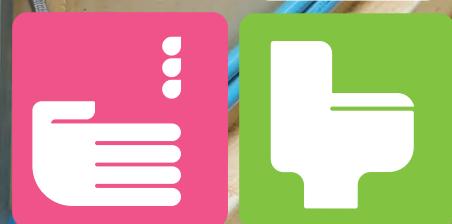


# WaterAid Cambodia Annual Reflection

2020



WaterAid



## Contents

<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Status of intermediate changes .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Insights on how change happened and implications .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Engaging leadership to drive ODF.....	10
Data drives decisions.....	15
Journey to gender equality in the Cambodian WASH sector....	22
Leave no one behind still in question.....	26
<b>Implications &amp; Recommendations .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Annex 1: Learning products and publications in 2019-2020 ....</b>	<b>33</b>

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>CR-SHIP</b>	Cambodian Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Improvement Program
<b>DWG</b>	District Working Group
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information System
<b>MRD</b>	Ministry of Rural Development
<b>ODF</b>	Open Defecation Free
<b>PDRD</b>	Provincial Department of Rural Development
<b>PWG</b>	Provincial Technical Working Group
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene



## Executive summary

The Annual Reflection Report for WaterAid Cambodia captures our experience in 2019 and 2020, both from specific program activities conducted within this period, but also observations and impacts from prior investments and foundations by WaterAid and our partners.

The report contains the current status of Intermediate Changes that bridge the 2017-2020 Country Strategy with the incoming 2020-23 strategy along with evidence as provided in Annex 1. As this is the beginning of the strategic period, the status of Intermediate Changes is still quite low when reviewing the overall Cambodian context including areas outside of our current target areas. We can see that in many cases, the situation is better in the locations where we have programs - showing that our work has already had an impact compared to unserviced and unsupported areas. The evidence demonstrates strong indications that change is occurring as well as the areas we will need to focus on moving forward to ensure that our programs are effective and replicable. This report contains four stories from the real experience in the field. These provide narrative on key components that span across the various programs we run, illustrating the underlying influences and lessons of how change is successfully occurring or is being frustrated. The stories provide nuance as to the variations in personalities, motivations and other factors that influence the adoption of change.

Through the reflection process, WaterAid Cambodia confirmed that the overall thinking and assumptions in the 2020-23 Strategy and Theory of Change are still appropriate to the context and WASH challenges particularly for marginalised groups. This report captures greater detail and ideas on how we can be more effective based on our real experience over the last 2 years. Adjustments for consideration on how we work and where we focus our actions that are laid out in the Implication and Recommendations section. These include:

- Using our strengths to expand emphasis on gender equality and inclusiveness
- How funders and financial resourcing is a major driver in action/inaction
- Intrinsic motivations of government actors are recognition based
- Collaboration and collective action has larger and longer lasting impact
- Research provides a foundation and entry point for systemic change, but it takes time
- Way forward for WaterAid Cambodia around water security and WASH climate resilience

Our experience and relationships that we have developed mean that we are in a strong position to effect change as laid out in the 2020 - 2023 strategy and Theory of Change.



# Introduction



WaterAid/ Remissa Mak

This annual reflection report covers work that was completed in 2019 and 2020. This report is a collective opportunity to overview what is occurring across our Cambodia program, how change is happening (or struggling to happen) and what this means for the future. It sits alongside other reporting mechanisms such as the Annual Accountability report, monthly reports and quarterly reflections, however the scope of the annual reflection looks beyond activities confined within singular thematic programs, as well as takes a longer view of the current impact and influence of work completed prior to this financial year.

In this report, we summarise the status of 13 of the 17 **intermediate changes** described in the 2020-2023 Theory of Change. These were selected as they represent our work that bridges from the previous 2017-2020 strategy. Thus, this report provides a benchmark for the 2020-2023 strategy as well as recommendations for ways forward in 2021.

In order to adapt our programming to lessons learnt and evolving contexts, we want to explore **stories** that illustrate how change is occurring, real successes and frustrations in our journey with the Royal Government of Cambodia and our partners to achieve



WaterAid/ Remissa Mak



sustainable, equitable and universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene. The stories, selected jointly by the Cambodia team, capture the experience common across the program. These stories provide insights into the effectiveness of our approaches in combination with the priorities and motivations of key actors.

The reflection captures evidence and thinking at a strategic level, identifying the strengths and challenges as well as adds nuance (i.e large variation in results for similar interventions) to shape our work for greater effectiveness in future.

**Implications and recommendations** provide practical options to enhance our impact.

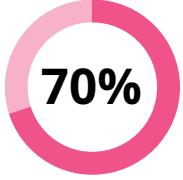
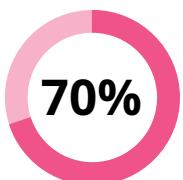
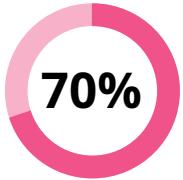


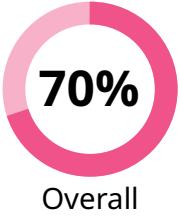
## Status of intermediate changes

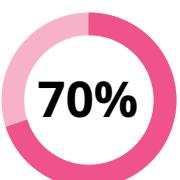
The table below outlines the progress summary against intermediate changes of our country strategy 2020-2023 aiming at journey collaboratively with the Royal Government of Cambodia and partners to achieve sustainable, equitable and universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene

by 2025 and beyond. The rating below is the status of progresses to date based on team observation and consultation with key partners. The status is measured against the changes we want to achieve over the next four years.

Intermediate Change	Status*	High Level Summary of Progress
Effective feedback mechanisms demonstrated between service users (especially the most marginalised) and service providers lead to ongoing service quality improvements	 <p><b>60%</b> Overall WaterAid target areas - 80%</p>	<p>Accountability mechanisms have been implemented and being used by service providers, even beyond the period of the project.</p> <p>Subnational governments are independently conducting their own consultations and civil society engagement; higher commitment to social accountability ISAF.</p> <p>User satisfaction of private and government service providers has increased.</p> <p>Difference in effectiveness of feedback mechanisms for water supply (high) but for sanitation (still low).</p> <p>There are limited trusted accessible feedback mechanisms nor specific core teams that are responsible for recording and responding to any feedback and complaints provided by communities and other sector actors.</p>

<p>National and subnational WASH actors are coordinated by functioning, gender-empowering coordination mechanisms and committed leaders</p>	 <p><b>70%</b> Overall WaterAid target areas - 80%</p>	<p>Sector coordination mechanism has been set up. National and subnational governments have taken some ownership but still require support for finance, technical assistance, process and facilitation.</p> <p>Target areas have regular meetings and take a lead in meetings, adhere to roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Still male dominated, and lack gender empowerment.</p> <p>Still needs to improve on collaboration across the WASH sector.</p>
<p>National and subnational government monitor and share service progress and performance (including social inclusion and gender equity) and use data effectively to inform decisions and planning</p>	 <p><b>70%</b> Overall</p>	<p>Government developed, is actively using and take ownership of WASH data systems in tracking progress.</p> <p>Low evidence that data has been used to inform decision making and planning.</p> <p>Government still requires support on capacity and financing to collect and analyse data.</p> <p>Reliability of data is still questionable.</p> <p>GESI indicators are not included in MIS and sanitation logbook indicators yet.</p>
<p>National and subnational WASH actors (government and non-government) align service delivery and financing with government-owned and led plans for inclusive, gender-equitable services</p>	 <p><b>70%</b> Overall</p>	<p>Planning is strong but financing is not connected to national and subnational plans.</p> <p>In Kampong Speu &amp; Svey Rieng (WaterAid target areas), there are clear plans and financing.</p> <p>Gender equality and inclusiveness is still extremely limited because of the low level of understanding and prioritisation by subnational stakeholders.</p>

