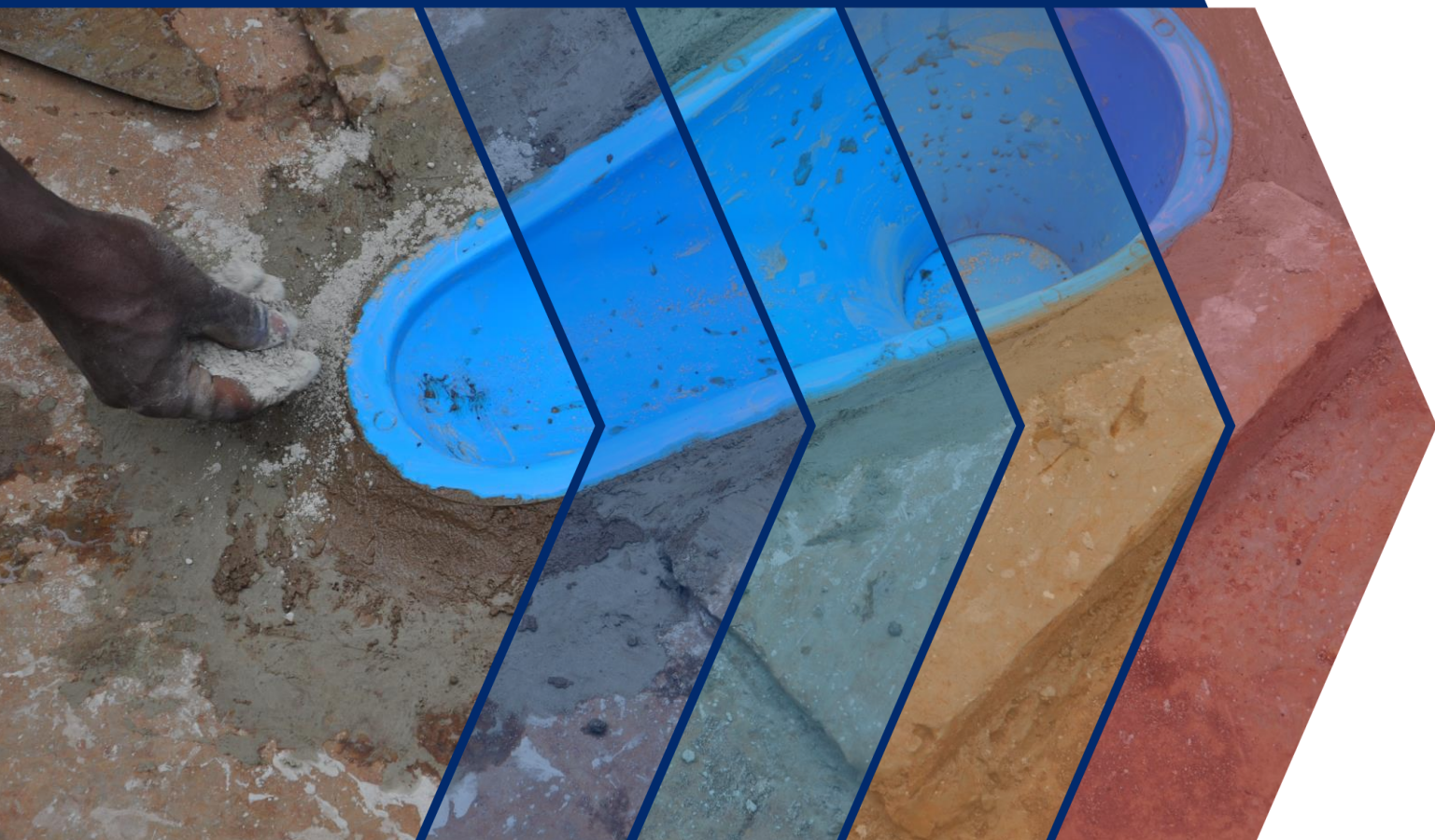


USAID Transform WASH

Building Government of Ethiopia capacity to manage effective WASH programming



Learning Note, September 2018



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USAID Transform WASH aims to improve water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) outcomes in Ethiopia by increasing access to and sustained use of a wide range of affordable WASH products and services, with a substantial focus on sanitation.

