

# Reflection Note

May 2019

# The Civic Champions Leadership Development Program for Strengthening Sub-national WASH Systems



**WaterAid**

May 2019

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Sector Strengthening Programme

# I. Introduction

The Civic Champions leadership development program began with the assumption that anyone can be a leader regardless of that individual’s family connections, educational background, or current position in the community. Rather than identifying candidates with “leadership potential” as beneficiaries for the program, Civic Champions focuses on motivating and inspiring individuals, who had a desire to build leadership skills, to become leaders. Civic Champions also directly engages sub-national government staff at all levels (commune, district, and province) as facilitators, advisors and advocates. Specific objectives of program focus on:

1. To build up leadership skills of local leaders;
2. To improve planning, monitoring, budgeting, and leadership of sanitation services;
3. To demonstrate how Civic Champions could be institutionalized into sub-national government program.

# II. WaterAid’s Approach to Systems Strengthening

Figure 1: WaterAid’s Approach to Systems Strengthening



Right now, hundreds of millions of people do not have access to clean water, decent toilets, or good hygiene. And many of those who do have access suffer from inadequate levels of service: poor water quality, service outages, toilets not being emptied and hygiene behaviors are forgotten or not practiced. But there are solutions, and it is not just about installing more taps and toilets. It’s strong systems, engaged citizens and government leadership that will keep the taps running, the toilets working and reinforce hygiene habits. The system is complicated, with many different people, institutions, and processes involved. This can lead to bottlenecks. In addition to delivering services and promoting good hygiene habits, WaterAid works to strengthen the whole system, to create real and lasting change.

We push for clarity on who is responsible for doing what at local, national and global levels. We support better coordination, so that even when there are lots of people working on different parts of

solution everyone is still working towards a common plan. We strengthen existing service providers and help set up and train new providers where none exist. We work with governments to strengthen monitoring, planning, financing and regulatory systems and processes that highlight and address gaps in service provision and quality. We empower citizens to know their rights and demand better accountability from their government and service providers. In working together to strengthen the system, we ensure that water and sanitation services and hygiene behavior, will be delivered and sustained, long after our programmes and campaigns have ended.

### III. An Effective Civic Champions Implementation Process

Civic Champions is a proof-of- concept project designed to transform leadership amongst elected local government representatives in rural Cambodia developing and implementing by WaterSHED. As part of WaterAid’s Promoting Sustainable WASH Service at Scale (SusWASH) Program in Kampong Chhnang, Civic Champions is a joint implementation of WaterAid and local NGO WaterSHED. This approach also aligns with WaterSHED’s goals of institutionalizing the Civic Champions program within sub-national government. WaterSHED provides a consultancy service to WaterAid and WaterAid works with District WASH Committees to implement the program. District and provincial staff are recruited by the Civic Champions program and trained in a provincial training of trainers co-conducted by WaterAid and WaterSHED program staff. These trainers then facilitate each discover conference and deliver the training material to participating commune councilors. The provincial and district trainers also function as coaches to commune councilors in the three-month period between each discover conference.

During the second, third and fourth discovery conferences, participating commune councilors who have met their sanitation coverage target for the given cycle (i.e. the three-month delivery period prior to each discovery conference), are allowed to compete for a leadership award and cash prize. Each qualifying commune makes a presentation at the conference to explain its strategy and how it was able to reach its target; other conference participants then vote for the winner. The presentations show about: (1) actual performance during the three-month delivery period (i.e. latrines increased); (2) leadership (how they use leadership skills in performing their work to achieve the goal); (3) teamwork (share their experiences in team work as part of performing their work to achieve the goal); (4) questions and answer session following the presentation to allow other commune councilors to probe further about their strategy. During the three-month delivery period between each discovery conference, the participating commune councilors are supposed to have at least two coaching visits facilitated by their participating district official. Districts officers submit reports after each coaching session.

<b>Coordination</b>	<b>Recruitment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preview workshop conducted in district;</li> <li>• All commune councilors invited;</li> <li>• Councilors submit application and pay participation fee.</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional Arrangement</b>	<b>Discover</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants build skills such as goal setting, public speaking, and planning;</li> <li>• Participants learn how to create a shared vision for community development, and measure progress;</li> <li>• Participants learn and exchange new ideas to form ambitious, but feasible, strategies to achieve vision.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Delivery</b>	<b>Develop</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants implement strategy and push to achieve targets set in Discover;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants facilitate relationships between stakeholders to foster better collaboration;</li> <li>• District and provincial officers provide one-on-one and team coaching.</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliver</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants present results against strategy – successes and challenges;</li> <li>• Peer reconciliation – participants vote for and celebrate top performers;</li> <li>• A new cycle of discover, develop, and deliver begins.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring</b>	<p><b>Ongoing Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WaterAid’s role as facilitator tapers off;</li> <li>• Provincial and district trainers responsible for continuous support to commune councilors.</li> </ul>

## IV. Key Challenges

The following key challenges were faced during the Civic Champions implementation process.

