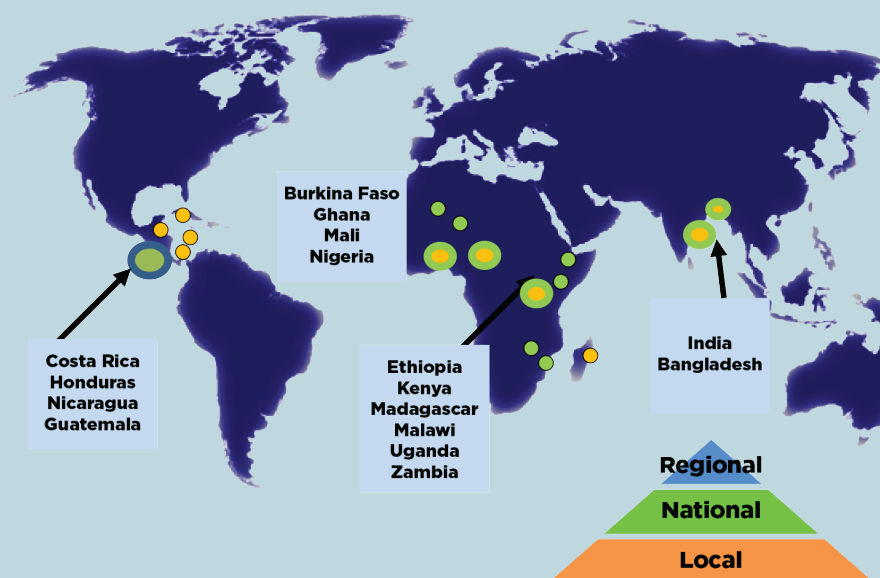
The programme, which is funded by the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) through its Governance and Transparency Fund, began work in 2008. This phase of work on governance will end in September 2013.

Programme map showing countries and levels of operation

The programme's approach, which is rooted in DFID's Capability, Accountability and Responsiveness (CAR) framework⁴, can be summarised as:

- Empowerment through awareness raising on rights, plus capacity building in skills, tools and analysis.
- Alliance building through networks and multi-stakeholder forums.
- Advocacy to influence governments for more and better WASH services and for more transparency, accountability, participation, consultation and responsiveness.

The aim is to create community-based organisations (CBOs) with the confidence, skills and tools to hold governments to account, supported by strong NGOs and networks able to engage with decision-making processes and influence the design and implementation of WASH policies at all levels.



⁴ DFID (2007) *Governance, development, and democratic politics: DFID's work in building more effective states*, pp 14-21. DFID, London. Available at: webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/governance.pdf or www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2964&source=rss

1. What is sustainability?

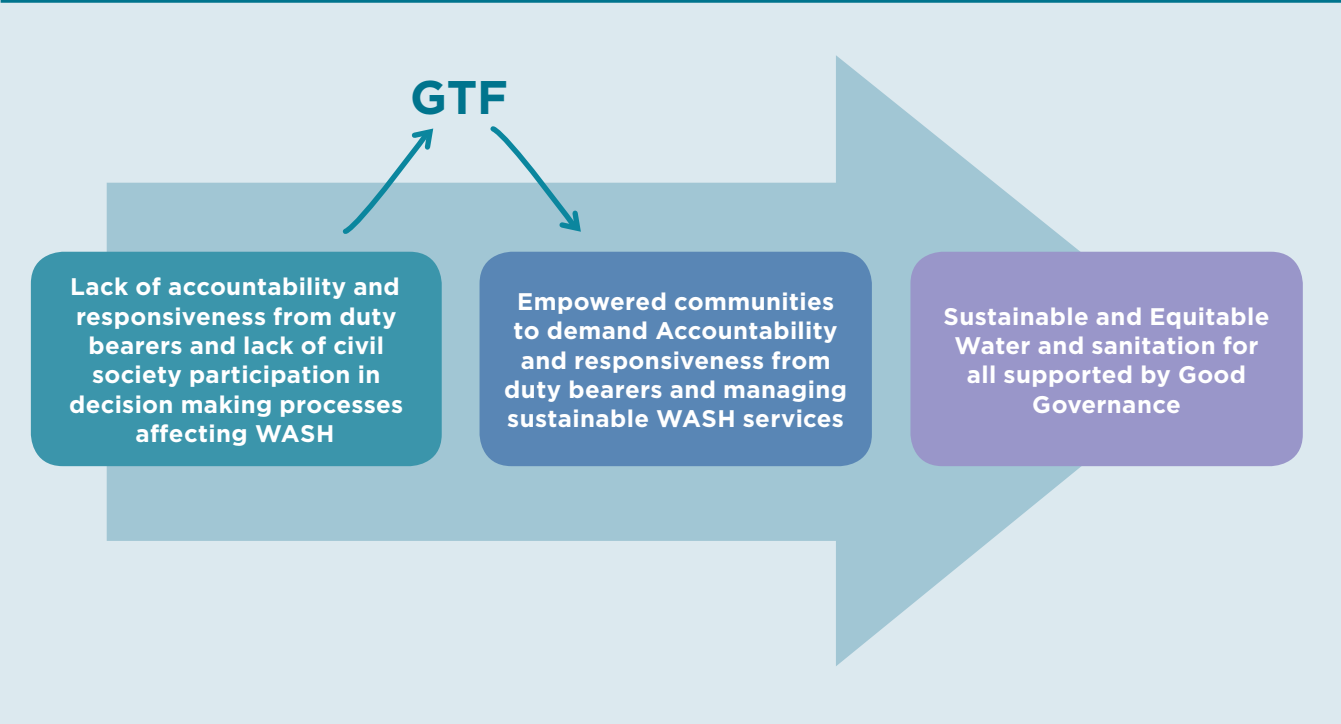
For WaterAid and FAN, sustainability means that the benefits and progress achieved during the life of the programme not only survive and continue long after it has ended, but also continue to progress on an upward course⁵. This definition implies that there is no end point for sustainability. Even if a completely ideal state is reached, this too must be continually sustained. If at any time the benefits of the programme begin to disappear and communities slip back into the pre-intervention situation, then the intervention cannot be said to be sustainable.

Sustainability vs sustainable development

Since the 1990s, there has been an increased emphasis on sustainability in civil society. Over this period, two ideas with similar names have emerged, but they mean entirely different things. Sustainable development relates to the impact of economic development and growth on natural and environmental resources.

Sustainability is used more broadly to describes the ability to endure or be maintained, and is used in relation to all development programmes focused on rights and poverty issues.

Figure 1: The GTF programme bridges the gap between the lack of accountability for WASH and community empowerment



⁵ WaterAid (2011) Sustainability framework, WaterAid, London, UK. Available at: www.wateraid.org/publications

1.1 What needs to be sustainable?

In a governance project that also addresses specific sector issues, for example, WASH, education or agriculture, it is not always clear what has to be sustainable. Is it the hardware or infrastructure? Is it the running of the service? Is it the NGOs, community groups or networks involved? Or is it the improvements to the way the sector is governed?

In fact, these questions present false choices:

- i** It is pointless to spend scarce resources delivering facilities and services that fall apart after a few years. They must be sustainable (see Appendix 1 for more on the sustainability of services).
- ii** Research shows that the best way to ensure maintenance of services is through the active participation of well-organised CBOs⁶ that receive external support (WaterAid's sustainability framework for rural water supply services can be found in Appendix 1).
- iii** Large-scale repairs, or replacing or upgrading facilities will always require technical and financial action involving government.
- iv** This is more likely to happen if citizens can hold governments to account and if there is regular dialogue and consultation between governments, CBOs, other citizens and service providers.
- v** This means that CBOs' ability to maintain infrastructure and continue influencing local government must be sustainable.
- vi** NGOs often play the biggest role in mobilising and building the capacity of CBOs. Without them, many community organisations would not exist and/or would not have the confidence, knowledge and skills to engage government⁷. For this reason, high-performing NGOs must be sustainable for at least the medium-term future.
- vii** For changes at the local government level to last beyond personnel changes, positive changes in local governance must be institutionalised and incorporated into political culture and national policies for them to benefit all citizens.
- viii** National-level NGO networks and INGOs are currently most active in advocating government responsibility for providing sustainable services and for better, more inclusive governance. In addition, they play a key role in spreading the message of good governance across a wide range of civil society organisations (CSOs). This means that NGO networks and national offices of INGOs also need to be sustainable in the medium-term.

⁶ WaterAid, citing a major study that concluded 'the analysis consistently shows that beneficiary participation was more significant than any other factor in achieving functioning water systems and in building local capacity'. See Narayan D (1995) *The contribution of people's participation: Evidence from 121 rural water supply projects*, Environmentally sustainable development occasional paper no 1. World Bank, Washington DC. Available at:

www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&searchMenuPK=64187283&siteName=WDS&entityID=000009265_3961219095253

⁷ Faith-based, trade union and political organisations may also play this role, but generally focus on specific sections of society that share their beliefs and are prepared to commit themselves exclusively to these.