<p>The WASH sector has sufficient qualified personnel, especially women, and WASH practitioners clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and have relevant skills and capacity to fulfil them</p>	 Overall 70%	<p>Increased knowledge and interest in WASH career paths from youth, particularly university graduates.</p> <p>Improved technical skills and management skills for WASH staff on improved service provision and enhance inclusiveness in planning.</p> <p>Government actively participates and leads on the functioning of WASH structure and capacity development.</p> <p>Improved priority and knowledge of where to access technical training in the sector.</p>
<p>National and sub-national government and private sector implement WASH guidelines and strategies to support and promote gender equity and social inclusion.</p>	 Overall 60%	<p>In the target area (Rolea B'ier District), knowledge and capacity increases on inclusive WASH led to the construction of accessible toilets in public places and as demonstration models.</p> <p>District level changes show adoptions through the roll out of inclusive WASH guidelines and District Working groups mainstreaming inclusive WASH into plans and activities.</p> <p>Limited changes at National and private sector levels.</p>
<p>Marginalized groups including urban migrants workers and person with disability are empowered for themselves to advocate to decision makers to address their WASH challenges.</p>	 Overall 70%	<p>Increase in key marginalised groups (people with disabilities, construction &amp; brick kiln workers) participating in processes to influence decision makers. This included sharing their stories and issues to key stakeholders. However, it is unclear whether these groups are able to continue this without the support and invitation of WaterAid or other advocates.</p>
<p>Hygiene behaviours among healthcare workers around maternal and child health improved through scientific behavioural change interventions</p>	 Overall 60%	<p>Behavioural change interventions have been designed and rolled out to 4 selected health care facilities.</p> <p>Still in the process to track and evidence to long term adoption by healthcare workers currently, requires follow up. Study to be finalised in March 2021.</p>

<p>Conversations between Anti-microbial resistance and access to water, sanitation and hygiene are continued to inform country programmes and global advocacy</p>	 60% Overall	<p>Conversations have led to the production of materials, joint actions and stakeholder mapping such as globally WHO and WaterAid producing the Anti-microbial Resistance and WASH joint actions was released. AMR and WASH stakeholder mapping in country was conducted.</p>
<p>Health sector policy framework and monitoring systems to comprehensively address WASH in Healthcare facilities are strengthened</p>	--	<p>None</p>
<p>Targeted gender transformative scientific hygiene behaviour change interventions developed and demonstrated for specific groups through WaterAid Cambodia team's skills</p>	 70% Overall	<p>Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) national strategies already exist in the sector and are available but its coverage is quite broad and no gender or inclusion targeting. Tools have been set up with formative research foundations.</p> <p>Future need is for behavioural change targeted specifically to gender needs. Little scientific approach to behavioural change interventions currently. WaterAid has started developing models for wider roll out.</p>
<p>Improved gender equality and social inclusion outcomes in programmes, organizational process, system and culture of WaterAid Cambodia and partners.</p>	 60% Overall WaterAid target areas – 70%	<p>There is a significant difference between the social inclusion and gender equality components of this intermediate change. WaterAid has been working on social inclusion for longer and is active/recognised as a champion with partners and in its own processes. Gender equality is only just starting and will require more time to be adopted.</p> <p>Internal capacity is being strengthened through various capacity building activities and programs, resulting in integration into programming for gender integration and social including.</p>

\* Status: overall refer to situation of WASH sector at country level while WaterAid target areas refer to the provinces and districts that we are currently supporting including: Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, Svay Rieng, Kratie.



## Insights on how change happened



Story 1:

### Engaging leadership to drive ODF

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**“At first, I thought it was an easy work (WASH). But after I worked more closely on it, I realised that it is harder than I thought.... I have many challenges but I don't give up on those challenges.... We have achieved two districts ODF but we don't stop here. We will push to have ODF plus to those two districts by 2020....Even though I am busy. I need to have high commitment to the work for our commitment to the Minister of Rural Development and Provincial Governor. For Svay Rieng, we will achieve ODF by 2022...”<sup>1</sup>**

HE Toch Polyva, Deputy Provincial Governor of Svay Rieng Province

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A major step forward in the journey to achieve sustainable, equitable and universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene was the commitment of five provinces (Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, Kep) to eliminating open defecation 100% by 2023. WaterAid provided capacity support to three of these (Svay Rieng, Kampong Speu and Kampong Chhnang) to fulfill their commitment to become open defecation free (ODF).



*District working Group (DWG) dissemination meeting in January 2021 showed high commitment in Open Defecation Free (ODF) declaration in mid 2021.*

WaterAid believes that it is essential to have strong and committed leadership in order to achieve full water and sanitation coverage. Leaders and those with the mandate to improve water, sanitation and hygiene regardless of their position or level of authority need to have the capacity and motivations to successfully achieve such an ambitious goal. WaterAid, in conjunction with other international organisations and partners, undertook a range of initiatives to increase capacity, ownership and commitment at leadership and implementation levels of government.

## **Increase ownership through engagement in planning, coordination and implementation**

The Provincial Technical Working Groups (PWGs), which are coordination platforms chaired by the deputy provincial governor and the Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD) as secretariat, met regularly with key government champions from different Provincial Departments to develop Open Defecation Free (ODF) plans and drive the implementation at local level. PDRDs coordinated with PWGs to set up district and commune WASH committees as well as supported the committees to plan, implement and monitor the ODF plans in their communities. To support the ODF process, WaterAid worked with PDRD and sub-national government bodies in conducting contexts analysis using the Sector Strengthening Building Block, a Life Cycle Costing Analysis for water supply and capacity assessments to inform

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**“We have developed a clear provincial action plan and set up technical working groups at each level from provincial to village level. Our focal point at each level has clear roles and responsibility and reports the progress regularly. Also set aside 10% of the development fund at commune, district and province to support WASH activities. We also have annual competition and appreciation among districts who show good progress compared to their committed plan.”<sup>2</sup>**

HE Sok Phea, Deputy Provincial Governor of Kampong Speu Province

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the development of ODF plan at both provincial and district levels. We also provided technical support and resources to increase capacity of PDRDs and WASH committees to coordinate and drive ODF plans.

## Enhance motivation and capacity through exchange learning

To enhance motivation and bring in new ideas across different provinces, a peer learning was conducted by WaterAid to connect local government personnels responsible for WASH at the national and international level.