The WASH market will be transformed by: stimulating demand at the community level, strengthening supply chains, improving local business practices, and building the enabling environment for a vibrant private sector.

USAID Transform WASH is a USAID-funded activity implemented by PSI in partnership with SNV, Plan International, and IRC. The consortium is working closely with government agencies, including the Ministry of Health, the National WASH Coordination Office and regional governments.

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The objective of this learning note is to document the process and early results of the capacity building activities of the Transform WASH program, so that lessons can be identified and the approach can be improved and refined.

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Abbreviations

GoE Government of Ethiopia

OWNP One WASH National Program

WWT Woreda WASH Team

WWTT Woreda WASH Technical Team

KWT Kebele WASH Team

SMTWG Sanitation Marketing Technical Working Group



1. Background

While the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) has established strong water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) policies aimed at improving sanitation in partnership with the private sector, such policies have not been operationalized at scale, and implementation at the district (woreda) level has been challenging. USAID Transform WASH supports the GoE and the One WASH National Program (OWNP) by providing targeted capacity building to sub-national GoE staff, which enables them to manage and sustain WASH activities, especially those related to sanitation marketing and strengthening of the market for affordable, quality WASH products and services.

Transform WASH collaborates with the GoE to tailor a package of capacity building support based on assessed needs in WASH and OWP planning, budgeting, coordination, implementation, monitoring, and reporting. This support is designed to strengthen the OWP at two levels of government: the Woreda WASH Team (WWT)¹ and the Woreda WASH Technical Team (WWTT). The WWTT then supports the Kebele WASH Teams (KWT), the lowest level of local government administration.

The responsibility of the WWT is to oversee the progress of planned WASH activities through close follow up of the WWTT. The WWTT gives technical support to the KWT and WASH Committees (WASH Cos) in all WASH-related activities. The KWT reports to, and passes matters that need decision, to the WWT. In addition to these teams, the Sanitation Marketing Technical Working Group (SMTWG) collaboratively plans and implements improved sanitation at the Woreda level.

¹ According to the WASH Implementation Framework, the WWT comprises of the Woreda Administrator (Chair of the team), heads of Water, Education, Health, Finance, Women and

Transform WASH has adopted a cyclical approach to capacity building rather than one-off trainings. Once a certain milestone has been achieved, each capacity building plan is reviewed to determine whether the identified skills are being performed followed by adjustment, as necessary.

2. Purpose

The objective of this learning note is to document the process and early results of Transform WASH capacity building activities so that lessons can be identified and the approach can be improved and refined.

Data collected included document reviews and key informant interviews on how the project facilitated capacity building at the sub-national level. Data was then analyzed, and key themes, insights and recommendations were compiled. These insights may be of use to others involved in government capacity building activities to improve WASH governance and management capacity.

The following learning questions were used to guide reflection:

- *What training topics were covered, and how were they selected?*
- *What changes have resulted from the training in day-to-day activities?*
- *How have attitudes changed toward sanitation marketing approaches and the role of the private sector?*
- *What barriers have been identified that hamper progress in building capacity, and what are some of the ways to overcome them?*

Agriculture Offices. The WWTT comprises of experts from the same offices.

- What are the key learnings that may improve future capacity building activities?

3. Capacity building activities

3.1. Preparatory work

The Transform WASH team organized sector capacity assessment workshops with participation from regional, zonal, woreda and kebele levels to identify

