

Working in partnership in Pakistan

Background

In the 2015 Global Strategy, WaterAid commits to ‘Collaborate with and where appropriate provide support and resources to many different types of partner organisations from civil society, private sector and government.’ Between 2011 and 2015 WaterAid invested in a comprehensive approach to partnership. This has included a stronger normative framework, guidelines, training and collecting evidence and feedback from WaterAid’s partners.

WaterAid Pakistan

WaterAid Pakistan has three programmes: Rural WASH; Urban WASH; and Influencing and Enabling. The team works in eight districts; six cover rural programming and two exclusively cover urban activity. The country programme embarked on a relatively ambitious programme plan and vision for expansion during the strategic period 2011–2015.

Two crucial elements of this expansion were:

- i) Identifying new funding opportunities
- ii) Moving from a geographical to a thematic focus.

To be successful in both, WaterAid Pakistan recognised the need to diversify its portfolio of partnerships, so it identified new partners (mainly NGOs) in the broader development sector rather than only the WASH sector. WaterAid Pakistan believes these partnerships helped it achieve its ambitious targets of reaching more poor and marginalised people, and ultimately achieving greater access to improved WASH than had been anticipated.



National-level partnering context

WaterAid Pakistan has transitioned from a partnership approach aligned towards service delivery to one designed to achieve both service delivery and advocacy outcomes. WaterAid Pakistan's current partners have multi-sectoral engagement and deal with bigger portfolio projects. These organisations have set policies and rules which help foster improved accountability and transparency.

Before the consolidation of the partner portfolio in 2012 (from 16 partners across ten districts to four partners in four districts), WaterAid Pakistan had challenges on two fronts. First, it was difficult to monitor and provide support to partners because they were geographically spread out, and at that time WaterAid Pakistan had a smaller team available to manage partners. Second, because of this configuration there were pockets of change spread over a large area which could not be aggregated to demonstrate change at a greater scale.

The new portfolio allows partners to focus on fewer districts, so monitoring and support from WaterAid Pakistan is more targeted and, ultimately, it is hoped, more effective. Partners have improved capacity to effectively implement projects and ensure better donor and organisational compliances. WaterAid Pakistan has also benefited from the partners, learning from their approaches to community mobilisation, health and micro-finance.

Two partners – local NGO AWAZ, and the National University of Science and Technology – were established to strengthen WaterAid Pakistan's policy, advocacy, research and development studies. These partnerships helped the team to reach out to parliamentarians and to test and improve existing WASH technologies and explore new technological options. WaterAid Pakistan intends to build on such partnerships and enhance the scope of its work to include WASH-focused legislation.

WaterAid Pakistan recognises that partnerships are:

- **Essential for the successful delivery of sustainable and equitable programmes.** WaterAid Pakistan's partnership with the Association for Gender Awareness and Human Empowerment and EPS enabled them to sustainably promote Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM). These partners implement projects exclusively dealing with MHM issues in adolescent girls in schools. The project has been successful to an extent where local education officials and legislators also speak about this tabooed issue publicly.
- **Necessary to build capacity and sustainability in the WASH sector.** Working with Muslim Aid and National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) enabled WaterAid Pakistan to influence a greater focus on WASH and make longer term sustainability a priority. These organisations have strong experience in community mobilisation which will be the basis for WaterAid-supported interventions in communities.
- **Required to strengthen civil society's ability to hold governments to account for delivering WASH.** WaterAid Pakistan is part of a core group of NGOs working at national and provincial levels which engages with the

Government on issues of sector strengthening, sector financing, sector policies, and accountabilities. These organisations include UNICEF, Plan International, World Bank Water and Sanitation Programme, UNHABITAT etc.

- **Essential in developing effective links with other sectors.** WaterAid Pakistan partnered with NRSP (micro-finance) and HANDS (health), which helped WaterAid Pakistan to understand key ideas of micro-finance-related and health-related development initiatives and establish the links between WASH and health and using micro-finance for promoting sustainable WASH.

Spotlight: Local government partnership in the Punjab

In 2012, South Punjab became a priority area for WaterAid Pakistan because of its high-density poverty and poor sanitation. At this time¹ discussion of WASH at the provincial level was limited, and little data was readily available on WASH access.