Deputy Provincial Governors, Provincial Department Rural Development and district WASH committee members visited Svay Rieng and Prey Veng with the aim to expand District Working Groups (DWG) for WASH. The program provided a space for government staff in similar roles to observe examples of effective sub-national coordination and leadership that lead to improved water and sanitation service deliveries for local communities. By showcasing WASH achievements, key decision makers were also inspired to create change for their provinces as well.

As a result, WASH leaders from Kampong Speu province committed to revisit and strengthen the structures, roles and responsibilities, and functioning of PWG and DWGs. District leaders also pledged to increase the engagement from a leadership level to disseminate and mobilise resources to drive ODF plans. The PDRD affirmed their commitment to actively coordinate and support the regular meeting of PWGs to monitor the implementation of the ODF plan.

After a visit to Svay Teap, the second district declared open defecation free in Cambodia, Sophat Chon, Chief of the Rural Water Supply Office in Kampong Chhnang Province saw how the role of the PWGs along with the leadership of the provincial governor was important to future plans for WASH. Many others wanted to create District WASH committees to drive local WASH improvements<sup>3</sup>.

WaterAid provided coordination support for an exchange visit to Nepal organised by Cambodian Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Improvement Program. WaterAid assisted in the invitation of government staff who had historically demonstrated a strong commitment and interest in WASH so that they could enhance their technical skills. It also acted as a form of encouragement to persist in championing universal WASH.

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*The Cambodian delegation visiting Nepalese community.*

During the visit to Nepal, His Excellency Om Sophea, deputy provincial governor, expressed that he learnt a lot from the exchange learning, and he committed to bring back new knowledge and priority to Kampong Chhnang to establish and improve district WASH committees for all districts.

## Motivate action and commitment through media

Another part of our strategy was to use traditional and social media to motivate action in WASH. Government staff were shown how to publicise WASH efforts, thus generating public support and greater awareness of positive change. Provincial WASH leaders from Kampong Speu and Svay Rieng proudly announced that their provinces would reach ODF by 2022 or earlier to the public during [TV Roundtable Talk Show](#) discussing strategies on how to reach 100% open defecation free in Cambodia.

One of the provincial WASH leaders from Kampong Chhnang publicly shared his commitment to support two districts in the province to become ODF by 2020 as a role model for other districts<sup>5</sup>. He also proudly shared the best practices in coordinating WASH services to reach marginalised groups in the TV talk show discussing responding to the WASH need of marginalised people<sup>6</sup>.

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**“Currently the total sanitation coverage in Svay Rieng province is 90% (as of May 2020) with two districts declared ODF (Open Defecation Free)...Our provincial governor has committed to the Minister of Rural Development to become an ODF province by 2023. But based on the current high progress of sanitation coverage, I believe we can reach our target to become ODF province even before that.”<sup>4</sup>**

HE Toch Poliva, Deputy Provincial Governor of Svay Rieng Province

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## Key learnings

Getting provincial commitment has not been an easy process. It required ongoing efforts through collective action and recognising incremental shifts. Factors that facilitated commitment were:

- Prior knowledge and value on WASH as a key area of human development
- Active participation in technical working groups by core decision makers
- Willingness and ability of leadership to champion WASH decisions and priority
- Empowerment of delegated representatives from technical group to influence or inform provincial planning and decision making
- Relationship, respect and communication between high level provincial leaders
- Popularity of proposed action items with local communities and constituents
- The interest and priority of other senior political influencers and leaders e.g. from national level

The commitment to stop open defecation is a significant milestone, one that demonstrates an understanding and value by government officials on WASH. However, it is only the first step in a longer process that will require further technical and financial support alongside strong government leadership.

Anticipated barriers to achieving ODF include:

- the allocation of funding in national and sub-national budgets;
- donor funding priorities and preferences;
- technical skills to provide WASH services;
- appropriate technology addressing sanitation in challenging environments;
- additional costs and requirements to reach the most marginalised populations;
- lack of interest from the private sector;
- lack of sufficient market based incentives for rural sanitation programs; and
- retaining motivation and momentum over the next 5 years.

In particular, the most marginalised groups and people require context-specific based strategies and solutions to tackle the bottlenecks and specific needs to reach the “last-mile” targets.





## Story 2: **Data drives decisions**

WaterAid believes that evidence and data driven decisions by key actors including national and sub-national governments enhances the effective attainment of sustainable, equitable and inclusive safe water, sanitation and hygiene. This requires a number of interrelated components such as: pertinent indicators that identify gaps and discrepancies in services; reliable, up to date, easy to use repositories of data; accurate and sufficient data collection; accessible body of relevant, high quality research; and data analysis and interpretation capabilities and tools.

### **Data collection systems and human capacity creates accurate analysis**

For data driven decisions, there are early signs that data is valued by key government actors to plan and track action plans for the delivery of WASH services.

At the national level, the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), with support from partners including WaterAid, has initiated and developed the Management Information System (MIS) for Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene. The MIS aims to address challenges in data accuracy, reliability and availability in the sector which can be used for strategy development, planning, sector performance review and future policy formulation. The first MIS report was produced on WASH in 2019 with the next expected to come out in 2020.

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**Our vision, increase reliability and accountability of WASH data to inform measures for future planning and operations, and better alignment decision making and data availability with official government monitoring and evaluation in web-based system that provide a convenience platform with accessible for all audiences.**

*Ms. Chantheth Sokhadeva, Deputy Director of Department of Rural Health Care and the MIS project manager*

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MIS reflection workshop. Credit: MIS team

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**The additional indicators will help us in the planning and decision-making process since it becomes the only tool to measure the performance of the sector as a whole as well as inform the advocacy for better planning and implementation.**

- Ms. Chantheth Sokhadeva, Deputy Director of Department of Rural Health Care and the MIS project manager

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During phase 1 of the Annual Management Information System in 2019, data was collected on only six WASH indicators. The MIS core team decided to increase this to 32 indicators in phase 3 [2020 onwards]. WaterAid aims to work with the MIS core team and partners to include gender and social inclusion indicators into the MIS system in the next phase.

WaterAid provided support to national and sub-national governments with coaching and hands on guidance to MRD staff on data analysis and knowledge management, mentoring of provincial staff on monitoring their

National and Provincial Action Plans. From assistance through the MIS core group - made up of Cambodian government and other key partners (UNICEF, WaterAid, Plan International, Engineers Without Borders, Cambodia Climate Change Alliance) - national and sub-national government staff are able to interpret what the data means to inform their decisions and plans. With our support, MRD and PDRD staff are now able to extract data, use report templates as well as create charts and graphs confidently.



A small group discussion at the MIS workshop. Credit: MIS team

The MRD demonstrates increasing independence and is now taking a lead in the oversight of the MIS. They provide training to provincial staff, follow up and ensure the collection of data is completed by regular deadlines. Data is being checked for quality and accuracy by being compared to other sources. Their confidence to analyse, produce and share data has increased.

At sub-national level, data from the sanitation logbook contributes to information for MIS at the national level. WaterAid has supported and rolled out the digitisation of the log book to improve consistency, accuracy and timely availability of data at sub-national level. Data collected through the digital logbook integrates into the national MIS system.