The key focus of sustainability work needs to be on:

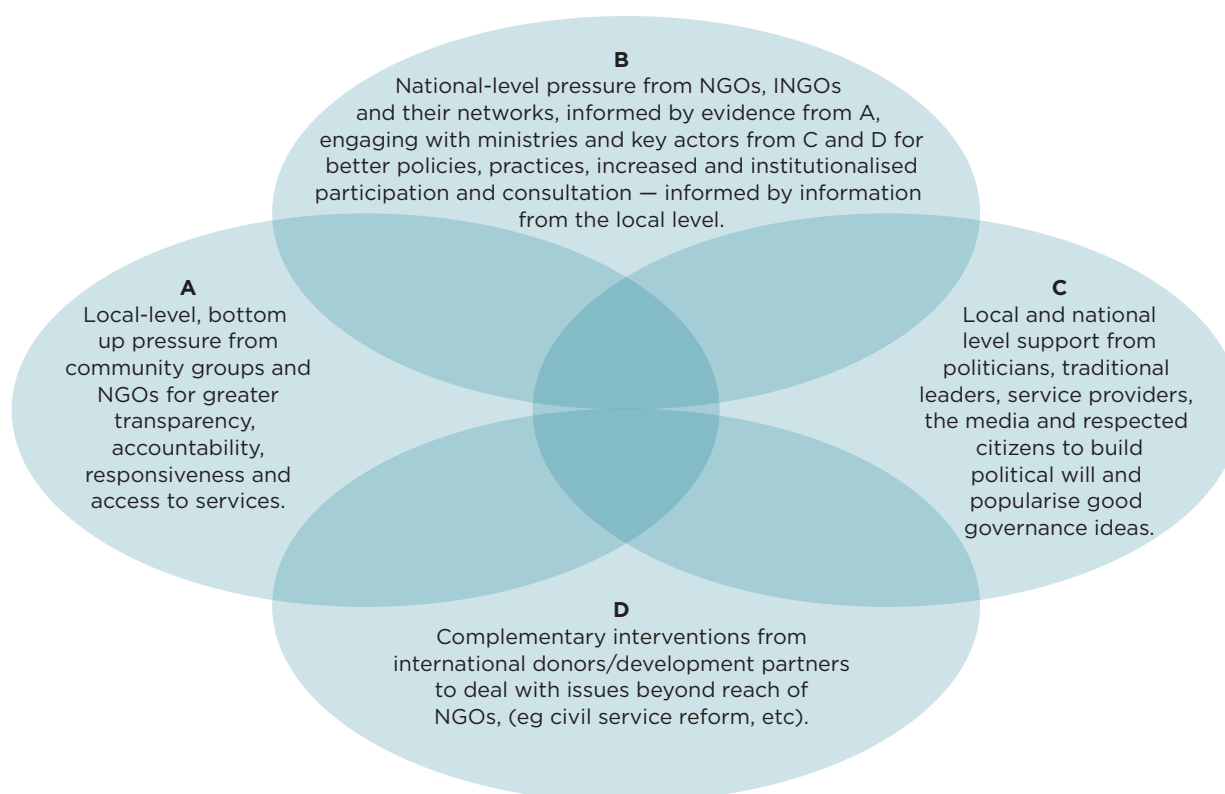
- Hardware, facilities and infrastructure.
- CBO engagement with government and key stakeholders.
- Responsiveness and accountability of local government, and opportunities for dialogue.
- Local NGOs supporting CBO governance agendas.
- National NGO networks and INGOs advocating better sector policies and governance.
- Advances in the willingness of national government to engage in dialogue, and be transparent, responsive and accountable.

Tip

Handling all these areas of sustainability at once is not easy. Fortunately, most organisations limit their main focus to one or two of them, with sister organisations taking responsibility for other areas.

Nevertheless, it is essential for everyone working on governance issues to remind themselves of the whole picture. This ensures that, even if they are not involved in them directly, each organisation's strategy contributes to all the areas needed to deliver long-term outcomes.

Figure 2: Basic CSO framework for sustainable good governance in the WASH sector



1.2 The need for action at different levels

As figure 1 indicates, advocacy at local levels alone can only achieve so much. On its own, local advocacy is never enough to ensure the sustainability of improvements in governance and service provision. Likewise, local advocacy is not enough to ensure that the benefits of these improvements are shared across the whole country.

Achieving national improvements requires changes to policies, practices, budgets and approaches that are led by national government and complemented by supportive policies and actions by key multilateral and bilateral donors.

Figure 3 provides a fuller account of the multi-level, multi-actor elements that need to be in place.

Figure 3: Elements necessary for good governance in the WASH sector to be sustainable

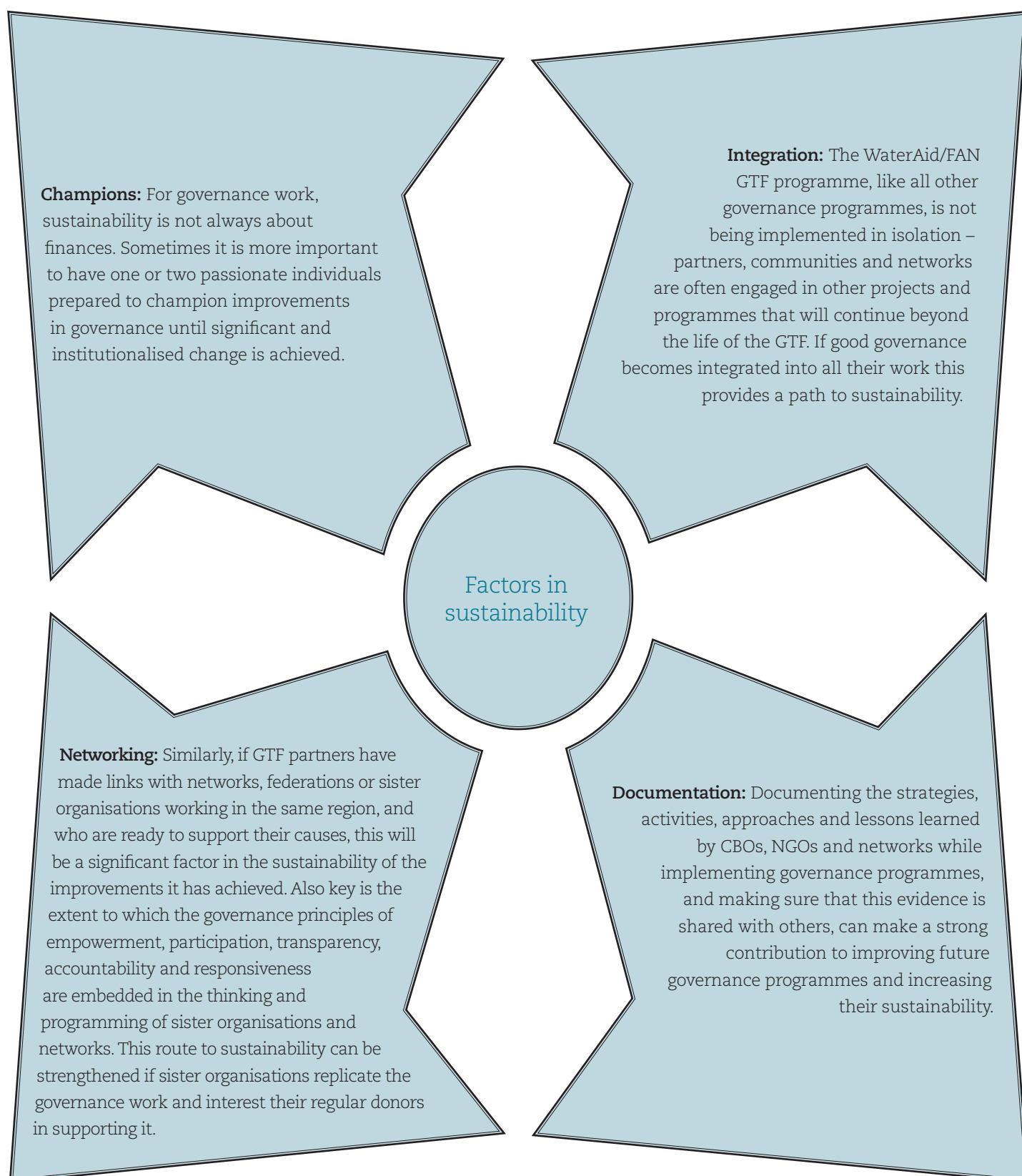
Grassroots and district level



National level



Figure 4: Factors in sustainability



2. Achieving sustainability: Lessons from WaterAid and FAN’s experience

WaterAid and FAN’s GTF partners have concentrated on areas where their expertise is likely to be most effective:

- Supporting communities to build upward pressure on local and national government for better sector governance and better services.
- Broadening the impact of this by creating pressure at a national level through dialogue and advocacy focused on better, more responsive policies and practices from national government and service providers.
- Generating public and political support for better governance by working with the media.

Local and national-level work was linked by upward and downward information flows facilitated by networks. This meant that national policy advocacy could be informed by local realities. At the same time, local-level advocacy gained from having up to date information about current government programmes and policies.

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2.1 Local-level sustainability — Approaches and challenges

For the WaterAid/FAN GTF programme, the role of CBOs was seen as central to ensuring progress towards good governance. The objective was to create communities that are confident, understand their rights and feel worthy of respect regardless of their poverty or lack of education, and who have the skills and knowledge to engage in constructive dialogue with government.

