



Evidence-based advocacy for WASH

Through the Voice for Change Partnership (V4CP), SNV strengthened civil society organisations (CSOs) to effectively voice their views. Jointly, V4CP contributed to structural change and effective solutions, ensuring that low-income and marginalised communities' interests are included in government and business policies and practices. This learning brief presents key advocacy successes of the V4CP programme in the area Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), with specific attention to sustainable sanitation and hygiene for all. It outlines the most effective approaches for improving the enabling environment, including influencing policies and stakeholders.

Introduction

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) set up a policy framework focusing on capacity strengthening of civil society for 'lobbying and advocacy'. Under this framework, SNV - partnering with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) - led the V4CP, a programme focusing on evidence-based advocacy to improve the enabling environment. The programme, active in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya and Rwanda, addressed four focus areas: Renewable Energy, Food & Nutrition Security, Resilience, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) - with close attention to gender, social inclusion and climate.

The V4CP programme empowered CSOs to engage with decision-makers by providing sound arguments and a solid evidence base, backing the proposed sectoral changes. The partnership enhanced CSOs' capacities in terms of leadership, the use of evidence and thematic knowledge, advocacy skills, and organisational sustainability. Jointly with the CSOs working on WASH, V4CP contributed to systemic change in countries by embedding community interests into policies and practices.

Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All & Voice for Change Partnership

Alignment with other SNV programmes ensures that efforts are complementary and can jointly result in systemic changes. It also means ensuring consistency in messaging towards stakeholders. For example, the rural sanitation activities in Ghana, Kenya and Indonesia all followed SNV's [Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All \(SSH4A\) approach](#) and existing projects. The V4CP programme for WASH was specifically designed to build on successes and address challenges faced in SSH4A projects. All three SSH4A projects provided a strong foundation for V4CP advocacy efforts.

In **Indonesia**, V4CP played a critical role in reinforcing Government ownership, as well as in scaling the approach within Lampung Province and to the Province of West Sumatra. This is thanks to the joint work of both V4CP and SSH4A, as well of course as the efforts and commitment of the Government.

In **Kenya**, V4CP focused on increased prioritisation and budget allocation for sanitation. The increased allocations reinforced the work initiated by SSH4A. It used evidence to ensure prioritisation and increased sustainability by working with CSOs to ensure Open Defecation and other sanitation challenges are voiced by citizens and taken up by local decision makers.

In **Ghana**, V4CP focused on strengthening systems structures to increase funding for the sanitation sector, and to ensure lasting behaviour change by amplifying leadership from national and district governments and traditional authorities. The evidence-based approach led to the prioritisation, approval and passage of localised sanitation bylaws. In the Nandom Municipal, SSH4A and V4CP played a key role in increasing access to sanitation and the municipal being declared ODF.



Regional minister at launch of post-ODF strategy in Nandom, Ghana

WASH advocacy focus areas

The CSOs worked on increased access to inclusive, affordable and reliable WASH services for all (Sustainable Development Goal 6), whilst addressing specific issues in their countries.

In **Ghana**, existing WASH policies, strategies and guidelines were outmoded, and implementation was non-existent. Ineffective coordination on sanitation and hygiene at national level, including weak capacities of institutions, did not help. At local level, there was limited consultation and collaboration among Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), CSOs, service providers, traditional authorities and other district and community-level actors. There was low private sector involvement and investment. Little attention was given to inclusiveness and inequalities regarding access to services. The focus of the V4CP team in Ghana was thus to increase equity and access to sustainable, equitable and affordable sanitation services and products. It sought to improve the responsiveness of duty bearers and the private sector to the demands of the communities.

To address access to sanitation in **Indonesia**, the government developed a Community-Led Total Sanitation Programme (STBM) in 2006 to improve sanitation supply chains and the enabling environment and stimulate consumer demand. However, implementing the programme across the country's 17,000 islands proved challenging. This was due to local government's low capacity

and political willingness to implement, as well as limited understanding of the impact of poor sanitation within local governments and community. Thus, V4CP Indonesia's goal was to advocate the prioritisation and district wide implementation of and budget implementation for STBM, as well as better institutionalisation and stronger collaboration and inclusive regulation. This contributes to the commitment of the Government to achieve 100% Universal Sanitation Access in Indonesia.

Access to (safely managed or basic) sanitation in **Kenya** was and is a major challenge, with overall coverage at 29%, rural coverage at 27%, and urban coverage at 35%¹. The low levels of access to improved sanitation have been linked to low levels of investments and a lack of prioritisation for the sanitation sector. This is coupled with a lack of accountability and transparency mechanisms and poor inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms between the Ministries of Water & Sanitation and Irrigation, Health, and Environment and Natural Resources. The goal of the V4CP team in Kenya was to increase access to improved sanitation in Homa Bay, Elgeyo Marakwet and Kericho counties through increased investments, improved accountability and transparency and better inter-ministerial coordination among ministries delivering core functions.