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**The future of MIS is to be a unique tool suit best for all. I hope the new digitized tool developed will be used to harmonize the data collection process required by each institution and donors in a way to reduce workload for data collectors and maximize outcomes as well as inform the advocacy and strengthen the system.**

- Ms. Chantheth Sokhadeva, Deputy Director of Department of Rural Health Care Department and the MIS project manager

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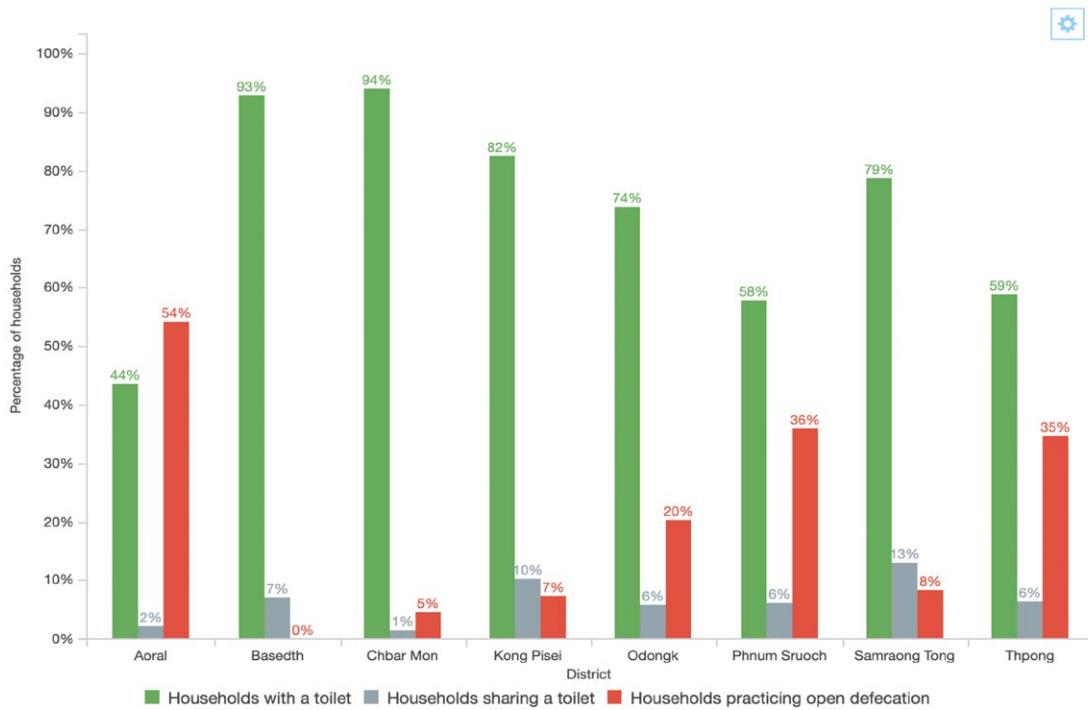
Because they can input data directly through their computer, field staff find it easier and faster to add information. Digitisation has also led to improved consistency, regularity and frequency of data uploads. An additional benefit is an heightened accountability as provincial staff can be monitored on data entries.

The digitisation was rolled out in Svay Rieng and Kampong Speu. The system collates data in real time, which motivates staff to collect and correctly enter data because they can immediately see the impact of their work. The PWG uses the data to inform their planning and decisions. Mr Chhin Samnang, PDRD staff from Svay Rieng, who took part in the digitisation process of the sanitation log book, said: "I'm glad for having the opportunity to engage and lead the WASH data management in my office."

The digitisation of the logbook process is quite helpful and effective and accessible for me and team members. The WaterAid team has been actively engaged to provide technical assistance and support when I faced issues and technical challenges."

With the digitisation of data, decision makers and analysts can quickly interpret and show data with automated reports.

Latest date of data uploaded (may not reflect all districts) = May 25, 2020  
Sanitation coverage = 83.95%



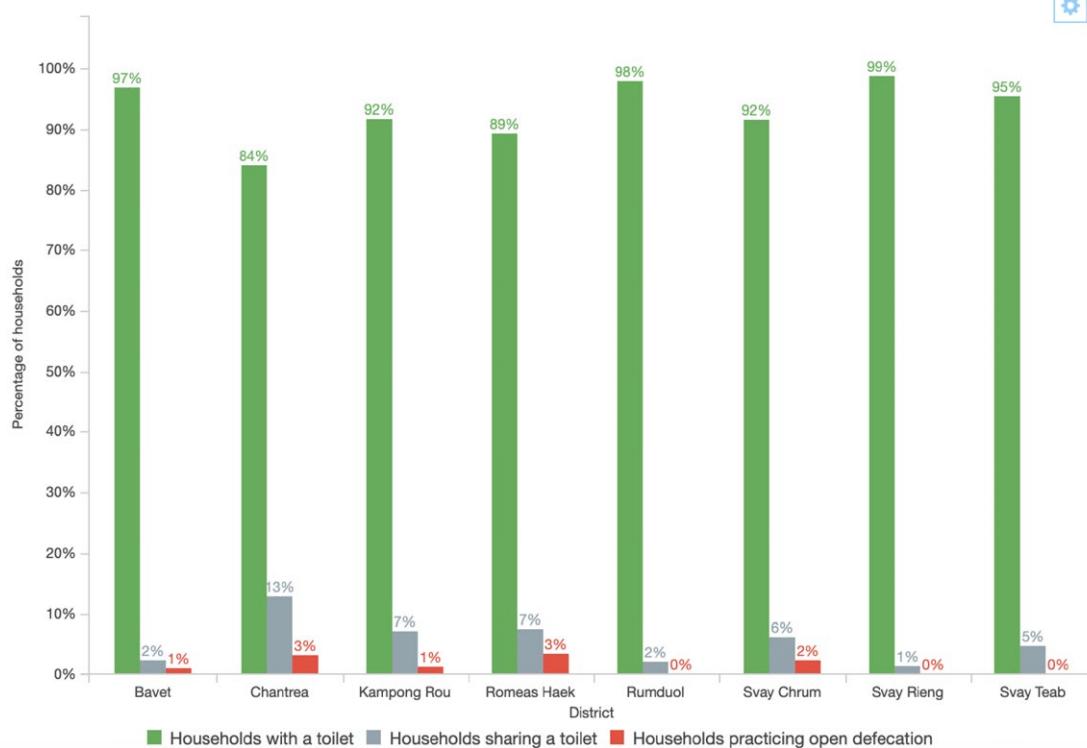
*Sanitation access rate updated by PDRD through mWater System*

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**"I'm glad for having the opportunity to engage and lead the WASH data management in my office. The digitisation of the logbook process is quite helpful and effective and accessible for me and team members. The WaterAid team has been actively engaged to provide technical assistance and support when I faced issues and technical challenges."**

- *Mr Chhin Samnang*

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## Quality Research adds to effectiveness of the sector