<b>Financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financing for WASH especially through existing government development plans, remains challenging. Communes have reported that they feel motivated to use their social services budget for WASH but the complexity of the expenditure process for social service budget and the lack of explicit budget codes for WASH limits their ability to do so. We could see Civic Champions provides a platform for the communes that are doing this well to share their good practice with others.</li> <li>• Provincial, District and Commune authorities are not allocated budget for Civic Champion and not integrated Civic Champion into their development plans.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village and commune leaders play important roles to collect household sanitation data and update the village sanitation logbook, while the district WASH committee enter and manage aggregated data in excel. The district staff are now able to manage the sanitation coverage data by themselves event without support from WaterAid;</li> <li>• Limited capacity of commune and village focal points for data collection, monitoring and checking quality;</li> <li>• Uncleared timeline and roles and responsibilities for data collection and reporting;</li> <li>• Lack of harmonized simplified village, commune and district data management systems;</li> <li>• Absence of good documentation and information management systems. In particular, participating district trainers and commune councilors have low capacity on documenting and sharing best practice and learnings and managing their training documents.</li> </ul>
<b>Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of engagement of the Provincial Technical Working Group (PTWG) in providing technical support, capacity building, monitoring</li> </ul>



	and coaching with district trainers and commune councilors remains a key challenge.
<b>Accountability and Regulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of effective accessible and affordable feedback mechanisms to engage citizens, specifically the most marginalized groups, in evaluating commune and district authority's performance, especially participating commune councilor's performance.</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional Arrangement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some participating commune councilors did not have high commitment on WASH issues.</li> </ul>

## V. Key Learning and Motivation Factors

The following key learnings and motivation factors were identified.

<b>Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Media engagement was a powerful approach to motivate and inspire local leaders. When WaterAid worked with national media to conduct a feature documentary on the need for sanitation and the Civic Champions programme, the commune and district leaders who were interviewed said that they felt more motivated by become "famous" in their provinces, while other leaders who were not involved in the documentary felt inspired and contacted the featured leaders to ask how they too could become even stronger leaders.</li> <li>Learning exchange and ongoing coaching was an effective approach to make district trainers clearly define their roles and know how to provide technical and leadership support to commune councilors.</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional Arrangement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition, and publicly rewarding the participating district trainers and commune councilors who reached their plan targets, demonstrated efforts and showed best performance as champion leaders was a powerful mechanism to motivate and inspire local leaders.</li> <li>High-level commitment and support of the district governors and commune leaders was a success factor for implementing the Civic Champions program and will help to achieve universal sanitation coverage at district and commune Levels;</li> <li>Selected the right interested district trainers and strong commitment.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having clearly defined joint district WASH plan created collective action to bring key actors together and direct joint efforts. Notably, this has strengthened relationships between districts and communes;</li> <li>Applied adaptive planning and adaptive management that gave us the space for any flexibility and collective decision for implementing Civic Champion regarding to the real situation and context.</li> </ul>
<b>Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence of good collaboration and collective effort between government, NGOs and local private sector made the Civic Champion program successfully achieved and improvement of sanitation services.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing additional technical training to complement the leadership skills including CLTS, inclusive WASH and hygiene behavior change</li> </ul>

	training made commune councilors more confident to promote WASH services and reach their defined target plan.
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## VI. Proposed Next Steps and Opportunities

Through completion of four discovery conferences and learning, we could see opportunities to institutionalize Civic Champion Program.

<b>Institutional Arrangement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WaterAid and WaterSHED will work together to do in-house data analysis and just get a consultant to undertake a cost effectiveness evaluation of Civic Champion to make more attractive to the Ministry of Interior (MoI) to institutionalize it.</li> </ul>
<b>Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage and discuss with national authority, especially the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Interior and Sub-national authorities, PTWG (Provincial Technical Working Group), PDRD (Provincial Department of Rural Development) and District WASH Committee about developing and operationalizing civic champions as a government led-program.</li> </ul>
<b>Accountability and Regulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and formulate tools and manual for operating a government led-Civic Champions program and reviewing competition criteria to also include indicators relevant to water supply, hygiene clean communes, clean school, clean health Centre, inclusive WASH and commune budget allocation and spending.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ODF (Open Defecation Free) Plan is crucial factor to bring all sector actor to join efforts and commitment. WaterAid will support PDRD, District and Commune WASH committee to create their ODF plan (Water and Sanitation).</li> </ul>
<b>Financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use coaching and mentoring tools to advocate provincial, district and commune authorities to prioritize and allocate their government budget for implementing Civic Champion program.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen harmonized simplified district and commune data and information management systems to inform planning and decision making.</li> </ul>