

# Our water, our waste, our town

Supporting civil society to engage in urban  
water and sanitation reforms



## Introduction

*Our water, our waste, our city* is a training toolkit that offers support to civil society in engaging in urban water and sanitation reforms. This engagement can span from acting as advocates of alternative views to providing services within a reforming system.

The toolkit of PDFs on the attached CD comprises a detailed guidance manual for CSOs and summaries of nine case studies outlining civil society involvement in urban water and sanitation reforms.

The guidance manual identifies the approaches that have been helpful in ensuring civil society engagement in reforms and documents how this engagement has influenced urban water supply and sanitation sector reform processes.

The guidance manual is split into seven training modules that aim to help civil society groups develop skills for engaging in

effective advocacy on pro-poor reforms of water and sanitation services. They offer practical guidance on how to improve knowledge on the issues, gather information and learn by getting involved in debates, dialogues, planning and activities that champion the interests of the poor.

The case studies present examples of real-life civil society engagement in urban water service reform in ten countries in South America, South Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe.

The ultimate aim of the toolkit is to improve the accountability framework within government and donor urban water and sanitation programmes and reforms. Although the toolkit's primary audience is CSOs, the toolkit can also serve as a useful resource for policy makers, reform planners and donors on how to harness the benefits of citizens' participation in reforms and mainstream these in future reform plans.

## The guidance manual's training modules

The guidance manual's seven training modules can be used either sequentially or independently to facilitate learning on each of the themes:

1. Getting started
2. Understanding urban water systems
3. Management options available to government in urban water and sanitation reforms
4. Governance and water sector partnerships in reforms
5. Sanitation and sewerage: issues, problems and actions
6. How to take action in urban WSS advocacy
7. Working with financial institutions

The manual concludes with top tips for civil society on engaging in urban water and sanitation reforms, a glossary and a list of useful references and contacts.

## The case studies

Over a six month period in 2006/2007, case studies of CSO actions in ten countries were developed through discussions with key stakeholders. The case studies focused on:

- capturing the experiences of the CSOs in urban WSS sector reform processes
- assessing the strategies of engagement adopted by the CSOs and
- evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies in influencing the reform and protecting the interest of the poor

The case study summaries, listed in the table overleaf, offer practical examples of CSO engagement and help the reader think through the implications for their country while undertaking the exercises in the guidance manual.

<b>Reform agent &amp; Location</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<p>Dushtha Shasthya Kendra (DSK) <i>Bangladesh (Dhaka)</i></p>	<p>CSOs have been active in water service delivery in the cities of Dhaka and Chittagong. Many have acted as intermediaries between slum communities and water authorities, negotiating for the establishment of community-managed water points connected to the mains water supplies. This role led to CSOs being invited to participate in the new World Bank urban reform project: the Dhaka Chittagong Water Supply and Sanitation Project.</p>
<p>Recife city's Deliberative Assembly &amp; Communal Councils in Caracas <i>Brazil (Recife) and Venezuela (Caracas)</i></p>	<p>Water and sanitation services are being decentralised in Recife, Brazil and Caracas, Venezuela. In Recife, CSOs are officially represented on the council responsible for water strategy in the city. However, the council is not yet fully functional. In Caracas, CSOs play an active role in a water communal council that monitors the activities of the state water company. However, management of the state water company is yet to be devolved to local level as planned.</p>
<p>National Coalition Against Privatisation <i>Ghana (Accra)</i></p>	<p>CSOs involved in the Ghana National Coalition Against Privatisation (NCAP) influenced the Government of Ghana and the World Bank in their implementation of urban water reform. The contract for the management of urban water services, signed with Aqua Vittens Rand Water Services BV in November 2005, contains several points advocated for by NCAP.</p>

Reform agent & Location	Summary
<p>Maji na Ufanisi and others <i>Kenya (Kisumu, Nairobi and Mombasa)</i></p>	<p>In 2002, the Government of Kenya introduced the Water Act to reform the urban water sector. At the time the sector was characterised by corruption, lack of investment, inefficiencies, poor management and a confusing array of legal and institutional frameworks. CSOs in three cities have successfully used Citizen Report Cards to enable poor communities to engage with city water utilities and highlight the priority areas for reform.</p>
<p>NGO Forum <i>Nepal (Kathmandu)</i></p>	<p>The NGO Forum for Urban Water and Sanitation has worked to improve public participation in decisions concerning water supply in Kathmandu. Between 1988 and 2007 government water policy focused on the construction of a water tunnel connecting the Melamchi and Kathmandu Valleys. The NGO Forum has advocated for improvements to other water services for the urban poor.</p>
<p>Water and Sanitation Network <i>Pakistan (Karachi)</i></p>	<p>Karachi has seen three phases of attempts to reform water and sanitation services. Phase one, attempting to privatise the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), was suspended, partly due to CSO opposition. The second phase proposals to improve sewerage were criticised by CSOs as unworkable, but ultimately were replaced with a project featuring CSO input. The third phase, to improve the KWSB's service standards and financial viability, features active CSO involvement.</p>

<b>Reform agent &amp; Location</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Bantay Tubig, Action for Economic Research (AER), et al <i>Philippines (Manila)</i>	In 1997 the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) was privatised. It was the world's biggest water privatisation at that time, and split the provision of water services in Manila between two large private companies. Various civil society organisations have worked to increase accountability in the urban water sector and to provide water to those not served by the water companies.
Uganda Water and Sanitation Network (UWASNET) <i>Uganda (Kampala)</i>	Reform of the National Water and Sewerage Company of Uganda began in 1995 and continues to date. In November 2000, the Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET) was launched to enable civil society organisations to collectively engage in the reform. UWASNET has successfully influenced policy, but faces challenges in reaching consensus, and effectively and independently monitoring government activities.
MAMA-86 <i>Ukraine</i>	Water and sanitation services in the Ukraine went into decline after the collapse of the USSR. The result was drops in water and sanitation coverage, higher prices and increased concerns about the quality of drinking water. MAMA-86, a women's pressure group, and stakeholder committees have both had success in improving public participation in the urban water sector, and demonstrating good practice in water service delivery.



PDF files of the guidance manual and the nine case studies are available on the attached CD. The files can also be downloaded from WaterAid's website at **[www.wateraid.org/urbanreform](http://www.wateraid.org/urbanreform)**

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*Our water, our waste, our town* is a training toolkit focused on the role civil society organisations (CSOs) can play in improving the accountability framework of urban water and sanitation systems. The toolkit comprises a detailed guidance manual for CSOs outlining action checklists and training exercises, and a series of case studies summarising the actions CSOs have taken in ten countries in South America, Africa, South Asia and Eastern Europe.

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 **WaterAid**

WaterAid's mission is to overcome poverty by enabling the world's poorest people to gain access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education.

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