Beside our support to MRD on the MIS and sanitation log book, WaterAid also produced research as evidence for decision making. WaterAid has contributed significantly to a trusted body of knowledge that helps inform the sector in making grounded decisions for the best use of resources. Over the last 2 years, WaterAid supported and produced the following research and documentation:

- Report: [Management Information Systems for rural WASH](#)
- Survey report: [WASH data survey in Kampong Chhnang \[2018\]](#)
- Scoping study: [Towards safely managed water access in Kampong Chhnang \[2019\]](#)
- Guiding tool: [Rural Water Supply Decision Guiding Tool 2019](#)
- Equity and Inclusion study [2018]
- Report: [Water quality monitoring \[2019\]](#)
- Report: [Cost Effectiveness Analysis for local leadership \[2019\]](#)

- Report: [Life cycle costing \[2019\]: long term costs of different types of water supply](#)
- Research report: Water piped connection to Health Care Facility [2020]

We are seeing these studies inform systemic change and enhance the allocation of resources from deeper situational knowledge. The WASH Data Survey in Kampong Chhnang was conducted in conjunction with the Ministry of Rural Development and the National Institute of Statistics. Aside from the immediate effect of informing the provincial action plan, this led to the National Institute of Statistics scaling the study to a national level. Feedback from WaterAid, along with the World Bank, UNICEF and the Ministry of Planning on the methodology, questionnaires and indicators were adapted and incorporated into the 2019 census.



WaterAid/ Remissa Mak

Our research is both influential and practical in a wide scale effort to improve WASH. Specifically, WaterAid's scoping study on safely managed water access in Kampong Chhnang has been requested by the Provincial Department of Rural Development to select locations with appropriate geographical approaches for an ADB funded grant, while another organisation, Life With Dignity, used the report to target locations in need as part of a Czech funded project. The study results have been referenced by the World Bank, Czech Development Agency, Caritas, and private investors including TapEffect, Heineken, and WaterOam Social Enterprise, to decide where to direct their investments. Notably, the World Bank included Kampong Chhnang as one of three provinces for detailed investigation for public-private partnerships for piped water based on our study, which is likely to lead to investments of more than US\$2 million in the province.

Studies open up avenues for discussion and querying current practices and obstacles to change. WaterAid conducted a participatory life cycle costing assessment to help government decision makers and service providers understand and prioritise budget for water service delivery using Samakki Meanchey district as an example. Participants from national, provincial, district and commune government as well as private sector gave feedback that this information was useful for their planning and budgeting and could also be adapted for calculating the costs of providing other services. For example, participating district and commune level government staff realised that hand pumps are more expensive and less sustainable than the piped water options once maintenance, breakage and replacement are factored in. This has helped local authorities to promote piped connection or fixing existing infrastructure rather than adding new hand



## Key learnings

In order to enhance evidence based decisions, there needs to be long term investment into systems, human capacity and relevant quality research. This story demonstrates that WaterAid as a strong sector contributor where we recognise that the benefits of our efforts are attributed to a collective effort with the Royal Cambodian Government and our partners. For the future, we will work alongside various counterparts on the quality and accuracy of data collected to assist with planning but also provide clearer indicators to highlight gender and other marginalised groups for inclusion.

With the MIS system now operational and MRD confident in rolling this out, the next stage will be to scale up consistently across the country. This will likely require linking the digitalised logbook directly to the MIS system to strengthen relevance and speed of information for decision makers.

We should also continue further research - particularly on issues related to those most likely to be left behind by economic growth and wide scale projects. As it takes active dissemination and discussion for the research to influence projects and funding, we expect that it takes a few years for us to see the influence of research. Not only do we need to ensure resources for events and activities so that the information is easily and widely available, our research topics should anticipate the trajectory of the sector and what is likely to be a barrier in future.

pumps. With these studies, WaterAid is able to support government staff to demonstrate a strong rationale towards piped water. However, the adoption of more long term cost effective solutions is still difficult as there are stipulations and preferences by donors, grantors and community members.

The results of the Life Cycle Costing study identified that there are huge funding gaps (up to US\$520,000 per year) in government funding for sustainable rural water services in the district, highlighted the inefficiency of overlapping private and public investment in water supply and showed that almost no tariffs are currently being collected or used for operation and maintenance. The workshops also identified that the decisions made for

allocating these budgets are often made at the national level with minimal strategic planning, and are mostly politically-motivated. National level activities and dissemination of the results were shared and with different groups and individual meetings with high-level decision makers who are responsible for WASH. As a result, MRD have requested WaterAid to adapt the life cycle costing assessment processes and methodologies and provide Training of Trainers to MRD and PDRD staff so that they can facilitate similar assessments with sub-national authorities including districts and communes across the country.



### Story 3:

## Journey to gender equality in the Cambodian WASH sector

WaterAid is investing in women leaders through the empowerment and capacity building programs for women in government and professionals in the WASH sector.



— “

Very often there are some women at sub-national level and then from time to time they disappear. When I work with them I always try and check where they are and get them involved. She already has a baby, got married, wants to stay more at home looking after family. So that kind of thing is challenging. Then I think the new generation seems to be encouraging but because there is no education system, no course curriculum, that women do not become ready to work in the WASH sector.

- Female WASH Professional, 18/02/2020

” —

— “

It is very scarce. I am not sure why - they are just not there. Cambodia is still among the countries that think engineering and maths is more like men's things. We are having a surplus of female accountants and not enough female engineers in this country. I think it is a mindset issue that women [&] engineers are not compatible with each other.

- 3i, 17/02/2020

” —

WaterAid recognises that gender equality and inclusion are long term goals that have many social, political and economic factors and influences beyond our control. In order for women to be represented in WASH, we need to increase the number, confidence and competence of women working professionally in the sector as well as in the government. WaterAid's 2020 activities to empower women to take ownership and action for equitable WASH outcomes include:

- Strengthening confidence and empowerment of women working in WASH sector through networking, social support and collective action
- Investing in women leaders at the sub-national level (Kampong Chhnang)
- Providing scholarships for young women to study engineering
- Increasing women role models and representation through professional opportunities as trainers, facilitators, committee members etc

## **Leading by example - Women champions in WASH leadership**



Ms Ouk Sopheary is recognised and respected as an advocate for WASH for all, often invited to share her knowledge and conviction about the importance of WASH to communities. As the Deputy District Governor of Rolea B'ier district, her voice is influential with communities and in sub-national government decision making. Since taking part in the WaterAid's leadership program, she has started taking a big part in creating an inclusive WASH committee and pushing for its effective functioning. She confidently leads meetings with relevant people to make collective decisions on WASH.

For example, Sopheary leads the quarterly and monthly meeting on WASH with the district WASH Committee members and commune councilors to check and review the progress of WASH plan implementation in each commune. She got authority from the district governor to lead on the WASH work, so she always motivates and pushes the commune councillors and district WASH Committee members to follow up and implement the plan.



*Mrs. Ouk Sopheary led the district WASH committee to check the progress of WASH in her community.*



Since 2018, Sopheary has been an active participant in WaterAid's leadership program. The program provided women at the sub-national government level with leadership and communications training. The women leadership training is a series training, that we provide this training to 29 female government staff from around the departments in the province and from districts. This training aims to empower women and unlock their internal potentials. Through the training, the women have the opportunity to learn new things and learn from each other.

