Achieving universal and equitable access to WASH for all

Practitioner perspectives and perceptions

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Achieving universal and equitable access

Where do we stand?

Rights used in practice?

Recognition of water and sanitation as human rights

LGs are pivotal but human rights remain abstract to them
The “Making the rights real” project

Materials on the HRTWS for LGs

We know the rights are useful. How can we create something that is accessible, easy to understand and motivating for LGs?
Understanding the materials’ target audience

- 42 semi-structured interviews (LG, national govts, CSOs, donors, international orgs)

- E-discussion on “Local government and rural water services that last” April-May 2015
Findings
How are the rights perceived by LGs?

• Low level of understanding of services for all and connection with the human rights not readily made

• Language of rights not widely used and (mis)understood

• Human rights seen as burdensome and confusing

• LG officials don’t necessarily see themselves as duty bearers

“This broad international goal has not been really explained to local government or local people”

“When a project is carried in a given community, we think it’s a gift rather than a right that is being satisfied.”
Findings

What influences decision making about service delivery?

- Political influence is much more influential than efforts of donors and/or formal service planning processes.

- Growing influence of rights-holders but awareness of rights doesn’t always translate into action.

- Development agencies can play an important influential role as they often engage with LGs.

“I may know that I have the right to demonstrate when I am not happy, but knowing that I will be tear gassed, then I may not do it. So a spirit of apathy... for that one [right], I let it go, I have no time for it.”
Who influences local government officials?

- Sector partners
  - Project managers
  - Campaigners & advocates
  - Capacity building specialists

- Community
  Less or more demanding of government. We influence community by working with them.

- Policies & programmes
  Set the tone in government bureaucracy. Are more or less rights compliant. We influence policies & programmes through advocacy & lobbying.

- Regulators
  Create less or more rights compliant regulations and enforces them less or more strictly. We influence regulators through advocacy & lobbying.

- Elders, role models, religious leaders
  Have influence on the public discourse. Are often accessible to the community. Can be a big blockage or helper in determining “how things are done”. We influence them by seeking their support.

- Media
  Reports on government less or more favourably and less or more in line with human rights thinking. Influences relevance of WASH in public discourse. We influence media by sharing our learnings and experience.
Findings

Challenges for achieving services for all

- Human resource and skills/capacity
- Financial and cost-recovery
- Community awareness and behaviour change
- Lack of political will and leadership
- Political interference and corruption
- Lack of geographic and technical/technology issues
- Lack of a legal framework and policy direction
- Lack of implementation of inclusive policies and strategies
- Limited local government authority or lack of an appropriate local government unit
- Lack of legal recognition of slum areas
- Lack of clear institutional responsibility for reaching excluded people
- Limited local government authority or lack of an appropriate local government unit
- Sustainability/long-term functionality of water and sanitation systems
- Lack of legal recognition of slum areas
Conclusion

• LGs are familiar with the notion of services ‘for all’ but have low understanding of what this really means in practice and it relates to rights

• There is a need to clarify and translate the rights into language that is meaningful for LGs - consistent with policies, frameworks

• Development organisations that work closely with LGs can play an important influential role in this

• The materials developed through the ‘Making the rights real’ project are aimed at assisting development organisations in doing this

• This will be critical to ensure LGs see themselves as duty bearers and understand how the human rights can help them become local heroes by achieving services for all

• Recognise support and nurture local government champions