

WaterAid in Zambia Country programme evaluation

This executive summary is from the May 2009 country programme evaluation of WaterAid in Zambia. It focuses on the relevance and effectiveness of the country programme, and the sustainability of the work carried out by the programme.

Zambia is a large country with a low population density. Just over one third of the population lives in urban and peri-urban locations. The remainder are rural, and in some provinces settlements are very dispersed. Rural water supply and sanitation coverage are estimated at 37% and 13% respectively. The corresponding urban figures are 36% and 40%.

Life expectancy has fallen significantly over the last 30 years (from about 50 to under 40 years), and under five mortality rates are still high (at 182 per 1000 live births). GRZ has allocated 214 billion Zambian Kwacha (ZMB) (approx £26 million) to water and sanitation services in 2009. Of this total, more than 90% is from donors.

Zambia's population is growing (at about 2.3% pa), and it is likely that the peri-urban population is growing more rapidly than this. Prices and exchange rates have shown significant volatility in recent years, contributing to the uncertainties experienced by people and programmes. Concerns expressed about trends in climate and groundwater levels may be unjustified as yet, but this area requires more detailed investigation.

WaterAid in Zambia works in the Southern and Luapula Provinces, spending about eight to nine billion ZMB (just over £1 million) annually. In recent years it has focused its activities geographically, targeted on need (in terms of service coverage), emphasised sanitation, and engaged strongly in sector policy and coordination processes.

Approach and methodology

The evaluation approach was intended to concentrate on the overall themes of relevance and effectiveness of the country programme, and the sustainability of its interventions. It was designed to be forward-looking, leading to guidance for future modifications to the country strategy. The approach combined consideration of relevance, effectiveness and sustainability with the cross-cutting themes of a) sector blockages, b) inclusion and c) sector influencing.

The methodology involved document reviews, semi-structured interviews and a limited amount of observation in the field. The evaluation was carried out in a participative manner, involving WaterAid in Zambia staff and partners in discussions at all stages.

The evaluation team consisted of one independent consultant (team leader), a member of WaterAid's Programme Effectiveness Unit and WaterAid in Zambia's Rural Programme Manager.

Findings relevance

The country programme design is highly relevant to the national context, the identified sector blockages and the needs of Zambia's poor. It highlights the need for greater capacity, professionalism and commitment within lead agencies and service providers (Government, NGOs and private sector). It also identifies the need for a more systematic approach to inclusion of the most marginalised within WaterAid in Zambia projects and programmes.

Effectiveness

The increased geographical focus of WaterAid in Zambia's work over the last few years, and its strengthened partnerships with District Councils have enabled it to bring about significant change at both ward and district level. Its focus on wards and districts with particularly low coverage has also demonstrated effective targeting of effort.

Most of WaterAid in Zambia's projects have operated according to a fairly conventional (but well-executed) model of subsidised service delivery. The one exception – an exciting one – is the self supply project in Luapula, in which it has been possible to stimulate real demand which has translated into household cash investment. WaterAid in Zambia has generated a good deal of learning through its interventions over many years, but relatively little of this has been carried through to accessible publication.

WaterAid in Zambia urban work has progressed less rapidly than its activities in rural areas. This may be due to the limitations of the NGO partners involved, and we believe WaterAid in Zambia should focus far more in the future on building partnerships with the commercial utilities. WaterAid in Zambia has been an effective influencing organisation in its participation in sector coordination and policy processes. It has been less focused on the highest levels of Government though, where political will needs to be urgently transformed.

Sustainability

Discussions in communities provide evidence of enthusiasm for the perceived benefits of water and sanitation services. However, this does not generally translate into adequate financial contributions for the maintenance and repair of water supplies, nor into evidence that households will take the appropriate actions when pit latrines fill up. Furthermore, local institutional arrangements and spare parts supply chains are often not fit for the purpose of permanent service delivery.

We have no evidence of the sustainability of hygiene practices and behaviour changes. WaterAid is not alone in providing services which will realistically have a service life of only five to ten years and hence, adequate systems to ensure long term functionality are important. Nevertheless, strenuous efforts need to be expended on finding solutions to this ubiquitous and perennial problem.

Recommendations

The recommendations from the evaluation highlight the need for:

- An increased focus on sector capacity development, extending current good practice into further areas of need (such as the Ministry of Local Government and Housing itself).
- Completion, publication and dissemination of key studies undertaken in the past, and the initiation of a number of new studies on key themes.
- Advocacy at the highest level of national Government to release a latent demand for greater political commitment to the sector.
- Progress in urban work, especially through partnerships with commercial utilities.
- A more explicit country strategy with regards to inclusion of the marginalised.
- An explicit strategy for water security (water resource management and water safety/quality).

Addendum – WaterAid in Zambia and the new Global Strategy

WaterAid’s new (2009-2015) Global Strategy signals a number of key shifts, while retaining many of the sound practices and approaches which have been proven over many years. The main changes centre around:

- The central place of *influencing* in all that WaterAid does.
- Better integration of implementation and advocacy under the theme of influencing.
- A greater emphasis on inclusion, rights and sustainability.
- Growth in numbers of people served directly and indirectly.
- A greater openness to taking calculated risks.

We raise six key questions for WaterAid in Zambia to address as the country strategy is realigned to the Global Strategy over the coming months:

- 1 How can the direct implementation work which WaterAid in Zambia carries out influence other sector players to carry out more and better service delivery?
- 2 How can WaterAid in Zambia assure sustainability of the services which it provides directly, and those provided by others?
- 3 How can the implementation and advocacy work of WaterAid in Zambia be better integrated in future?

- 4 How can WaterAid in Zambia better address issues of equity and inclusion of the most marginalised?
- 5 How should WaterAid in Zambia best rise to the challenge of growth, especially in relation to influencing other players to meet the needs of significant numbers of people?
- 6 What innovations, in terms of technology, approach or way of working can WaterAid in Zambia usefully introduce over the coming years?



WaterAid transforms lives by improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation in the world's poorest communities. We work with partners and influence decision-makers to maximise our impact.

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