- “

**Before I didn't know much about WASH, but after I joined a lot of activities with WaterAid such as training, workshop, and field activities, I have gained much knowledge on WASH and I have confidence to push and speak with community people and senior government leaders in WASH. Now I committed to improve my district to be ODF and push local authorities to take more actions on WASH improvement.**

*- Mrs. Ouk Sopheary, Rolea B'ier Deputy District Governor*

” -

These were followed up by providing opportunities to practice these skills to enhance their confidence such as engaging with the community as facilitators and coordination support. WaterAid deepened their understanding of public relations and social media and how this could be used to advocate for WASH.

## **Women in WASH**

Women in WASH is an initiative in which women working in WASH sector network and share their experiences in order to support each other professionally and encourage other women to further their careers in what is perceived as a male dominated industry. It started informally in 2017 with PLAN International having informal lunches for women working in WASH to meet up and build relationships, but due to the limited conversation, unclear purpose and agenda it slowed down in 2018. This was a disappointment for some of the members from the Cambodian team who believe that it was important to increase the voice and influence of women so that their needs could be taken into account in planning and implementation of WASH programs.

In 2019, springboarding from momentum of WaterAid's Global Framework, the Cambodia team transformed the network into a more substantial and powerful force through better organisation, setting a purpose and agenda, formalising roles and seeking out those genuinely passionate and engaged as leaders. They set up subcommittees focusing on women's perspectives on advocacy, capacity building and communications for WASH. Spanning a number of organisations including PLAN International, Engineers Without Borders, WaterSHED, Cambodian Water Supply Association, SNV, Centre for Sustainable Water and Sevea Consulting Company, the members gained both social and financial commitment from their organisations for network activities.

As it is still in its infancy, the Women in WASH network hasn't created a massive impact on the sector as yet. However its potential is recognised by many individuals



*Ms Chheng Sokha, officer from Rolea B'ier district, participating in the Women in WASH leadership training.*

and organisations as a stepping stone to enhanced gender equality and inclusion of women in influencing and decision making. This is demonstrated by WaterAid Cambodia's inclusion in its 2020 business plan on internal investment into the staff's knowledge, skills and ownership of gender equality principles and concepts, shifting towards a wider base of champions to drive, monitor and implement greater gender equality outcomes in our programming and with our partners.

Recently, the network gained funding from Who Give A Crap and Plan International to build the agency and technical skills of women in WASH as well as activities to campaign for improvements in the recognition and disparity related to gender e.g. indicators that could be included in MIS.

Through having a safe space to share the issues that they face, advice and support on how to tackle challenges and take collective action, women will have greater opportunity to develop their leadership skills and empowerment. Their perspective can influence the WASH sector to take into consideration the needs of 51% of the population<sup>7</sup>.



## Story 4: Leave no one behind still in question



WaterAid/ Remissa Mak

Equitable and universal access is a core component of our work with marginalised groups championing for their inclusion as well as systems, skilled professionals and leaders providing support and services. Over the past strategic period (2017-2020), WaterAid has advocated for key actors in WASH, health and private sectors to address the needs that marginalised people face. While we have seen positive changes and strong indications of improvement, progress has been slower and less successful than hoped for.

WaterAid connected representatives of marginalised groups to local government. Direct access allowing them to explain their circumstances and request appropriate services, it was believed that marginalised

groups could compel local governments to add inclusive WASH services to plans. Positive changes included increased awareness and confidence in expressing their WASH needs as well solid evidence of the challenges to inform decision making. Through on-going support and empowerment on their rights to access WASH services, construction and [brick kiln workers<sup>8</sup>](#) and [marginalized groups<sup>9</sup>](#) in Kampong Chhnang are now able to share their WASH situation using photo-story and storytelling methods to raise their voice. They can claim their demands through different platforms including workshops, field visits, and live-events on social media. The workers are empowered and actively participated in documenting their WASH situation as

advocacy based-evidence. Garment factory workers, who are passionate and empowered, continue to advocate themselves for WASH improvement at their communities and factories. They practice their skills and knowledge on how to raise their issues to key stakeholders at annual and public forums, thus role modelling how to change WASH practice at the communities and factories through routine campaigns. Local youth have shared and expressed their views and concerns of WASH issues happening in their rural communities through photo stories. They gained confidence and capacity to tell stories through taking [photography](#). Their messages reached and were accepted by key WASH actors including high level government at national and sub-national levels through online messaging and [photo exhibitions](#) in Phnom Penh and [Kampong Chhnang](#).

However, for some communities, they did not necessarily view WASH as an immediate need, instead prioritising food and livelihoods. Government and other NGO representatives are not automatically considering or providing these as part of basic rights on behalf of these communities either.

National and subnational governments have been able to demonstrate targeting and responding to needs of marginalised groups through the ID poor system as seen in communications on COVID-19. However, there is limited use of the system to address WASH issues and there are limited cross sectoral policies or priorities. Government support and services tend to favour emergency and basic living demands. When asked, many officials respond that the decisions and budgets are

influenced by input from the community and based on what is requested by popular demand. This put marginalised groups at a disadvantage as their needs may not be recognised or prioritised by the majority.

WaterAid has invested in capacity strengthening on how to build inclusive WASH infrastructure and how to provide services to marginalised groups. We have produced inclusive WASH guidelines learning resources (<https://camwateracademy.org>) that are available online along with user friendly WASH in health care facilities. These are used by the Ministry of Rural Development, Provincial Departments of Rural Development, District Working Groups, Public Health Departments and private sectors. To support the roll-out of the inclusive WASH guidelines, the inclusive WASH learning hub was set up in Rolea B'ier district led by district WASH committee (DWC), which is a sub-national government body created to improve and promote inclusive WASH in the community. The district WASH committee was trained on applying inclusive WASH national guidelines through workshop, practices, and learning exchange. A small grant was also provided to support the implementation in the community and building inclusive sanitation in the Rolea B'ier district office. DWC members now have the confidence to implement inclusive WASH at communities, where they confidently provided inclusive WASH topics to local leaders, influenced local leaders to construct inclusive toilets, and conducted inclusive Behavioural Change Communications (BCC) to marginalized communities including older people, persons with disabilities, Cham ethnicity, etc.

Yet the technical skills and understanding of inclusive WASH at subnational level remains low on needs or modifications required for marginalised groups e.g. toilets that are flood proof or facilities that are accessible for people with disabilities. While we had strong success in this target district with the inclusive learning hub, we were unable to scale up. A key reason reported through subnational level stakeholder consultations is the dissemination of national level guidelines as a framework for local governments and partners to follow. These include the National Guidelines for inclusive WASH that has not been widely disseminated at the sub-national level and therefore has rates of low implementation currently. There are also national guiding principles on hardware subsidies for rural households but these have not been widely disseminated, leading to a gap in national budgeting for subsidies programs as there is limited understanding of local government and partners to raise this as a priority for more marginalised groups. In addition, the guiding principles need to be updated as the general economic situation has improved and smart subsidies need to be more targeted.