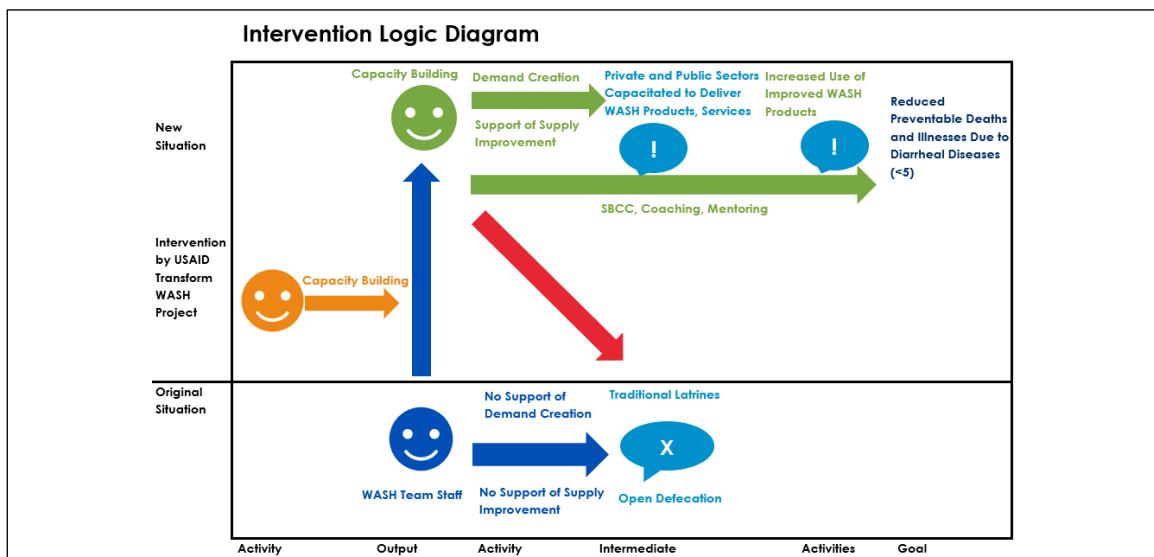
capacity gaps, needs, and priorities of WASH teams in planning, institutional arrangements, implementation capacity, financing, monitoring and evaluation of WASH programs.

Using this WASH sector capacity assessment data, Transform WASH created WASH sector capacity building guidelines for the project that integrated with national plans for WASH sector development. A capacity development action plan was then developed to guide implementation.

3.2. Orientation on WASH Sector Policies, Strategies and Guidelines

The GoE has done remarkable work developing WASH-related policies, strategies and guidelines, which facilitate the implementation of public-sector WASH programs. The key documents include the WASH Implementation Framework and OWNP and Sanitation Marketing Guidelines. However, these key

documents have not been evenly cascaded to lower levels of government, thus WASH teams at regional, zonal, and woreda levels have not fully understood and utilized the documents. Transform WASH conducted orientation sessions to help WASH teams at all levels familiarize themselves with these documents and align them their planning and implementation.



3.3. Training of Trainers on Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PBMER)

Transform WASH provided training to regional, zonal and woreda WASH experts who were tasked with cascading their learning to the kebele level. The training covered basic concepts, practical cases, challenges and solutions to overcome problems related to PBMER. The training also covered gender mainstreaming in WASH programs. Once completed, the trainers cascaded the training to Kebele Development Committee members — health extension workers, school principals, and kebele chairpersons — the Women and Child Affairs Office, and heads of health centers.

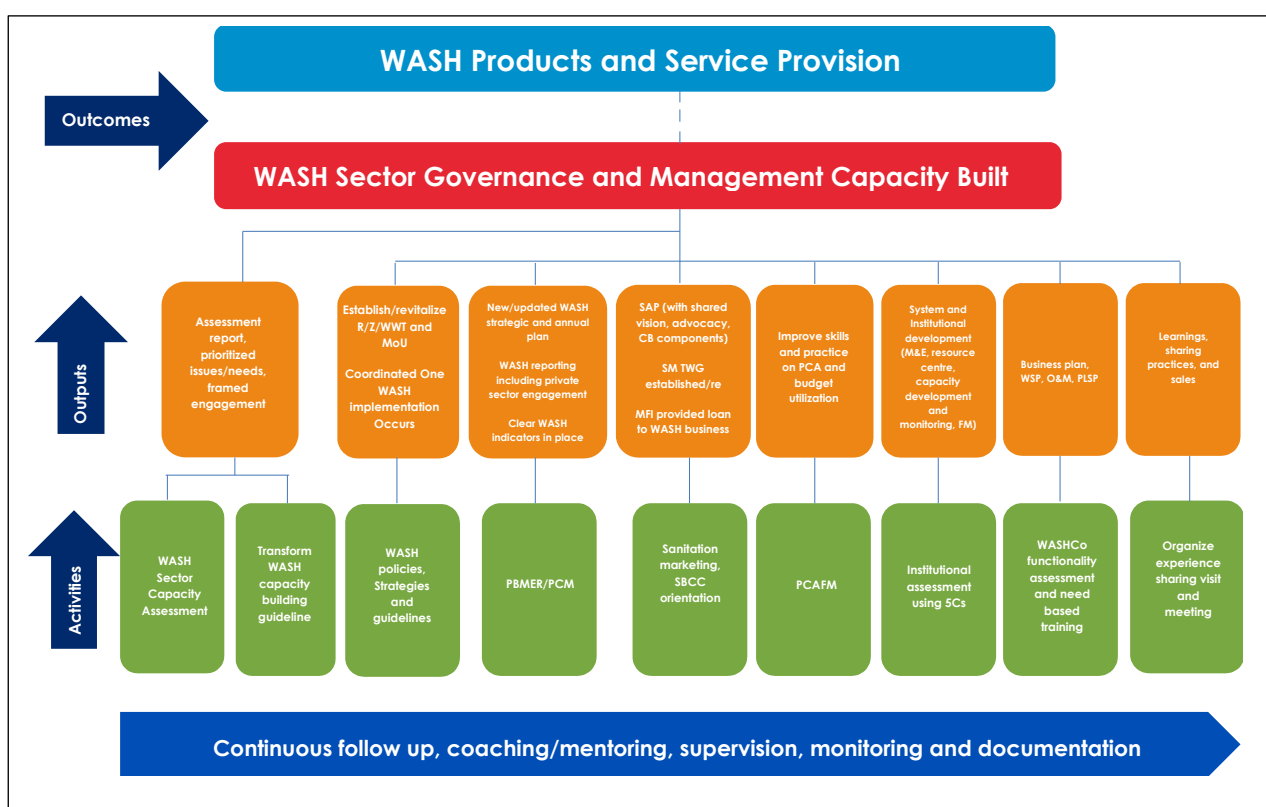
3.4. Training on Sanitation Marketing and Woreda Sanitation and Hygiene Action Plan Development