Key developments over the strategic period of 2011–2015 included the development of PATS (Pakistan Approach to Total Sanitation) by the Government – a community-led total sanitation approach, which has been implemented by various development partners for the past four years. This approach began with government subsidising new or improved toilets.

However, over time, WaterAid Pakistan has made it a more community-based and community-owned approach. This has worked by partnership and collaboration with district government and a local NGO, AGAHE – e.g, WaterAid Pakistan supports the Government in making plans (i.e. the district open defecation-free [ODF] plan). So far WaterAid Pakistan has supported three district governments in the preparation of district ODF plans, with the objective that once all the needs and gaps are identified stakeholders can jointly contribute to an ODF environment across the whole district.

To complement these efforts and to create an enabling environment, WaterAid Pakistan (through its Engaging Parliamentarians Project with their other Punjab-based partner AWAZ), has developed a core group of parliamentarians focused on WASH legislation. It has arranged training for this group to support capacity building and raising awareness of governance issues, supported by factsheets.

To further strengthen these efforts, the WaterAid Pakistan Policy and Advocacy Team adopted a multi-pronged approach, to keep the legislative core group aware of WASH issues in Punjab, which is the most populous of the four provinces. Issues include the number of people who have access to clean drinking water and the number of people without access to improved sanitation. The legislators raise points using this information, and put forward resolutions in the Legislative Assembly of Punjab. This has resulted in a stronger focus on WASH issues in the province. One result of this engagement has been allocation of PKR 400 million (£2.6m) to promote PATS in South Punjab. There is also evidence of change at the individual level, e.g. a move from viewing WASH as a drainage issue to include perspectives of sectoral financing, lack of access and a compromise of basic human rights. This is a good

¹ Please see <http://www.pndpunjab.gov.pk/system/files/Punjab%20WASH%20Sector%20Development%20Plan%202014-24.pdf> accessed April 2016 which sets out all critical data.

example of value for money – a relatively small investment of approximately PKR 6.2 million (£41k) per year resulting in legislative resolutions.

Spotlight: Improved equity and human rights through non-WASH partnerships

WaterAid Pakistan believes in local partnerships to capitalise on outreach and contextual understanding of local organisations. To implement its rural sanitation programme in the district of Rajanpur, WaterAid Pakistan looked for a new partner. Rajanpur is one of the most deprived areas in Punjab with very low rates of WASH access.

Muslim Aid, an international NGO, had a presence in the district with its own programmes. Although Muslim Aid is not a traditional WASH-sector organisation, their strength in handling large portfolio projects in Rajanpur, presence at the grassroots levels and understanding of the context complemented the work and experience of WaterAid Pakistan.

A partnership was established with Muslim Aid to implement a rural sanitation project. Initially, field-based support was provided to help the Muslim Aid teams understand the basic principles of the project, such as rights being central to its ideology. This made it easier for Muslim Aid to initiate community mobilisation with a clear understanding of the aims and goals.

To further establish rights discourse among the Muslim Aid team and their management, Muslim Aid requested the support of WaterAid Pakistan to facilitate a workshop on realising human rights to water and sanitation. This resulted in a strong partnership delivering a rights-based approach to WASH access in Rajanpur.

Spotlight: Engaging with the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in Islamabad

It is generally noted that Pakistan lacks community-based, low-cost WASH technologies. WaterAid Pakistan felt that the technologies they used needed to be scientifically tested and scaled up, so it decided to invest in research and development, partnering with NUST to develop new sanitation and water solutions.

This is an example of a non-service delivery based partnership, and an example of where local knowledge and practice from communities, scientific experience and experience of WASH practitioners comes together. WaterAid Pakistan and NUST are planning to develop a tripartite partnership with the Government of Punjab.

The NUST now works with WaterAid Pakistan's technical unit to explore technological options and propose modifications to existing WASH designs. Two prototypes – the Water Desalination Unit and the Improved Sewage Treatment Unit – have been developed and are being refined for a potential scale up.

Study based on focus group discussions by IOD Parc held with WaterAid staff and partners, as part of the UK Department for International Development's Programme Partnership Arrangement final evaluation, 2016.

Photo: WaterAid