Another challenge is that WASH is not a compulsory function at commune or districts, rather there is an overlap in responsibilities. This means that WASH advocates must convince both individuals and government bodies of the importance and integration of WASH in their core domains. The capacity of these government institutions to provide services clearly within their scope is quite high, however WASH tends to fall in between the gaps and requires time and investment to find champions. This also manifests in a lack of district and commune budget for WASH.

WASH priorities were held at the national level by the Ministry of Rural Development. As of 2020, decentralisation has shifted the onus of some functions to subnational levels. It is still too early to see the difference created by the transfer of responsibility.

Potentially, decentralisation means that interventions and support can be crafted for local contexts and hence consider the needs of marginalised groups in their jurisdiction. However, it also means that there needs to be interest and commitment by more decision makers that may have varying levels of prior knowledge and value on WASH. Currently, senior members of National leadership still have significant influence on motivations and priorities at the subnational level, however this may also shift in future.

Even in circumstances that marginalised groups were recognised as having particular WASH requirements, funding mechanisms and the cost of inclusive WASH often restrict the ability of government services to respond. Due to distance, accessibility, different specifications, the cost of WASH services for marginalised groups is higher. There are lower rates of change at higher investment compared to other populations. This discourages both government and donors from focusing on inclusion. The team notes that many donors also prefer to fund tangible outputs such as major infrastructure projects than WASH services.

There exists a belief within the sector that market economics will provide WASH services. Many programs are based on either user pays or co-contribution models. While this may be an appropriate solution for those who are benefiting from the economic growth and can afford to buy services, this does not necessarily apply to the poorest or marginalised. Additionally, the private sector does not have sufficient incentive to provide options for the marginalized as there are still many opportunities for market share and growth in easier to service areas and populations. The complexity and lower profit margin for commercial operators means that they do not reach out to marginalised groups. Thus subsidies may need to be allocated to fulfill gaps left by the market.



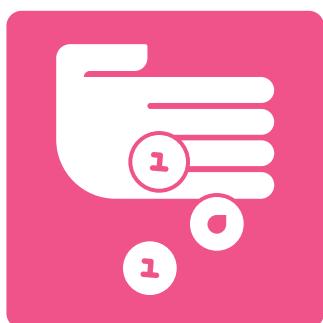
## Implications & Recommendations

The review of the Status of Intermediate Changes and the stories shared in the above sections provide some key insights into the Cambodian context, the trends in the WASH sector and our role in influencing the Cambodian government and actors towards achieving sustainable, equitable and universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene the implications. Through open discussion with the WaterAid Cambodia team and reports from partners, we outline the implications of our ground experience and make recommendations moving forward.



### Use our strengths to expand emphasis on gender equality and inclusiveness

WaterAid has evidence on how we influence and create change - what has worked well and what could be adjusted for the future. The 2020-2023 strategy has greater emphasis on gender equality and social inclusion. Through this process, the team recognises that inclusion is further ahead than gender equality in WASH services due to the fact that we have been driving inclusion with our partners over a longer time. We will need to transfer the strengths from our past experience to develop tools, research and activities to raise gender and social inclusion issues. This includes investing in **behavioural change communications** that have a gender transformative and scientific approach towards positive hygiene practices.



### Funding forces choices

Despite knowing the facts, government and non government programs struggle to apply more cost effective or inclusive shifts because of donor priorities and preferences. These include: value for money of providing services to marginalised and hard to reach groups, focus on tangible attributions (e.g. hand pumps over piped water), political or personal interests, etc. Without the ability to allocate funds, subnational governments are not always able to own and lead service delivery, let alone be inclusive and/or gender equitable.

Future programs will need to nuance action towards the **decision makers at the sources of funding**. This may include Cambodian government as well as international organisations and donors. WaterAid could **enhance evidence based advocacy to donors, funders and government** to allocate budget and invest in WASH more strategically and efficiently based on community needs, research and

long term value for money principles. This may require a focused and clearly articulated advocacy strategy that significantly incorporates sector financing as well as how existing programs may need to be modified with this goal in mind. By mapping the political economy, relationships and priorities of various decision makers both from their personal and institutional perspectives, we may more accurately determine a meaningful role in not only increasing sector financing, but the more effective application of existing funds already allocated to WASH. We could also support partners and other key actors from private, government and NGO sectors with enhanced skills to **negotiate and influence donors** and funding bodies.



## Intrinsic motivations of government actors are based on recognition

Adoption, commitment and accountability by government actors increase when **social or public exposure**. Exchange visits to see successful WASH work in other provinces by people in similar positions inspired participants to take action in their own area, most likely through a lens of competition and comparison - whether that be pride to do better than others, confidence that they could do it if their peers were, the fear of not performing of being left behind or having a support network of similar people who could share and give advice.

After WaterAid demonstrated how to use **media (traditional press and social media)**, government actors began to lead and own WASH messaging and campaigning after seeing that it increased their public profile and reputation. This was further reinforced by tangible rewards in status within the political system. It also creates momentum as other government actors and community members are influenced by the conversation and attention on WASH.

Conversely, government actors were not strongly motivated by rights based arguments. If there was little public demand or social and institutional pressure, the concept that safe water as a right did not lead to action. Instead, the team notes that government actors are most proactive when there is **pressure and priority from multiple directions**. This includes constituent demands and whether WASH is a topic of concern for voters, the interest and involvement of senior government officials (e.g. Prime Minister, Ministerial Directors, etc), and whether WASH priorities and plans are enforced and tracked by their line management. Where there is little community priority or senior government interest, NGOs may have to carry the burden and continue to ask on behalf of marginalised groups using **concepts of statesmanship and legacy** until such time as communities have more essential needs met and the resources to petition for safe water.

In future, WaterAid's program's and approach include a light touch but regularly updated review of **institutional and individual motivations** of target duty bearers, particularly those that once they value WASH, will thrust the WASH agenda forward. This should include reviewing the motivations and mapping influences within key decision makers' social and political connections.



## **Collaboration and collective action has larger and longer lasting impact**

WASH is also a cross functional area as it involves different ministries and actors having a common understanding and vision. For example, to create Water Safe communities and improve safe water supply, there needs to be clear roles, responsibilities and collaboration opportunities across multiple departments and ministries. The relationship and trust we have with the Ministry of Rural Development is very high already, so moving forward we will have to deepen our **coordination and engagement with the relevant ministries**.

Willingness to participate and commit to inclusive and gender equitable WASH is significantly higher when there has been collective and persistent action over time. This makes direct and singular attribution difficult to make as we can see wins that are the result of previous work by us or by others. Key examples include: the use of our research to inform donors and implementers where and how they can take a more appropriate approach to inclusive WASH; Government champions that participated or worked in the WASH sector previously in their careers; when there is a strong, congenial and open relationship between government leaders; in technical working group where different actors bring their expertise; and within groups having a common experience e.g. Women professionals in the WASH sector. Implications for our work include **collaboration and co-funding** with other organisations that have core expertise. In the immediate future, we should work with organisations that we can **leverage their expertise on sanitation in challenging environments and fiscal sludge management**.