CSOs in all three countries, with SNV support, generated new, contextualised evidence in support of their advocacy strategies. This included studies presenting local WASH-related data, research on the impact of pro-poor guidelines, the role of private sector in WASH service delivery, as well as budget analyses and allocation for sanitation. As a result, the CSOs were able to speak with a greater voice about policy improvements and better provision of services.

WASH advocacy successes

Evidence increases awareness and informs stakeholders

Creation and use of evidence are important in advocacy. Building strong local constituencies and actively involving citizens in evidence generation and use adds a human-face and validates demand

for improvements. The CSOs were actively involved in generating, interpreting and sharing evidence to inform and convince government and other stakeholders.

In **Ghana**, WASH CSOs comprehensively assessed existing WASH policies in 2018, including the Environmental Sanitation Policy (ESP) and the National Water Policy. It showed the need to map the indicators of the existing ESP to the SDG indicators. These findings were presented in a communique and shared with the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources. This contributed to the government's decision to review the policy and the invitation of one of the CSOs (Intervention Forum) to participate in the review process.

In order to create a compelling story and convince key decision makers to prioritise and budget for sanitation, V4CP in **Kenya** researched "[the effects of poor sanitation on the health and wellbeing of communities in Kericho, Homa Bay and Elgeyo Marakwet counties](#)". This resulted in a wide range of reports and advocacy products used by CSOs in a broad range of advocacy activities. National media produced a [TV documentary](#) based on the research. CSOs were also trained in how to develop advocacy strategies and advocacy briefs using local evidence around identified sanitation challenges.

In **Indonesia**, CSOs collaborated with researchers and a local university on nine studies on sanitation behaviour and facility, sanitation supply chain, and private sector engagement. Recommendations for better STBM implementation were disseminated through meetings with local government. CSOs used the research findings to approach the private sector and advocate for their involvement in the sanitation movement. CSOs also used real-time sanitation monitoring data (STBM Smart) to advocate the prioritisation of sanitation from key leaders.

To increase awareness of sanitation issues, the V4CP team piggybacked on another SNV WASH programme, under which the Youth Sanitation Concern (YSC) network was formed. YSC has actively raised attention for sanitation and hygiene issues including through the power of social media. Since YSC's founding, SNV has been an active mentor and supporter of the network – helping build today and tomorrow's behaviour change agents.

¹ Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2017. Special focus on inequalities. New York: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization (WHO), 2019

Networks and alliance building for joined agenda setting

CSOs have been actively seeking collaboration through networks and alliances to set and influence the sanitation agenda of local and national governments.

In **Ghana**, V4CP saw the need to advance the district-level sanitation and hygiene advocacy agenda to the national level. The aim was to trigger sectoral changes, such as an inclusive sector policy and improved sanitation governance structures, at the top. Changes at this level would not only help sustain progress, they would also strongly influence improved sanitation policy implementation and service delivery at the district level. Thus, V4CP supported the formation of a national Alliance for WASH Advocacy (A4WA). The alliance pulled together a wide range of NGOs, CSOs and networks in the WASH sector. By working in tandem they unified, and thereby amplified, their voice for change. As a result, they managed to inspire the national Government to step up efforts to improve Ghana's outdated sanitation governance structures, policies and processes.

In **Kenya**, the national level CSO (IEA) worked with county-based civil society networks, activating and strengthening them. A specific group of CSOs focused on WASH in each of the sub-counties and those representing specific groups e.g. people living with disabilities and youth, were identified to ensure WASH needs across the

county were represented. Through the voices of many, the advocacy efforts in the counties have gained recognition. The CSO networks have grown, professionalised and are formalising their partnerships with the respective county governments.

In **Indonesia**, CSOs used the sanitation task force (Pokja AMPL) in each district as an entry point to re-activate the group and advocated for more inclusive members. It not only involved government staff from various agencies, but also CSOs, private sector, community and women's groups and community leaders. This task force played a critical role as allies to put sanitation on the map. Also, CSOs built an alliance with media which not only strengthened CSOs' reputations related to sanitation, but also increased the sanitation awareness among the wider public.

Social accountability mechanisms

To be effective agents of social accountability, CSOs must be able to access information, mobilize citizens, make their voices heard and negotiate a response from public authorities.

In **Kenya**, IEA developed a social audit toolkit and trained CSO networks on how to conduct social audits on sanitation projects. From 2018 to 2020 CSO networks conducted social audits, validated findings with county government representatives and other stakeholders and used the findings to advocate for sanitation service delivery.