Alongside their role in managing and maintaining WASH facilities, the sustainability of CBOs is important so that they can continue to monitor government performance and engage in dialogue and lobbying for improvements in both governance and services when necessary. The key to sustainability at a local level is CBOs being able to continue their influencing activities with minimal, occasional external support.

2.1.1 Capacity building for CBOs

Taking community members from a state of feeling powerless⁸ to one where they are ready to engage with government and challenge the status quo takes skill and determination from NGOs and courage from community members⁹.

To help community-level transformations and new CBOs to become sustainable, **partners have engaged in extensive capacity building. A huge amount of effort has gone into this and CBOs have been equipped with organisational and advocacy skills, sector knowledge and a series of tools for gathering and analysing sector information.** Partners have also accompanied CBOs in their initial advocacy and dialogue with local government and other key stakeholders to build their confidence in being able to speak in forums where they previously were not heard¹⁰.

Figure 5: Capacities communities need to become independent actors



Note

For some local-level partners, involvement in the GTF programme was their first exposure to governance issues and working with a rights-based approach, rather than their traditional service delivery. This meant that building the capacity of CBOs also required building their own capacity and understanding.

⁸ Engaging communities in power analysis exercises that reveal formal, informal and hidden power relationships can play an important role in empowerment, and in allowing communities to develop effective strategies for change. More information on this, including practical exercises, can be found in *Power analysis tools for WASH governance*, available at www.wateraid.org/gtflerninghandbooks

⁹ See also Figure 2.

¹⁰ For further information about mobilising and building the capacity of CBOs and how they can engage with local government, see two other handbooks in the GTF learning series, *Getting started with governance* and *Engagement and advocacy for better WASH governance*, available at www.wateraid.org/gtflerninghandbooks

Capacity building has already led to some impressive results. Independent consultants report that CBOs, in this case, WASH committees, have become resilient and seem ready to work on their own to demand accountability¹¹. Across all regions where the programme operates, community groups are actively engaging with local government and raising issues with elected decision-makers. Some community members are already sitting on local government advisory committees, others have instituted regular multi-stakeholder meetings. In parts of India and Central America, community WASH organisations have been legally registered, while others have joined networks of other CBOs or NGOs¹².

Furthermore, the membership of most CBOs is inclusive, with women, minorities and vulnerable groups (including dalits in India) well-represented, participating in the groups' activities and having increased access to safe water and sanitation.

It is clear that many communities have increased their competence and confidence and can now engage in dialogue with local government and other key WASH stakeholders. The challenge now is to ensure that the progress that has been achieved is not lost when the programme ends. While CBOs need to be able to act independently most of the time, it seems likely that they will be stronger and more sustainable with a minimal level of support and guidance.

Note

While some GTF CBOs are now quite mature, partners note that those contacted more recently are still at an early stage, and are only just beginning to feel confident about advocating their rights and entitlements. In addition, the readiness to go ahead without support varies between community members because they have different levels of knowledge and skills. Getting these CBOs to a point where they can operate independently will require more time and support.

Fortunately, the end of the GTF programme does not mean the end of the partners' work. Nor does the GTF work happen in isolation. So, there is a reasonable chance that existing partners will either find ways they can provide substantial support to newer community groups, or locate other NGOs who can. In addition, it may be possible to make links between new CBOs and more mature ones in the same area. Or to provide contacts between them and national-level WASH networks.

In Madagascar, the programme selected GTF partner CBOs who had already engaged in a modest level of activity to increase the likelihood of the organisations being ready to stand on their own feet before the programme ends. During the last year, there has been joint thinking and planning with the CBOs about the capacities that still need to be built to strengthen these partners and ensure their sustainability. Similar activities are taking place across the whole programme.

¹¹ Based on internal WaterAid reports from five independent regional consultants: David Ddamurila, East Africa; Harold Essuku, West Africa; Pradeep Narayanan, South Asia; Laetitia Razafimamonjy, Southern Africa; and Haydee Rodriguez, Central America.

¹² For more information see handbook three, *Networks and WASH governance advocacy*, available at www.wateraid.org/gtfllearninghandbooks

Case Study: An example of independent community action: Narayan Prasad's advocacy, India

Narayan Prasad is a remote village situated in the forests of Odisha, India. It is home to 19 scheduled tribe families. As part of their overall programme, GTF partner Gram Vikas organised and mobilised the community to lobby local government for sanitation facilities.

To build their capacity, village leaders attended leadership development training and Right to Information (RTI) awareness camps. This resulted in successful advocacy by the community, supported by Gram Vikas, and households in the community now have access to individual toilets.

After this success, the Narayan Prasad community decided by themselves that they wanted electricity. They set about lobbying for access using their skills and knowledge of procedures learned during the campaign for toilets.

Like all advocacy initiatives, achieving their goal took time, patience and determination. Gram Vikas offered guidance at the beginning of the process, but after that, the villagers continued alone. It took continuous efforts by community leaders over the next 16 months, facing many challenges, before the posts and wiring for electricity were finally put up. This was made more complicated by the remote location and dense forest. Despite energetic lobbying, there still was no connection to the grid.

At this point, a village leader attended a workshop on electricity organised by Gram Vikas. While there, he was able to lobby the government's executive engineer and a manager from the electricity provider who were also participating.

He says, "When I returned to the village the next day I could see that my village was electrified."

Their success against the odds has boosted confidence levels and brought the marginalised community together. The community is now planning advocacy to have a road and a school built (The full details of the Narayan Prasad community's advocacy campaign can be found in Appendix 2).

Lessons

- Communities with positive experiences of using advocacy skills and knowledge of their rights and entitlements are capable of acting alone.
- Good leadership is important to maintain momentum.
- Occasional external help can make an important difference in helping communities to achieve their objectives.

2.1.2 External support to CBOs when NGOs retire: Options and challenges

Capacity building alone may not be enough to create long-lasting, effective CBOs. Even the most mature CBOs may not be sustainable in the long term without outside support or practical guidance. Sources of support for consideration include the following:

NGOs

The nature of NGO funding and programmes means that they have to keep moving on to new projects and communities, and cannot maintain intensive long-term contact with CBOs. However, it is important that NGOs should move slowly into the background – not abruptly cutting off all contact but reducing it to very occasional advice and perhaps involving CBOs in relevant capacity building exercises. To increase the sustainability of CBOs, NGOs need to help them find alternative sources of local, voluntary guidance and support.

Local government

In theory, one permanent source of support could be local government. Unfortunately, few local government offices would be the first choice partner for promoting social mobilisation and community empowerment. Not only is their capacity regarding participatory and inclusive methods often limited, but they also have a tendency to pursue centralised, top-down approaches that limit community ownership. In addition, in some contexts, especially where corruption is present, local governments may be part of the problem, rather than part of the solution. In these circumstances, there is a clear need to find another response.

Volunteer-run resource centres

In Jharkhand state, India, GTF partner, the Society for Advancement in Tribe, Health, Education and Environment (SATHEE), has established 12 access centres in the districts where they work (See SATHEE case study in Appendix 2 for more details). These centres act as resource centres where local communities and frontline government workers can go for advice and capacity building training as well as submitting and following up on applications to local government. The centres can also act as a venue for interface meetings between government officials and community representatives. Ideally, the centres are located close to the headquarters of the Gram Sabha or Gram Panchayat (the lowest levels of elected local government). The plan is that when SATHEE leaves, the centres will be run by volunteers, some from WASH CBOs and others from the Gram Sabha, as well as other respected citizens.

Involving influential local citizens

In Bangladesh's Moulvibazar district, GTF partner, NGO Forum for Public Health Development, has persuaded local doctors, teachers, faith leaders, the media and other respected local people to join civil society forums on water and sanitation that interact regularly with government. At present, this is happening mostly at Upazilla and district levels but it provides a good link between CBOs and government at higher levels. Civil society forum members will also be a potential source of help and advice when the NGO forum's work in the district comes to an end (see case study in Appendix 2 for more details).

NGO partners could help communities to **create long-term voluntary external support by involving sympathetic, respected citizens living locally**. These might include, for example, teachers, doctors, lawyers, business people, faith leaders and local politicians, who would become allies in achieving the communities' objectives. Whether or not formal forums are formed, **support from these allies might include: opening doors for engagement with local officials; accessing information; participating in multi-stakeholder dialogues; providing problem solving advice; and writing or translating documents**.

Sustainable financing for CBOs: options and challenges

GTF partners note that WASH **CBOs need additional resources to fund advocacy visits, capacity building exercises**, etc.

In spite of these concerns, local CBO fundraising is not an area that has received much attention during the lifespan of the programme.

Raising money for this type of activity is **not as easy as for projects that result in visible, 'concrete' items**, or where the focus is on relieving immediate suffering. With this in mind, the methods of fundraising should **compensate by raising money through things people enjoy**. For example, organising a sports day, singing contest, dance or fancy dress competition, where participants or spectators have to pay a small fee. Making and selling popular snacks or drinks to sell is another option.