This training was designed to establish a common understanding among key

stakeholders on sanitation business models, low-cost and high-quality sanitation product options and services, and innovative promotional approaches. It aligned the USAID Transform WASH market development implementation approach with national sanitation marketing guidelines and regional sanitation marketing initiatives.

3.5. Training on Procurement, Contract Administration & Financial Management (PCAFM)

This training program was provided to improve procurement and bidding processes and actual implementation of projects. The goal was to improve the process of releasing and spending the budget and drafting construction timelines for water schemes and sanitation facilities in communities, at health posts and schools. The training was delivered to regional, zonal and woreda WASH teams, followed by coaching and technical support.



3.6. Follow up and technical support for Woreda WASH Teams

The Transform WASH team organized follow up visits after all capacity building activities were completed. The aim was to check results achieved by the woredas and to provide technical support and coaching on key improvement areas and issues raised by the WWTs and WWTTs. A combined purpose of the visits was to find out how day-to-day activities had changed as a result of the training. This process of follow up and coaching will continue throughout the program.

4. Preliminary Results

As a result of Transform WASH capacity building activities to date, nine targeted woredas have developed sanitation action plans. The woreda action plans were created by WWTTs with members of the Sanitation Marketing Technical Working Group (SMTWG), which included the woreda health office, microfinance institutions, Technical Vocational Education and Training, Job Creation and Food Security Agency. This action plan was discussed at the Kebele level and is being implemented collaboratively by all of the signatory bodies of the SMTWG.

According to Endale Eliso, Hygiene and Environmental Health Officer at the Shashogo Woreda Health Office, sanitation marketing had never been effectively planned before the training. Endale said:

“We never prepared an action plan with specific targets, person responsible and a specific time frame. Now, we have detailed targets of how many improved slabs will be produced and sold and who is responsible for what among the technical working group.”

During the first six months of 2017, only five cement slabs were sold to households.

During the last six months of 2017, after the action plan was prepared and training was conducted, 212 slabs were sold out of 453 planned for the year. The OWNP budget for sanitation was also fully utilized.

Coordination and integration between the WWT and WWTT also increased. All nine woredas revitalized their WWT and WWTT and started to conduct regular meetings and field supervision. Furthermore, all WWTTs signed MoU among each other, which clearly indicated their respective office roles and responsibilities.

Woreda WASH strategic plans have been developed by WWT. According to Abdulkadir Mohammed, Water Supply Coordinator at the Shashogo Water Office, there had never been joint planning between the health, water and education departments at woreda level.