CSO representative during a media engagement, in Lampung, Indonesia

In **Ghana**, increased citizen participation in service delivery was established through the formation of citizens monitoring teams at the MMDAs level, the so-called “District Sanitation and Hygiene Advocacy Teams” (DSHATs). This to promote transparency and accountability. The DSHATs are comprised of 12 members who represent selected communities, women’s groups, youth groups, unit committees, landlord associations, Area/Zonal Council Chairpersons and Persons with Disability (PWDs). V4CP CSOs advised the DSHATs on how to engage the District Assembly so that they could push citizens’ access to safe sanitation facilities up the political agenda. Members work with the district authorities and the community and are responsible for evidence-based advocacy on sanitation and hygiene issues.

In **Indonesia**, the CSOs have become actively involved in the Pokja AMPL task force at district level. The working group served as a platform to consult between government and other stakeholders on sanitation policies and the roll-out of said policies. It is in this working group that progress is being monitored and government is held to account.

Policy and budget influencing

The V4CP CSOs successfully influenced local policies and budget allocation, working with local governments and relevant stakeholders.

In **Ghana**, CSOs advocated for the review of existing outdated sanitation bylaws in all eight MMDAs. The sanitation bylaws were developed to ensure compliance and enforcement of inclusive sustainable sanitation practices. CSOs first set the agenda at stakeholder coordination meetings for it to be a key discussion point and influenced the commitment of the duty bearers to have these bylaws reviewed and approved. These bylaws were also a tool to create the enabling environment for the private sector to engage in sanitation and hygiene service provision effectively. The CSOs led in training Environmental Health Officers on sensitization and enforcement of the bylaws. Currently all MMDAs have reviewed and approved the bylaws, with some gazetting for implementation.

In **Kenya**, IEA trained CSO networks on how to conduct pre-budget hearings during which proposals for WASH priorities and investments are made and consolidated. These hearings resulted

in the creation of alternative budget memos which were presented during round-table meetings with Members of the County Assembly. Proposals made were taken up in the next year’s budget and Five-Year County Integrated Development Plans and Annual Development Plans.

In **Indonesia**, CSOs focused on advocating the utilisation of village funds for sanitation. Each village has budget for village development, often used for road rehabilitation or construction. CSOs influenced the village government to use the money for improved sanitation services, specifically to support low-income community members and other vulnerable people. In addition, CSOs advocated for alternative funding for sanitation, like the use of Zakat funds. CSOs advocated that low-income communities and disadvantaged groups (including women and people with disabilities) should be given additional support to gain access to sanitation and include this within the “Sustainable STBM Regulation” in Pringsewu district, “Universal Access to Sanitation Acceleration Regulation” in the Sijunjung, and “STBM Regulation” in Padang Pariaman district. Overall, CSOs successfully advocated for at least six Bupati (Head of District) regulation and two District regulations related to STBM and sanitation.

Increased access or improved sanitation

The V4CP CSOs successfully influenced local policies by working with local governments and other relevant stakeholders, resulting in improved service delivery and increased access to sanitation.

In **Ghana**, the programme led to the prioritization of sanitation and hygiene at the local level by influencing agenda setting and engaging in policy development and improved participation of the private sector in sanitation and hygiene issues. The collaboration between V4CP and SNV’s SSH4A – Results Based Finance project led to [Ghana’s first declared District-wide ODF status](#) which combined the use of evidence-based advocacy and results-based financing to improve sanitation service delivery. Improving civic space and accountability led to the formation of Municipal/District Sanitation and Hygiene Advocacy Teams (DSHATs) that continuously engage duty bearers on sanitation and hygiene interventions. Wa, East Gonja, West Gonja, Nzema East and Jomoro Municipal all currently have very active private sector platforms with private actors leading in

community-based sensitization of household ownership of sanitation facilities, including handwashing facilities and practices.

In **Indonesia**, the V4CP programme contributed to the acceleration of [sanitation access and achievement of ODF](#) in three initial district programme areas (Pringsewu, Lampung Selatan, and Sijunjung District), consisting of more than 2 million people. Various outcomes led to ODF status, including the collaboration between the SSH4A and V4CP programmes. Firstly, all four CSOs highlighted their increased capacities on leadership, advocacy, and sanitation knowledge. In Indonesia, after a series of capacity building activities, CSOs started to re-activate the sanitation task group (Pokja AMPL). Pokja AMPL is the government platform at local level consisting of various government agencies that play a role on sanitation development. CSOs, however, also advocated for a more inclusive task group, and involved CSOs, private sector, and community groups in the agenda setting on sanitation.