2.1.3 An example of local CBO fundraising

One community group, which is part of the FRENASAPP (National Front of Sectors Affected by the Pineapple Industry) platform, and supported by Costa Rica's GTF partner CEDARENA (Centro de Derecho Ambiental y de los Recursos Naturales), has come up with an unusual fundraising plan. For more information on the methods and alliances used in FRENASAPP's campaign, see the case study in Appendix 2.

The community in Milano de Siquierres has been so badly affected by pollution from pineapple plantations that they are forced to get water from tanker trucks. To fund their continuing advocacy work to provide stronger regulation of the plantations, community members had the original idea of running tours of the area around their village to illustrate the difficulties caused by intensive pineapple farming. Developed with the help of a volunteer from the University of Costa Rica's Department of Ecological Tourism, the first tour will take place this year.

'The Real Pineapple Tour' takes visitors to pineapple plantations, the community's water catchment areas and the community water system, ending with a meal offered by the community. Its main target audiences are academics, researchers and journalists but members of the public are also welcome. Volunteer community members will be the guides for the tour.

Could INGOs play a bigger role in providing ideas for local fundraising by CBOs?

All communities, however poor, somehow manage to raise money for special occasions like festivals, dances or dramas, repairing community facilities, etc. However, raising funds for WASH CBOs to travel, advocate or build capacity may require a little more imagination.

As part of their overall fundraising strategies, many INGOs in Europe have specialist staff whose job it is to provide advice to groups of local supporters about fundraising for the organisation and provide them with new, creative ideas for doing this. INGOs should explore opportunities for extending their fundraising expertise to help CBOs via the local NGOs they work with.

Clearly, this experience would have to be adapted for each country context but the basic principles of managing this type of fundraising would be more or less the same – including the need for accurate, transparent money management.

A discussion between big INGOs and NGOs about whether 'northern' fundraising techniques could be translated into useful tools for NGOs and CBOs, as well as the potential advantages and disadvantages of doing this, would be a good place to start.

3. National-level sustainability — approaches and challenges

On a national level (and state level in India¹³), GTF partners' emphasis was on engaging in evidence-based dialogue with national governments, service providers and key sector actors regarding WASH policies, plans and budgets, while, at the same time, promoting the importance of good governance to them, as well as with sister NGOs, CSOs and the media.

3.1 The key role of national NGO network advocacy

The key partners and actors involved at this level were national NGO networks. The fact that most of these networks existed before the GTF programme, and that their work will continue when the programme ends, in itself provides a form of sustainability.

The main focus was on WASH and other key government ministries but some also focused on parliamentarians¹⁴, private sector providers and municipal authorities. What is not clear is the extent to which they actively lobbied development partners and multilateral donors to ensure that they took responsibility for the areas of governance that are beyond the reach of civil groups (see Section 5).

All governance advocacy was linked to

sector policies, practices or financing, rather than calling for transparency and accountability in the abstract¹⁵. This approach and the emphasis on making constructive, if sometimes critical, evidence-based contributions to dialogues with government, had the effect of building trust and respect.

In turn, this increased the number of spaces where NGO and citizen participation was welcomed, an important element in sustainable good governance. In some countries, the regular participation of NGO networks means that this has, in effect, been institutionalised in the advisory and policy committees of government as well as other key sector forums.

Of course, this puts pressure on networks to live up to the good governance standards they are promoting to governments but they have responded well to this challenge¹⁶.

Note

Local and national levels were linked, sometimes via provincial/district organisations, by upward and downward flows of information facilitated by national NGO networks. This meant that national policy advocacy could be informed by local realities. Local-level advocacy has benefited from having up to date information about current government programmes, proposals and policies.

¹³ The states in India where the programme is active have huge populations (Odisha – approx 42 million; Andhra Pradesh – approx 84.5 million). These populations are larger than those of all other programme countries except Nigeria. Indeed, the size of population in both these states is larger than the entire population of all the four GTF countries in Central America combined.

¹⁴ For example, WaterAid Uganda, in 2011.

¹⁵ For more information see handbook one, *Getting started with governance*, available at www.wateraid.org/gtflerninghandbooks

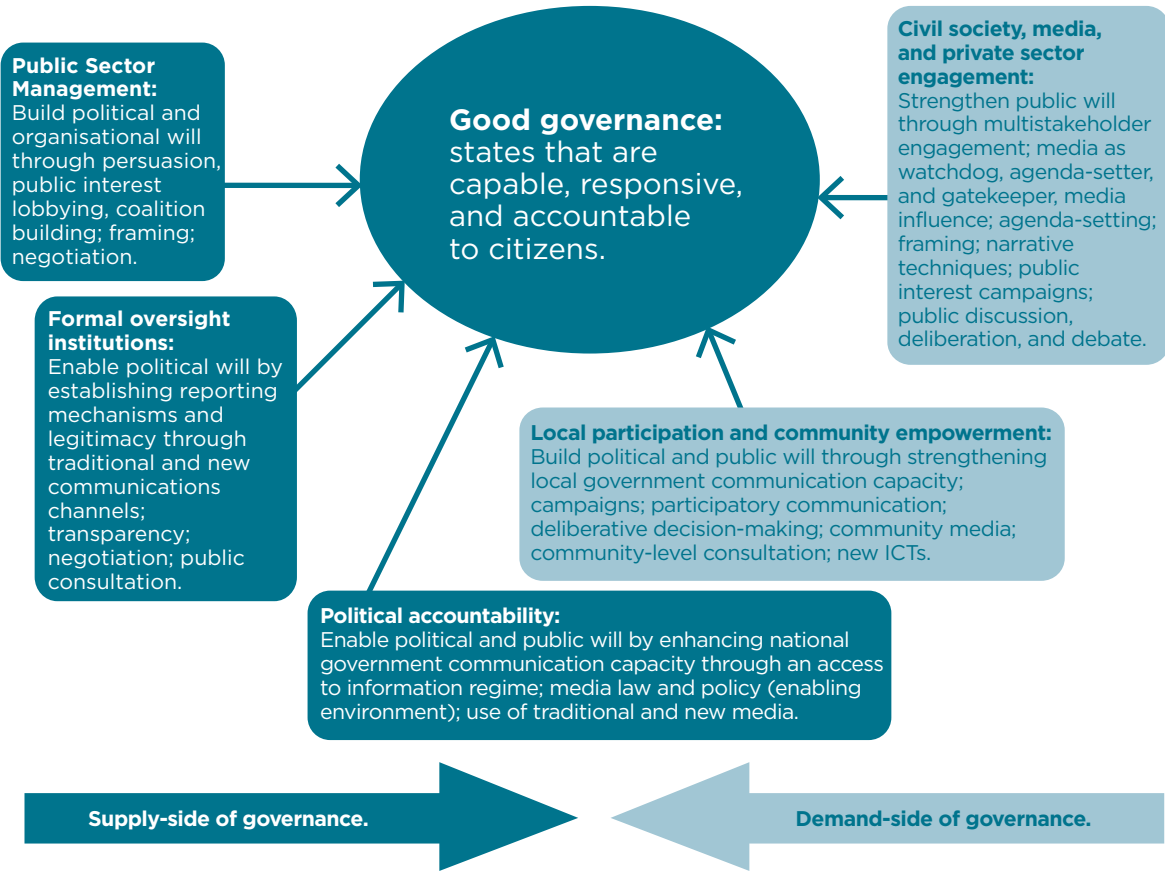
¹⁶ For more information see handbook three, *Networks and WASH governance advocacy*, available at www.wateraid.org/gtflerninghandbooks

3.2 Working with the media

The value of working with the media to get messages across was recognised from the beginning of the programme. Indeed, in Burkina Faso, the first GTF partner was a network of journalists. Most partner networks have engaged with the media, sometimes taking time to build journalists’ understanding of WASH sector and governance issues,

in order to build their interest in these issues. **The media is very important in building the political will necessary to ensure governance reforms take place and that good governance practices are sustained in the long term.** Although no WaterAid/FAN GTF partners and their media allies have addressed **all** the issues it sets out, Figure 6 provides a comprehensive picture of how media and communications can support governance advocacy.

Figure 6: The importance of media and communications in achieving good governance



Source: Communication for Governance and Accountability Programme, World Bank

Generating political will and popularising good governance ideas

Political will is essential for the successful introduction and implementation of lasting good governance reforms, not least because it requires a transfer of power between a government and its citizens.

Furthermore, in relation to governance, sustainability has to be seen in the context of changing political, economic and social circumstances. Unless there is significant cross-party and public support for them, improvements in governance will always be vulnerable to reversals whenever power changes hands or sympathetic senior officials change jobs.

Most politicians and officials worry about the consequences of greater transparency and accountability. Some may fear that introducing them may reveal patronage, or outright corruption. Others worry that it will increase their workloads and slow down decision-making processes even further, or expose them to criticism by citizens who do not understand the constraints they work under. Many simply cannot see how this type of engagement involving non-specialist citizens, who lack expertise and an overview of the sector, can possibly be of benefit.

The task of governance advocacy is to overcome these prejudices and fears. This task is easier if governance champions are not limited to NGOs and their networks, certain development partners/major donors and other specialist groups. This means that NGOs need to think strategically about which politicians could be influenced to support the cause, and what evidence will be required to persuade them to do this.