However, following the Transform WASH training program, the 2018 annual plan was drafted collaboratively at the kebele level; woreda officials met with the kebele administration to conduct joint planning for the first time. Transform WASH designed a standard planning template that all Kebeles are using. Abulkadir said:

“We now do all WASH monitoring and technical assistance duties as a team. And the WWT has become very active in decision making. I have learned what a proper detailed plan looks like, and it has helped me monitor and evaluate my own work.”

On the operational side, tendering and procurement have become a faster process. A tender used to be announced in the newspaper at the federal level, and the whole process took over three months. But after Transform WASH training in procurement, contract administration and financial management, the woreda was

allowed to increase the value of tenders they could process up to one million birr. The training made the whole process clearer, including tender value limits, and tender notices could be posted at the woreda level with only eleven days required to complete the process. Moreover, construction associations in the woreda were allowed to bid. As a training participant from Shashego Health Office commented, no construction work had taken place in 2016 due to procurement delays. However, in 2017, all planned construction projects were completed.

Following these preliminary results, Transform WASH organized an experience sharing visit for WWTs from Oromia, Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz regions to visit Shashego woreda, SNNP region, and learn from their progress and replicate successful activities in their respective woredas.

5. Lessons Learnt

The following lessons may be of use to others involved in government capacity building to strengthen the enabling environment for WASH:

- Bringing regional-, zonal- and woreda-level staff together into the same training sessions has been productive. It gave them a forum to discuss issues and develop solutions beyond their immediate interests. Many of the challenges are being resolved simply by bringing people together and thereby improving vertical and horizontal coordination and integration.
- Follow up to ensure cascading of training has been an effective way of building deep internal capacity and strengthening the enabling environment at all levels. Empowering the regional staff to deliver training at the woreda level has improved ownership and accountability.

- Ongoing coaching, mentoring and technical support by Transform WASH has been an effective way of building and sustaining momentum at all levels of government.
- Transform WASH has tailored its support to needs of government partners that were identified in a systematic way through capacity assessments. These assessments revealed that broad attention to overall implementation of the OGNP was needed before limiting the focus on sanitation marketing. This ensured that training was relevant and made improvements at the system level, which was a prerequisite for sustainable WASH systems at scale. Feedback from key informant interviews highlighted that the program gained critical support because it was supporting government activities more broadly.
- There were delays in signing the project agreement with the regional offices of health, finance and water at the start of the project due to high expectations with respect to overall project investment. There was also a perception that there were too few project staff and funds available for infrastructure from Transform WASH. Expectations of government need to be managed carefully.
- Feedback from key informant interviews suggested that more field time should be incorporated into the training program so that theory could be put into practice under direct supervision.

6. Key challenges

The following key challenges that were identified in program implementation may be useful to others involved in capacity building at the national and sub-national levels:

- Due to competing government commitments, it was challenging to get sufficient time with regional, zonal and woreda teams to discuss capacity building activities.
- A lack of proactive participation from some WWT members at regular meetings and joint activities was noted in some cases. The team discussed this issue with woreda administrators who have the mandate to ensure participation of WWT members.

High turnover in membership of the WWTs and WWTTs exists and cannot be avoided. The team learned to build in refresher trainings to mitigate this issue.

- Although there has been progress on the release of OWNP budget, the funds are still slow to be disbursed and often transfer only toward the end of the year. The woreda finance team claimed that the delay was at the federal level.

7. Conclusions

A range of GoE training programs were designed by Transform WASH after conducting a needs assessment workshop to identify gaps, needs and priorities in the implementation of the One WASH National Program. These training activities were delivered at the regional level and cascaded by the trainees down to woreda level.

The capacity building activities established a strong foundation for effective WASH governance and management capacity that could be sustained at the sub-regional level. This increased capacity has been developed in the form of improved coordination, effective planning and accountability mechanisms, and improved ability for government staff to implement the OWNP.

A few barriers have been noted that hamper progress in these areas. These included the busy schedules of government partners and the time required to organize and work with them. Also it has been difficult to maintain strong coordination between regional, woreda and kebele levels and between WWTs and WWTTs at the same level. This has been improved by getting officials into the same room to work on joint action plans. However, this progress could be eroded through turnover and the arrival of new staff members, which can weaken team cohesion. Continuous scheduled activity of joint meetings and improved communication and documentation is critical at all levels and among all teams to sustain capacity gains.