In **Kenya**, there has been increased allocation for sanitation programmes in the three counties and increased deliberate effort by county governments to improve service delivery based on the social audits reports for sanitation projects at county level. Discussions towards better sanitation coordination is picking up with key departments participating in joint forums on sanitation e.g. during the County Assembly round tables. County sanitation plans adopted in all counties provide a channel for better coordination efforts. CSO efforts for sanitation budget codes have been long drawn although at national level there is a committee now seating to lobby treasury for this. This success can be attributed to several factors enabled through V4CP project, among them IEA linkage to institutions and groups working on sanitation at county level which enabled the expanded partnership for budget transparency and WASH.

Effective approaches

Based on the results and learnings from the V4CP, several approaches have proven effective for influencing the enabling environment. They are interlinked and can be applied depending on the specific context, the status of the sector, as well as the capabilities of (government and other) stakeholders.

Increase citizen's participation

CSOs play a crucial role in accelerating systems change and mobilising citizens' voices. Empowerment of CSOs includes enhancing their legitimacy through increased capacities, accountability, transparency, and relations with their constituency. V4CP, through CSOs, effectively worked with different citizenry, like Youth Advocates, DSHATs, and district/county civil society networks. V4CP focused on building their capacity on sanitation and broader WASH issues and giving them a voice as advocates working with local policy makers. Awareness raising and capacity strengthening activities directed at key local actors are vital to ensuring local ownership and sustainable embedding. Examples include training on how to engage the media, on how to use evidence for advocacy, on how to analyse the budget cycle, and doing social audits.

The role of evidence in influencing policy development

The V4CP experience showed that contextualised and up-to-date evidence (including local data and making use of showcasing best-practices) is essential to influence policy processes. It supports the advocate to be taken seriously, educates decision-makers and forms a basis for policies that sufficiently consider the needs of marginalised groups. Involvement of (local) universities and research institutes helps increasing credibility of the research and findings. But, having credible evidence is one thing. Effectively translating the same evidence in different formats for different audiences is also key. Effective dissemination of the evidence, through advocacy ready products, to key audiences is crucial. This, with communication adapted to raise awareness, provides a thorough understanding and motivates them into action.

Alignment of the sector

Societal changes are only achieved effectively when stakeholders involved align vision and strategies, harmonise their efforts and join forces. Only once stakeholders are sufficiently aligned, can they share valuable data and experiences, jointly setting the agenda and taking action. This can be done through national technical working groups, or national level processes like joint sector reviews. CSOs can play a vital role in the facilitation of multi-stakeholder platforms, seeking willingness amongst key actors to collaborate and ensuring sustainability of changes.



CSOs conducting a social audit in Homabay County, Kenya

Alliance building to enhance policy dialogue

The full potential of advocacy results comes to fruition through collaboration. The involvement of a broad group of stakeholders in policy processes has proven an effective way to move policy processes forward and ensure sector input is incorporated in policies, strategies and regulations. It increases mutual accountability, ownership and commitment between policy makers and relevant stakeholders, which is crucial especially in difficult contexts where lack of trust is prevalent. And it supports knowledge sharing and coordination between key actors, leading to a stronger and more conducive policy environment.

Increase coordination within government

WASH issues fall under responsibilities of various ministries and government institutions. To ensure alignment between government policies, regulations, budgets and programmes, it is imperative that those involved are equally aware and capacitated on the advocacy issues and coordinate their efforts. Civil society can play a role by providing the necessary knowledge and

evidence and facilitating coordination between different government stakeholders.

Support local governments in developing & implementing programmes

To ensure that inclusive policies and programmes benefit the poorest and marginalised citizens, local authorities need to be capacitated on advocacy issues. WASH targets and activities must be incorporated in local or regional policies and plans, especially in decentralised political systems. Support to local authorities is an effective way to ensure plans are developed, budget is allocated and spent, and activities are effectively implemented.

Strategic Partnership at a glance

Title: Voice for Change Partnership (V4CP)

Partners: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS), Embassies of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and 50 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the six project countries

Duration: January 2016 - December 2020

CSO partners in V4CP WASH



New Energy - Ghana



PKBI SUMBAR

MITRA BENTALA

YKWS
YAYASAN KONSERVASI WAY SEPUTH
Mencintai Kelestarian



SNV (2020). Evidence-based advocacy for WASH.

SNV

SNV is a not-for-profit international development organisation that makes a lasting difference in the lives of people living in poverty by helping them raise incomes and access basic services. We focus on three sectors and have a long-term, local presence in over 25 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Our team of more than 1,300 staff is the backbone of SNV.

Cover photo

Participants at a V4CP-organised WASH exchange visit in Indonesia

V4CP WASH Advisors:

Reinilde Eppinga (Kenya),
Arti Indallah (Indonesia),
Theresa Swanzy Baffoe (Ghana)

For more information:

Sharon Roose
Senior WASH Advisor

sroose@snv.org

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