Building widespread support for better governance through public campaigns is likely to be a key element in building pressure on politicians and strengthening the political will for reform.

Popularising good governance ideas is most likely to be effective if the media are involved. For NGOs, as well as providing background briefings to a wide range of media, this may also require capacity building targeted at specific programmes or newspapers.

4. Sustainability for NGOs and their networks

4.1 Why NGOs and networks need to be sustainable

There are two reasons why high performing NGOs and their networks need to be sustainable.

Firstly, they have key roles to play, both at local and national levels, in building the capacity of sister organisations and other civil society actors, encouraging cooperation rather than competition between them, and contributing to the growth of a strong and vibrant civil society.

Secondly, NGOs and networks have a key role and responsibility in promoting the principles of good governance to governments, service providers and others, by leading by example in terms of their own internal good governance. While they are unable to ensure institutions make sustainable progress towards being more transparent and accountable, they are in an excellent position to promote these values to a wide variety of stakeholders.

In short, without quality NGOs and networks, progress towards better governance would be far slower.

Key roles for national networks, NGOs and INGOs in promoting good governance

- Linking with local level CBOs and NGOs to ensure:
 - Sector policies are guided by grassroots realities.
 - Lessons learned in the delivery and sustainability of services and local governance are reflected in government strategies and plans.
 - Local CBOs, NGOs and networks are aware of developments in national policies and programmes that affect them.
- Making government aware of:
 - Problems faced by CBOs and NGOs in trying to engage positively with local government.
 - Promoting the need for capacity building of local government staff and other local government reforms.
- Actively, and through their own approaches to advocacy:
 - Building trust between themselves and government.
 - Increasing the space for participation by civil groups.
 - Encouraging multi-stakeholder dialogue.
 - Demonstrating the benefits of transparency, accountability and responsiveness to government and service providers.
- Advocating that any gains in improved governance should be:
 - Institutionalised in policies, regulations or laws.
 - Widely implemented through explicit strategies, plans and budgets.
- Building the political will of politicians and the private sector for change.
- Influencing major multilateral and bilateral donors to:
 - Support good governance projects and programmes.
 - Assist governments with civil service, supply chain and other sector reforms.
 - Coordinate their activities and projects for greater coherence.
- Developing relationships with the media and assisting in popularising good governance messages to build widespread support among citizens.

4.2 Capacity building as a means to increase sustainability for NGOs and networks

As part of its contribution to the sustainability of its partner NGOs and networks, the WaterAid/FAN GTF programme developed a capacity needs assessment tool¹⁷.

This tool was developed in a participatory manner and aimed to assess an organisation as a whole, using an adapted version of the 7S framework¹⁸. Once gaps in capacity are identified, an organisational capacity development plan is drawn up and implemented. Improvements in organisational capacity are expected to result in more effective evidence-based dialogue with government as well as more efficient operations, communications, monitoring and evaluation that should enhance fundraising abilities.

4.3 Financing NGO and network sustainability

While capacity is a foundation for sustainability, the most pressing concern for GTF programme participants is whether they will be able to obtain grants to continue their work. Given staff, office, equipment and transport costs, and even networks that charge membership fees, they may be unable to maintain an effective organisation without outside financial support in the form of grants.

Fundraising is a special skill. As well as reflecting the interests of potential donors, a good proposal needs to present a clear, well-argued case for why the planned work is important, and a convincing explanation of how the project's projected outcomes will be achieved. In addition, it is important to be able to give an analytical account of the NGO's strengths and past successes.

¹⁷ WaterAid/FAN Governance and Transparency Fund programme (2012) *Capacity needs assessment tool*. WaterAid, London, UK. Available at: www.wateraid.org/~media/Publications/GTF-capacity-needs-assessment-tool.ashx.

¹⁸ McKinsey's 7Ss are: structure, systems, style, staff, skills, strategy and shared values.

Unfortunately, however good a proposal is, the reality is that some INGOs and bilateral donors are still focused on wells and toilets (or other material investments). While they claim to support a rights-based approach, they will only fund governance or other rights and advocacy-based work if it is attached to the promise of more 'concrete' outputs.

To overcome this bias, it is necessary to be able to identify, quantify and present the achievements of past governance projects, as well as the ones expected to happen in the project being proposed. In turn, this depends on having a strong and appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework in place. For governance programmes, the framework should be able to not only capture but also quantify changes in attitudes and behaviours; progress in the strengthening of CBOs; governance benefits from improved engagement processes etc; as well as the more usual results in terms of services delivered¹⁹.

Tips

- Many grant-givers have approval processes that take months to complete before funds actually arrive. Starting early means there is plenty of time to get to know donors, their organisations and their funding priorities.
- A basic draft proposal can be tailored to fit each donor by using their language, emphasising how the proposed work fits with their priorities, etc.
- Planning ahead also increases the chances of being able to meet with potential donors and/or invite them to visit a current project. Specialist fundraisers believe that face-to-face contact can give a significant boost to the chance of success.

Really, this means a basic draft proposal should be in place at least nine months before current funding ends.

¹⁹ See the References section for a selection of papers on monitoring and evaluation for governance programmes.

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4.4 Funding from government: A good or bad idea?

Nigeria's WASH network, the National Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (NEWSAN), was founded in 2003 to advocate policies and programmes that will ensure all Nigerians have access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.

The GTF programme has been providing support to NEWSAN's Abuja-based secretariat since 2009. Since then, NEWSAN has been involved in lobbying at national and state levels as well as providing capacity building support to its members, including GTF partners, in the country.

In 2012, the federal Ministry of Water Resources offered NEWSAN funding to coordinate its members to monitor the implementation of the ministry's WASH programme. This was unsuccessful because there were technical errors in the government's procurement process that meant the money could not be released. Hopefully, the process will be successful in 2013. If it is, this will institutionalise the role of NGOs in WASH monitoring, as well as providing them with the necessary funds.

It is yet to be seen whether local and state governments and, perhaps, the Ministry of Water Resources, react positively to the results revealed by the monitoring exercises. However, apart from these considerations, NEWSAN feels that the risks and disadvantages of taking money from the ministry for this work are small, if:

- NEWSAN and its members have strong reporting and accounting systems in place.
- NEWSAN, rather than the ministry, has control of the funds.
- The grants to NGO members make up only a small part of their overall income (to discourage dependence on government funds, which influences their reporting).
- For each NGO member, monitoring is only one of a series of activities.

5. Limits on the reach of NGOs and INGOs and implications for their sustainability strategies

As previously noted, NGOs and INGOs are not in a position to address all the elements required to ensure progress towards good governance is sustainable. Action on major reforms or local government, changes in how the sector is structured, funded and managed by national government, and the roles bilateral and multilateral donors/development partners need to play, depend on these stakeholders taking responsibility.

These factors are identified by partners as the key barriers to achieving sustainable good governance. Partners have a good understanding of the realities of local government²⁰ but the roles they can play are limited. They can build capacity of government staff in specific areas of NGO expertise, and advocate at district and national levels on issues such as participation, transparency and accountability, as well as for major reforms. Dealing with other weaknesses of local government is beyond their competence.

5.1 Local government

Better sector governance at the local level is dependent on changes in the way local government operates. However, not all local officials are willing to cooperate and, even those that wish to are not always able to do so. Some officials hide behind administrative rules and regulations, raising obstacles and objections to all new suggestions. Others simply do not have the funds to do what is needed. All will be cautious about how new ideas like regular dialogues with communities or multi-stakeholder meetings will affect their workloads and careers.

In many countries, making local government effective will require major reforms. Decentralisation of responsibilities and finances can help, but it will only succeed if, if there are also sufficient numbers of well qualified, well-equipped and, most importantly, well-managed staff, including finance and accounting staff, to undertake all planned work. In addition, sustainable reform generally requires continuous and extensive capacity building for civil servants at all levels.

This type of reform can only be addressed by national government, perhaps in cooperation with multilateral and/or bilateral donors/development partners who may provide both technical advice and financial support.

²⁰ For further discussion on local government realities see handbook four, *Engagement and advocacy for better WASH governance*, available at www.wateraid.org/gtflerninghandbooks

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5.2 National government

WASH ministries generally have a reputation of being professional in their approach, but they are also known for being massively under-funded, under-equipped, and under-valued. With the Millennium Development Goals and the right to water promoting the importance of investing in the sector, this situation is beginning to change, but there is still more progress to be made.

In addition, fragmentation of sector responsibilities across a series of ministries causes problems. For example, there are ministries that have responsibility for safe water but not for hygiene, although their remit does include livestock, forestry or the environment, making WASH issues difficult to tackle in isolation.

With multiple structural, management and funding problems to address, and with limited access to basic office equipment, it is no surprise that good governance concerns do not always seem like a top priority.

NGO networks can lobby to change all of this and try to build alliances with other stakeholders (media, politicians, bilateral/multilateral donors, regional WASH bodies, etc) to support their cause, but it is only national cabinets that can ensure it happens.

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5.3 Bilateral and multilateral donors and UN agencies

In all least developed countries, and many developing countries, the support of bilateral and multilateral donors and UN agencies plays a key role in achieving good sector governance, and ensuring that it is sustainable.