## Research provides a foundation and entry point for systemic change, but it takes time

There is demonstrable value in conducting research and studies with tangible applications and uses. The evidence from research helps open conversations and mindset change as well as provide clear justification to decision makers during planning. When **research is conducted jointly with government actors**, it increases application of the results due to the cognitive process as well as a social pride and value.

In future, the research could be **used as a discussion point with community members** to assist government actors engage and gain buy-in from community members for their plans and budgeting on WASH. An adjustment that could be considered is how **to use research in influencing financial sources** - such as private donors or family members living outside the community but make decisions on infrastructure as they provide the money.



## Internal planning and way forward for Strategic Intents around water security

Originally, it was anticipated that the support and labour power for this would come from the regional team. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, this component has not started. The team raised the need for an **internal discussion about how this could be delivered** - whether it was a shift in the way of working, whether there were other platforms that WaterAid could engage with to start the priority on water security and WASH climate resilience.

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- 1 Video documentation: Strategy towards achieving ODF in Svay Rieng province
  - 2 PNN TV Saturday Talk: strategies to reach 100% open defecation free in Cambodia
  - 3 Sector strengthening exchange learning programme in Svay Rieng province
  - 4 PNN TV Saturday Talk: strategies to reach 100% open defecation free in Cambodia
  - 5 PNN TV Saturday Talk: responses to the WASH needs of marginalised people (part 5)
  - 6 PNN TV Saturday Talk: responses to the WASH needs of marginalised people (part 6)
  - 7 <https://countryometers.info/en/Cambodia>
  - 8 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Life experiences of brick kiln workers in Cambodia
  - 9 Our journeys, Our stories: A collection of Analysis of inequalities from 2018 and Leaving no one Behind - lived experiences of Water and Sanitation in Kampong Chhnang

# Annex 1: Learning products and publications in 2019-2020

**Strong systems with skilled professionals and engaged leaders for sustainable, equitable and inclusive WASH**



### WASH Decision Making tool



**BOTTLED WATER SERVICES  
IN RURAL CAMBODIA**

Best combined with:  
  
Purity of treated water + taste  
Bottled Water + Filter

Author: Seavea  
Funded by: WaterAid  
Date: January 2020



**FILTERS IN RURAL  
CAMBODIA**

Best combined with:  
  
Filters + Pipes or Wells

Author: K.Z  
Funded by: WaterAid  
Date: January 2020



**PIPED WATER SUPPLY  
SYSTEMS IN RURAL  
CAMBODIA**

Best combined with:  
  
Pipes + Filter + Bottled Water

Author: K.Z  
Funded by: WaterAid  
Date: January 2020

**Water Bottled Water (EN)**

**Water Filter (EN)**

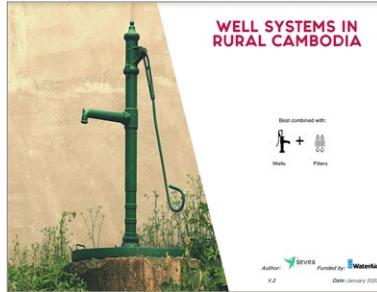
**Rural Piped Water Supply (EN)**



**RAINWATER HARVESTING  
SYSTEMS IN RURAL  
CAMBODIA**

Best combined with:  
  
Rainwater Harvesting + Filter

Author: K.Z  
Funded by: WaterAid  
Date: December 2020



**WELL SYSTEMS IN  
RURAL CAMBODIA**

Best combined with:  
  
Wells + Filters

Author: K.Z  
Funded by: WaterAid  
Date: January 2020

**Rain Water Harvesting (EN)**

**Well System (EN)**

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<b>Type:</b>	Report
<b>Published:</b>	2020
<b>Author:</b>	Seavea
<b>Objective:</b>	Provide data and process for rural WASH investment decisions.

April 2019 to March 2020 **33**



## 2018 WASH Data Pilot Survey in Kampong Chhnang province ([Khmer](#))



## Going Further: Safely Managed Sanitation (JMP Ladders) [Khmer](#)



## Going Further: Safely Managed (Perceived) Water Services [Khmer](#)



## Going Further: Hygiene Service Levels (JMP Ladders) [Khmer](#)

**Type:** Report

**Author:** Seavea

**Published:** 2019

**Objective:** Provide WASH data in Kampong Chhnang and two pager summary of findings.



## The community collective work on the construction of rainwater harvesting in O Kak and Kampong Phnov villages, Sambour district, Kratie province

**Type:** Report ([English](#))

**Author:** Rain Water Cambodia

**Published:** 2019

**Objective:** Document rain water harvesting approach in Sambour district.



## Civic Champion Development Programme for Strengthening Subnational WASH Systems

**Type:** Report ([English](#))

**Author:** Sou Sokkung

**Published:** 2019

**Objective:** Document WaterAid Cambodia's experiences implementing Civic Champion programme at sub-national level.

# Marginalised groups championing inclusive and equitable WASH



**Publication:** Leaving no one Behind: Lived Experience of Water and Sanitation in Kampong Chhnang ([Khmer](#), [English](#))

**Author:** WaterAid Cambodia

**Published:** 2019

**Objective:** Document voices and lived experiences of marginalised groups in their WASH experiences.



A man with visual impairment ([link](#))



A pregnant woman at health center ([link](#))



A women having difficulty moving travel to work ([link](#))



A girl who have difficulty moving and school ([link](#))

**Video:** My Fantasy Life

**Author:** WaterAid Cambodia

**Published:** 2019

**Objective:** Document voices and lived experiences of marginalised groups in their WASH experiences.

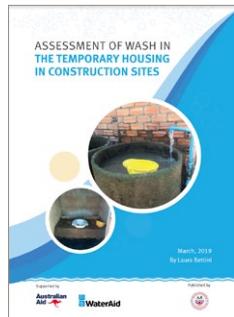


**Report:** Scoping Activities for Identifying and Engaging Diverse Groups  
[\(Link\)](#)

**Author:** WaterAid Cambodia

**Published:** 2019

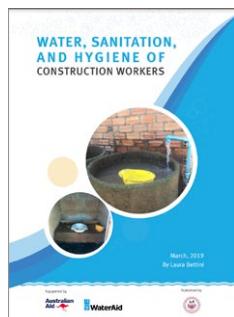
**Objective:** Document the process of identifying and engaging with marginalized groups to collect their voice and support their journey to improved WASH access.



**Full Report (English)**



**Full Report (Khmer)**



**Findings Summary (English)**



**Findings Summary (Khmer)**

**Report:** Assessment of WASH in the Temporary Housing in Construction Site

**Author:** BWTUC

**Published:** 2019

**Objective:** Assessment of WASH situations of construction workers at temporary housing in construction sites.

## A healthy start for mothers and children



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**Blog:** [\*\*The Handwashing Gap: what was taught in school vs. what is practised in healthcare facilities\*\* \(\[link\]\(#\)\)](#)

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**Author:** Ponnary Pors

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**Published:** 2019

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**Objective:** Share firsthand experiences on infection prevention control practices at health care facilities.

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