



VISION AND STRATEGIC INTENTION FOR WASH

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“Following Jesus where the need is greatest to stop the effects of dirty water, poor sanitation and unsafe hygiene in their murderous tracks. With your support we are enabling communities to live healthy and dignified lives through initiating lasting change within communities. Because of this people can access safe drinking water, decent toilets and enjoy the benefits of safe hygiene.”

Our support of WASH - access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene - is in response to its fundamental impact on life and well-being. No other sector is so interdependent on issues of health and poverty, whilst at the same time affording dignity and quality of life to the poor we serve. Education, personal productivity, the economic health of a community, financial viability at household level, and the freeing of time from the burden of work, are directly linked to a household's access to safe, sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene practice.

WASH is the single most common programme sector in our humanitarian response. Consequently, we have amassed substantial expertise amongst our operational teams, which is recognised by the WASH fraternity even at international level. WASH is also a consistent high priority sector amongst many of our partners, and we are fortunate today to have productive relationships with very capable WASH Partners who themselves are recognised nationally for their quality programming: Kigezi Diocese (Uganda); Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church, PPSSP (DRC), ACEV (Brazil), Eficor (India), IAM (Afghanistan), to name a few.

Theory of Change

Tearfund will develop Theories of Change for our WASH programmes to test our assumptions and develop an evidence-based theory of why and how Tearfund implements WASH programming. This will help us to identify good practice that leads to sustainable, transformative improvements in WASH access.

Theories of Change will be drafted for each of the three fundamental contexts in which Tearfund currently supports WASH programming:

- i) Relief response;
- ii) Fragile and Conflict Affected States (FCAS); and
- iii) Chronic / long-term poverty.

Principles

Within the context of Tearfund's corporate values and our Quality Standards, our approach to WASH as a core competency is based on the following principles:

- Approaches **based on economic need and targeting**, ensuring empowerment, gender sensitivity and inclusion of, the most vulnerable so that people can make their own informed decisions.
- Recognising the essential **role of the local church**¹, and seeking to equip and envision churches for resilience-building wherever possible.
- Emphasising approaches which are **participatory and demand-led** but which do not assume that beneficiary communities are capable of solving all challenges without any external support.
- Approaches which are **evidence-based** and **sharing learning** at all levels learning from others and building the capacity of individuals, communities, partners, governments and networks.
- Approaches which **do no harm** (e.g. not exacerbating conflict, not harming relationships, the environment, ensuring child protection, HIV and protection of vulnerable adults)
- Our approaches are **integrated with each other, sustainable, replicable, resilient** to future shocks and change, and **environmentally sustainable**. We adopt an integrated, sustainable approach to WASH, recognising the synergy between safe water access, access to safe sanitation, and good hygiene practice. Our basis for sustainability in WASH incorporates aspects of functional, institutional, financial and environmental sustainability². In this way we endeavor to help communities develop resilience to future shocks and climate change, and their effect on WASH access
- We prioritise using local communities' **own resources, assets, capacities and knowledge** and **local solutions**, informed by information and research.
- We adopt **demand-led, flexible and contextualised** approaches to build the capacity of communities to become self-sufficient and sustainable.
- Supporting **advocacy** at appropriate levels - addressing the key policy issues that make people vulnerable and reduce their access to basic services.
- We seek to increase people's resilience to both **known risks** (e.g. recurring disasters, ongoing conflicts) through risk analysis, preparedness, and mitigation, and to **unknown risks** (e.g. unexpected climate impacts, economic crashes, outbreaks of violence) through increased adaptive capacity, learning, and empowerment
- Collaborating effectively with communities, and other stakeholders at all levels
- Planning for sustainable hand-over to local communities and stakeholders.

¹ See "*Keeping Communities Clean*", Tearfund, 2009, which identified the church as taking up one or more of 5 distinctive roles in WASH programming: Messenger, Demonstrator, Implementer, Advocate, and Guardian (of the benefits of WASH interventions).

² Functional sustainability - ensuring services remain operational in the long-term; Institutional sustainability - ensuring capable management structures are in place to maintain all aspects of sustainability; Financial sustainability - ensuring that effective cost recovery methods are put in place; Environmental sustainability - ensuring that assessment of our WASH programmes on the environment, and vice-versa, is fully considered.