This is not only a matter of promoting good governance and providing financial and technical support to governments and NGOs/NGO networks. It is also important that they promote good governance by setting a good example themselves by becoming more accountable and transparent in their operations, and more open to dialogue with a wider range of stakeholders.

In addition, it is critical that major WASH sector donors reflect on how they can achieve much better coordination of their activities, projects and approaches in each country, so that these are coherent, prevent fragmentation and minimise the bureaucratic burden on local government offices.

National governments, the private sector, civil society groups, and their allies internationally can do their best to influence these donor agencies but final decisions are taken by national governments.

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5.4 Implications for the strategies of NGOs and their networks

The strategies of NGOs and networks need to recognise that they will not be able to address all the elements required for good governance achievements to become sustainable. Yet without these changes, their own achievements are vulnerable to changes in local and national circumstances. To address this, they need to ensure that those with the ultimate power to ensure their wider objectives are addressed are targets for their advocacy.

6. Conclusions

The key lesson emerging from the experience of the programme is that making the achievements of WASH governance programmes sustainable requires a jigsaw of activities at many different levels involving a variety of institutions. No single organisation can address all the elements required.

Achieving good governance requires a change in the relationships between governments, powerful stakeholders and citizens, which brings with it a shift in the balance of power.

As altering power relations affects some existing power holders negatively as well as benefiting those without it, sustaining these changes needs large sections of society to adopt new ideas about one another's roles and responsibilities and to be completely committed to the new principles involved.

History demonstrates that ensuring far reaching alterations in the thinking and behaviour of societies and their institutions – to the extent that they are firmly embedded and become accepted and 'natural' – takes many years. In this context, a five-year governance programme is a relatively short strategic intervention, in relation to ensuring that progress is sustainable. Indeed, few WaterAid/FAN GTF programme partners would claim that transformations in governments or communities have been total, nor that, at this point, that their sustainability can be guaranteed.

Important elements in CBO and NGO work to create sustainability have been: capacity building; linking governance advocacy to sector policies, practices or financing, rather than calling for it in the abstract; making constructive, if sometimes critical, evidence-based contributions to dialogues with government; and working with and through NGO networks.

As a result, despite the relatively short duration of the programme, there are reasons to be optimistic. Many of the elements for sustainability are in place at the community level, and more will be there by the time the programme ends. Similarly, at the national level, much has already been achieved and governance concerns are well-integrated into the thinking of networks. Together, this provides a sound foundation for future developments.

Appendix 1: Sustainability of WASH systems and hardware

A recent WaterAid report on the financial sustainability of WASH facilities shows that communities themselves are already making a large contribution to the operation and maintenance costs of infrastructure and facilities set up by governments and INGOs.

However, WaterAid has also noted²¹ that community-based management alone is not a sound basis for sustainability. It poses the following questions:

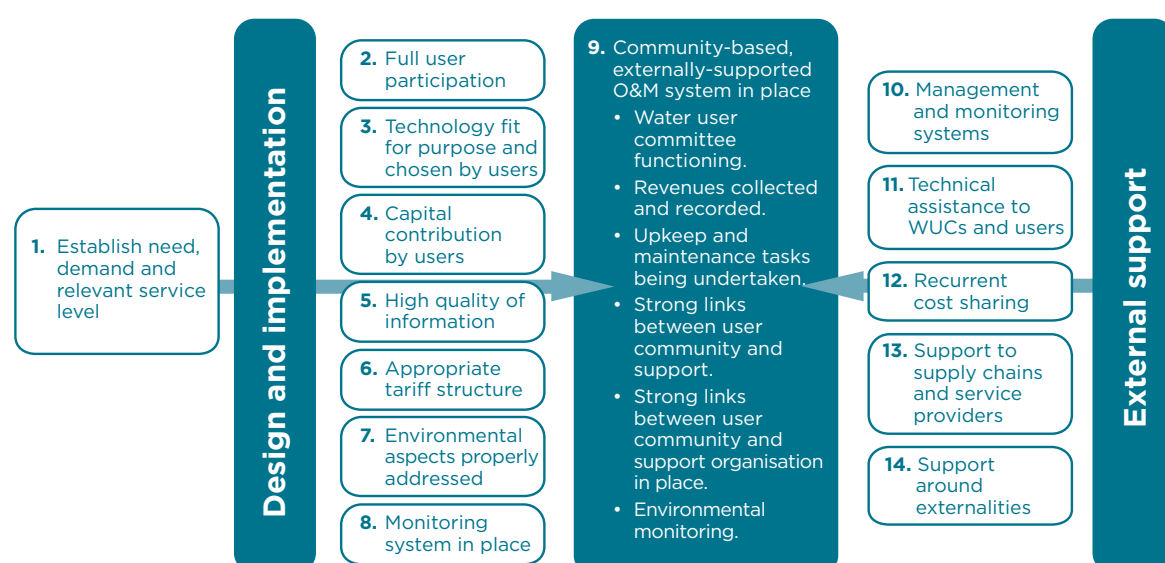
- How can community-level institutions (such as water user committees) solve major problems related to an internal breakdown of trust or unwillingness of members to serve voluntarily, in the absence of external mediation?
- What should communities do if a major technical problem arises? Where should they turn to for support?
- If user-generated revenues are insufficient to cover repairs, maintenance and eventual capital replacement, how can sustainability be assured?

- Communities are dependent on spare parts supply chains, on quality assurance of purchased hardware, and on specialist service providers. Who should support these structures, functions and providers, which lie outside the control of the community?
- What source of support can user communities turn to in the event of a livelihood or climatic shock, or in the face of an increasing demand for services because of population growth?

The answer it gives is that, for the most part, it is local government's responsibility to provide external support to resolve these problems and national government's responsibility to make sure that this support is sufficient.

WaterAid sets out a framework²² of the necessary elements for sustainable rural water facilities as follows:

Figure 7: Conceptual framework for effective externally supported community-based management of rural water supply services



²¹ WaterAid (2011) *Sustainability framework*. WaterAid, London, UK. Available at: www.wateraid.org/publications

²² Ibid.

Appendix 2: Case studies

Case study 1: FRENASAPP – Governance challenges and big business, in Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, the National Front of Sectors Affected by the Pineapple Industry (FRENASAPP) started work before the GTF programme began with support from CEDARENA and FAN Costa Rica. When the GTF programme was initiated, it seemed natural to continue supporting FRENASAPP, given their goal of strengthening stakeholders' ability to conduct advocacy and hold duty-bearers to account.

FRENASAPP is a community-based platform that gets support from a number of national organisations in Costa Rica. It focuses on getting government to regulate pineapple plantations to prevent damage to the environment, the health of workers and to neighbouring communities, and to end exploitative labour practices. One of its key strategies is to unite communities across different parts of the country that are suffering as a result of the way pineapple plantations are being run.

Bringing in close to \$700 million in 2010, pineapples are one of Costa Rica's most lucrative exports. Over the last ten years, the country increased the number of hectares it uses for pineapple cultivation by more than 300%. Many of the plantations are owned and managed by two big multinational companies: Del Monte and Dole. Other companies include Agricola Agromonte and Grupo Acon, which are Costa Rican companies, and Banacol, based in Colombia.

Impact on water

Pineapple is an extensive mono-crop that requires entirely bare land for farming. As it is being farmed in the tropics, it is highly dependent on fertilisers, herbicides, pesticides and fungicides. In the absence of proper regulation, pineapple plantations are being located on steep slopes, causing rainwater to carry chemicals into rivers, gulleys and even into aquifer mantles²³.

Milano de Siquierres

In the case of Milano de Siquierres²⁴, a pineapple plantation is located upstream from the stream the community uses to run its rural water system. In 2007, physical and chemical testing revealed that the water in their system was contaminated with pesticides, such as diuron, bromacil and triadimefon. The Ministry of Health stepped in and, as a temporary measure, insisted that water be delivered by tanker truck. As yet, no permanent solution has been found and tanker deliveries still provide the only source of safe water.

²³ In geology, the term 'aquifer' is defined as water-bearing porous soil or rock strata that yield significant amounts of water; 'mantle' describes the layer of earth between the crust and the core of the aquifer.

²⁴ See External sources of support for CBOs, p15

FRENASAPP – Alliances at community, national and international levels

The FRENASAPP platform has networked and formed alliances with other stakeholders including trade unions, professional associations and associations running community water systems, as well as cattle breeders. This last group is not a natural ally, but has also been badly affected by the expansion of pineapple farming, and their economic and political power means they are highly influential. As a result of these alliances, the movement for regulating the pineapple industry has gained a higher profile and become much stronger.

FRENASAPP has also contacted a number of organisations active in Europe or European markets, including Consumers International, FIAN International (Fighting Hunger with Human Rights), the Habitat International Coalition (HIC), and Save the Rainforest, as well as the UK newspaper *The Guardian*, which published a number of stories on the issue and produced a video on the labour, environmental, social and public health impacts of pineapple farming²⁵.

FRENASAPP has been able to attract the attention of, and engage with, high-ranking officials but believes that citizens' participation needs to go beyond merely being heard; they must also be involved in decision-making on issues that concern them.

Domestic legislation means that national and local government support is required to open up spaces for citizenship participation, but there is a struggle to ensure that this happens and that the spaces work effectively. FRENASAPP claims that these spaces have been weakened over the last few years because of the high priority the government has given to foreign investment, especially into mono crops like pineapple. In this context, meeting with affected communities and listening to what they have to say is simply a way of keeping them quiet and avoiding social conflict.

FRENASAPP believes that progress was made in this area as a result of pressure exerted by communities; for example, they made themselves heard, and the relevant ministers responded and showed accountability. However, despite their efforts, the expectations of communities belonging to FRENASAPP are not high. They are frustrated that even though their court cases have been won, and the issues that they have been struggling with have been widely reported in the media, both nationally and internationally, a comprehensive solution has not yet been provided. However, they have ruled out taking radical action such as staging road blockages and going on strike, as this could have a negative impact on public opinion.

Lessons

- The communities belonging to FRENASAPP have learned that, in their context, only public pressure, such as making public complaints and using the media, results in them being heard.
- Winning a court case does not necessarily mean that a problem has been solved. Advocacy needs to continue in order to find a genuine and lasting solution.
- Lack of funds is seen by the communities as being a major obstacle to their advocacy. This has restricted the extent to which community organisation can take place and the amount of legal and media support they are able to mobilise. Some planned major activities have had to be cancelled due to a lack of funds.

²⁵ These newspaper reports are available at: www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/oct/02/truth-about-pineapple-production?intcmp=239. The video can be seen at: www.guardian.co.uk/environment/video/2010/oct/01/pineapple-trade-costa-rica?intcmp=239

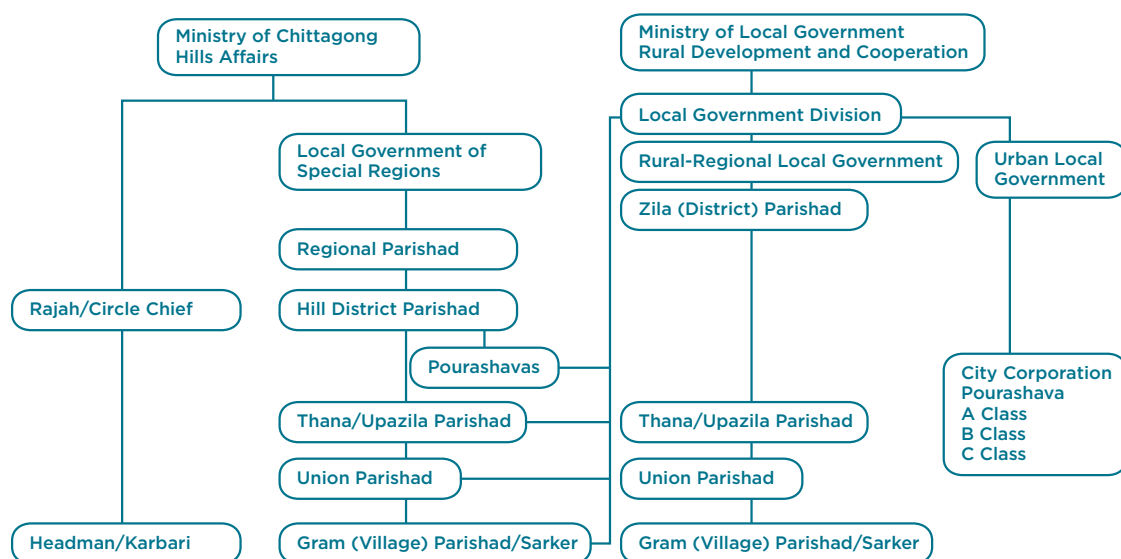
Case study 2: NGO Forum, Bangladesh - Involving respected local citizens

In Moulvibazar district, Bangladesh, GTF partner, the NGO Forum for Public Health Development, and its local partner NGOs have persuaded local doctors, teachers, faith leaders, the media and respected local people to join civil society forums on water and sanitation that interact regularly with local government.

The civil society forum at district level is a 25-member committee that has established an effective relationship with government policy-makers regarding WASH issues in hard-to-reach areas. The forum is engaged in advocating for poor people's rights and entitlements, and better governance and transparency from service providers. It holds evidence-based dialogues with other rights-based forums and with the government at district, Upazila and Union Parishad levels to promote pro-poor service provision and the need for transparent budgeting by Union Parishads.

The NGO forum built the capacity of CSO forum members to carry out advocacy work and sensitised them to rights-based approaches, the Right to Information act and other key policies.

Figure 8: Local government structure in Bangladesh²⁶



Source: Tofael Ahmed, 2002

²⁶ Tofael Ahmed (2002) in Aubert P (2006) *Actors of local governance: Information on project approaches and capacity building material / Capacity building needs assessment of Union Parishads*. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Bangladesh. Available at: www.sdc.org.bd

In 2012, this district-level forum brought together 126 representatives of civil society with the Deputy District Commissioner, the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner and Executive Magistrate.

Involving senior government officials resulted in the CSO forum gaining increased credibility with district officials. The CSO representatives took the opportunity to develop a plan of action and revitalise their positive relationships with service providers and duty-bearers while mobilising communities.

The CSO forum has become a regular part of the District Sanitation Taskforce, which has been prompted to monitor the WASH situation more closely. Evidence-based advocacy has resulted in reduced corruption in service delivery at a local level, something that is essential to ensuring pro-poor service delivery.

Alongside the district CSO forum, similar forums have been established at Upazilla level. These forums provide a good bridge between communities, CBOs, service providers and government officials. Their positive impact on WASH services led the district authorities to push for WASH taskforce committees to be set up at Upazila and Union Parishad levels, to give usually excluded groups a platform to express their views and voice their needs.

The results have been good. Dialogue with district, Upazila and Union Parishad officials and service providers is continuing, and the forums are recognised as useful partners to work with. Citizens' charters have been adopted and displayed by local government in 67 Union Parishads, and open budgeting has been adopted in 21 Union Parishads. In one Union Parishad, Rajaghat, a WASH budget of Taka 200,000 was allocated last year, compared to the previous year when no money was allocated.

Lessons

- The Bangladesh experience provides an example for other GTF NGO partners that are looking to ensure communities have long-term voluntary external support. Linking with respected citizens living locally, including, for example, teachers, doctors, lawyers, business people, faith leaders and local politicians, could result in alliances that would help communities to achieve their objectives.
- However, NGOs should note that the CSO forum members received capacity building training and sensitisation on rights, advocacy, and WASH policies and practices. The NGO forum assumes that further facilitation and support will be required on an occasional basis in the future.
- Whether or not formal forums are formed, support from these allies might include, helping to engage local officials, accessing information, participating in multi-stakeholder dialogues, providing problem solving advice, and writing or translating documents.
- Civil society forum members will be a potential source of help and advice when the NGO forum's work in the district comes to an end.

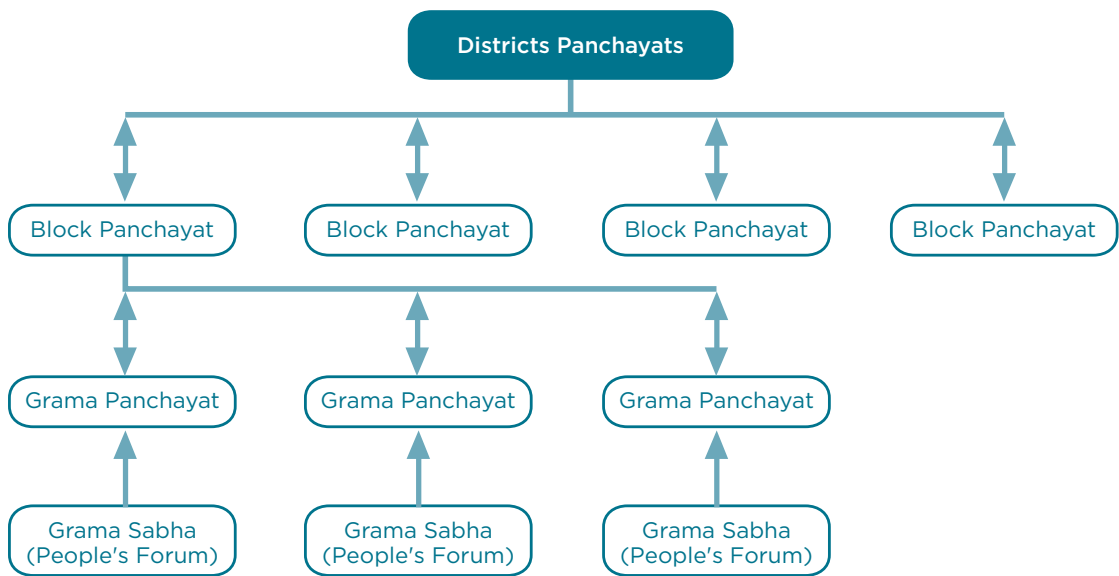
Case study 3: SATHEE – Access centres in Jharkhand state, India

GTF partner, the Society for Advancement in Tribes, Health, Education, Environment (SATHEE), has established 12 ‘access centres’ in the districts where it works in Jharkhand state. Local communities and frontline government workers can go to these centres for advice, capacity building, to submit and follow up on applications to local government, or for other resources. The centres also act as a venue for interface meetings between government officials and community representatives.

Before setting up an access centre, SATHEE meets with local government officers to inform them of its plans, and build support for their operations. It is generally recommended that local governments are made aware of upcoming activities, but in a state like Jharkhand, where political tensions are high due to the presence of Maoist insurgents, it is absolutely essential.

After everyone has been informed, SATHEE staff and village WASH committee members identify a venue to set up and begin running the centre. Access centres are run by community volunteers together with SATHEE staff.

Figure 9: Elected local government in India



Note: The above structure is correct for India in general. But some states use different terminology and add other levels. Andhra Pradesh, for example, has the same three-tier structure but different names and another layer. They use Zilla Parishad instead of District Panchayat, and Mandal Parishad between the Block and the Grama Panchayat.

In the remote locations where SATHEE works, having an access centre makes it much easier for village water and sanitation committees to file applications and follow up on issues. Their presence has decreased transaction costs for village committees and increased the number of applications being made for WASH services.

Access centres hold regular meetings with local government officers to find out about new government schemes and directives/circulars before passing this information on to community groups. Additional support is provided to village committees on the use of community-based monitoring tools and how to prepare an advocacy plan. To date, the centres have filed more than 300 applications for handpump repairs or the installation of new handpumps. More than 50 of these applications have already been resolved.

Challenges

Many of the access centres are still being run by SATHEE staff (under the GTF programme) in private properties. To achieve sustainability, SATHEE plans to persuade the Gram Panchayats to give space to the access centres and to take overall responsibility for their functions – supported by community volunteers and sympathetic local citizens.

Jeetlal Roy's story

"I live in Monahpur village. My father is a farmer. After stopping school at Grade 10, I became a farmer too. Families in my village had no access to safe water or toilets.

"SATHEE came to my village in 2011, and called a Gram Sabha (people's forum²⁷) meeting in which a village water and sanitation committee (VWSC) was formed. I was chosen to be one of its members and was trained in how to use the community-based monitoring tool and others. I volunteered to follow up on the water and sanitation issues.

"In April 2012, with the support of SATHEE, an access centre was opened to follow up on all issues regarding water and sanitation in our locality. After two months, SATHEE staff came to my village again and held a meeting of VWSC in the presence of the Gram Panchayat chief, Mangal Murmu. He took an interest in strengthening the capacity of the VWSC and especially in the access centre. Mr Murmu took responsibility for running the access centre in his house until the Gram Panchayat building was constructed. And I was made responsible at the centre for maintaining the records and registers.

"Since the establishment of the access centre, more than 42 handpumps have been repaired [out of 45 applications submitted]. 623 families have submitted applications through their respective VWSCs and the access centre has taken responsibility for processing the applications and following up with the relevant authorities. Now all the families have got the funds in their VWSC accounts. In addition, working at the centre has given me confidence in dealing with government officials."

27 The Gram Sabha is a meeting of all adults entitled to vote (over 18) who live in the area covered by a Gram Panchayat. Gram Panchayats are the lowest elected level of local government. A Gram Panchayat must have at least 500 people of voting age, so in rural areas may be made up of a number of villages. The maximum size of a Gram Panchayat varies considerably between the states in India, but can have populations as large as 20,000.

Case study 4: Acting alone – Narayan Prasad, India

Narayan Prasad is the remote village home of 19 scheduled tribe families situated deep in the forests of Jagannath Prasad block, Ganjam district, Odisha. Of the 19 households there, 12 are classified as being below the poverty line.

Like many other villages in the area, the village is cut off from the rest of the world during the rainy season. Even in the dry season, the nearest road is eight kilometres away down a narrow jungle path. Like many remote villages worldwide, it had been ignored by the government and service providers.

As part of their overall programme, GTF partner, Gram Vikas, had organised and mobilised the community to lobby the local government for sanitation facilities. To build their capacity, village leaders attended leadership development training and Right to Information (RTI) awareness camps. This resulted in successful advocacy by the villagers – all the households now have access to individual toilets.

In 2010, their neighbouring village, Kadaligada, was connected to electricity via a government scheme. The Narayan Prasad community approached the distribution agency to ask for the electricity supply to be extended to their village too. They were not given a clear response and the situation remained unchanged.

The village leadership decided to make use of the Right to Information act to demand a response from government and the service provider. An RTI application was filed at the office of the head of the district in mid-March 2011. This was forwarded to the service provider SOUTHCO and then to the Chief Engineer of the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation. The Chief Engineer replied, informing the villagers that ‘the rural electrification works in the village are under progress and the village shall be charged by December 2011’.

A few months later, a survey for electrification was done and a contractor started the initial work to install poles. However, the work soon came to a standstill, as the contractor said it was too difficult to transport concrete poles and service wire through the dense forest.

The community decided to file a second RTI application to the District Rural Development Agency in April 2012 asking when the electrification work would be completed. A government officer then visited the village to confirm the status of the work, but after he left nothing happened.

After a few weeks, the community received a letter asking them to contribute to the cost of providing information to SOUTHCO within a stipulated timeframe. The letter was in English and the villagers did not understand the content. By the time it had been explained to them, their payment was late and their application was rejected.

Nevertheless, the community was determined to continue to push for their legal entitlement to electricity. Without any guidance or support from Gram Vikas, and despite the distance involved, they decided to go to Ganjam’s biggest town, Berhampur, to visit the office of the company responsible for power infrastructure, SPML.

Their lobby visit resulted in a message being sent to the contractor, who resumed work within the week. The villagers provided voluntary labour for digging pits and cutting down tree branches and the installation of poles and house wiring was completed in a few weeks. But the electricity was still not connected.

In July 2012, one of the village leaders went to a workshop on electricity, organised by Gram Vikas in partnership with another NGO. He was able to raise the issue with the government's executive engineer and the manager of SOUTHCO, who promised to look into the matter and take appropriate steps for 'charging' the grid. "When I returned to the village next day," he said, "I could see that my village was electrified."

Their success in bringing electricity to their village against many odds has boosted the confidence and unity of this marginalised tribal community. They are now planning advocacy to have a road and a school built.

Narayan Prasad proves that initiatives for capacity building and community empowerment produce sustainable results, even in remote tribal villages, if accompanied by efforts to develop and nurture effective leadership skills at a grassroots level and impart essential knowledge on rights and entitlements.

Lessons

- Communities with positive experiences of using advocacy skills and with knowledge of their rights and entitlements are capable of acting alone.
- Good leadership is important to maintain momentum.
- Occasional external help can make an important difference in helping communities to achieve their objectives.

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Monitoring and evaluation of governance programmes

(all summaries taken from GSDRC website)

Alsop R and Heinsohn N (2005) *Measuring empowerment in practice: Structuring analysis and framing indicators*, *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3,510*. World Bank, Washington DC, USA.
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Garcia M (2011) *Micro-methods in evaluating governance interventions. Evaluation working papers*. German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Available at: www.bmz.de/en/what_we_do/approaches/evaluation/Evaluation/methods/index.html

Holland J and Thirkell A (2009) *Measuring change and results in voice and accountability work, DFID working paper 34*. DFID, London, UK
This adapts DFID's capability, accountability and responsiveness (CAR) governance framework for use with voice and accountability work. The costs and benefits of poor people's voices being heard needs to be measured and reveal the obstacles to poor people's engagement. Voice and accountability indicator data can combine observable and measurable changes in behaviour with perception scoring of the quality of those changes.

Jones H (2011) *A guide to monitoring and evaluating policy influence*. Overseas Development Institute, London, UK
This paper provides an overview of approaches to the monitoring and evaluation of policy influencing activities. It suggests that while monitoring and evaluation in this field is challenging, information can be generated that can be used to improve programmes and provide accountability for funds. The key is for policy influencing teams to recognise the value of monitoring and evaluation to their work and to incorporate it into their practices from the beginning of a project or programme.

Jupp D and Ibn Ali S with Barahona C (2010) *Measuring empowerment? Ask them – Quantifying qualitative outcomes from people's own analysis*. Sida Studies in *Evaluation* 2010:1. Sida, Stockholm. Presents the experience of a social movement in Bangladesh, which measured empowerment by letting the members themselves explain what benefits they acquired from involvement and by developing a means to measure change over time. These measures have also been subjected to numerical analysis to provide convincing quantitative data which satisfies the demands of results-based management. The study shows how participatory assessments can both empower and transform relationships while generating reliable statistics for qualitative dimensions.

McGee R and Gaventa J (2011) *Shifting power? Assessing the impact of transparency and accountability*, Working paper no 383. Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, UK. This paper argues that current approaches to impact assessment in this field are inadequate: methodological wars are overshadowing key issues of power relations and politics. A learning approach to impact assessment is needed, giving power and politics a central place in monitoring and evaluation systems. Instead of looking at the extent to which the desired impact was achieved, it is important to look at what happened as a result of the initiative, how it happened and why. It is also important to test and revise assumptions about theories of change continually and to ensure the engagement of marginalised people in assessment processes.

UNDP (2007, 2nd ed) *Governance indicators: A user's guide*. United Nations Development Programme, Oslo, Norway. There is considerable debate about the validity of different methodological approaches to measurement, and increasing recognition that measuring governance is itself a political process.



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