

Lights! Camera! Action!

Roles for WASH sector supporting actors



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Since 2008, WASH Catalysts, a venture of Engineers Without Borders Canada, has been working to tackle governance challenges in Malawi's rural water supply sector. We are working to shift services from projectized approaches towards a sustainable service delivery model. Over the years and throughout our different programs supporting the sector, we have noticed several different roles that we can play to support the sector in moving forwards.

Are any of these roles missing in your sector?
Can you play any of these supporting roles?

Supporting roles	Character description	Playing the part
The Wide Angle Lens	Complements expert voices in the room by bringing details back to the overall goal of sustainable service delivery	<i>"I'm hearing that there is low confidence in Government's capacity to lead this project. But in the long run, Government will need to have the skills to manage service delivery. How can we work now to set up for that future?"</i>
The Helping Hand	Helps to get things done that are hard to prioritize day-to-day, especially change design and management	<i>"I noticed you still hadn't developed the MoUs you wanted to try using to connect more often with traditional village committees. I know that writing official documents like this can be daunting, so I drafted a rough version that we can use to start a conversation: where should we change this to suit your particular interests?"</i>
The Connector	Links actors who have a hard time having open and honest dialogue, because of roles or hierarchy	<i>"A DP told me that they wish the Ministry would ask for project pre-conditions include the filling of key staffing vacancies – but the DP wasn't comfortable suggesting this to the Ministry because they felt it would be interfering. A week later, I was talking with a Ministry staff who wished DPs would pressure for key staffing vacancies to be filled – but the Ministry wasn't comfortable asking this of DPs because they felt it would undermine their authority. Let's talk about what we can do about these vacant positions."</i>
The Assistant Referee	Checks how initiatives align with existing sector policies, practices, plans, or regulations	<i>"It seems like this might be working in parallel to the sector's existing M&E system. How can we align these so we're not undermining each others' efforts?"</i>
The Accountability Coach	Takes note of where the sector is failing to make progress on priorities and helps develop plans to reach goals	<i>"I know you care about how this project's impacts will be sustained, but I haven't heard much about how you're preparing for the exit. Would you like to arrange a time to talk about transition planning?"</i>
The Cost Counter	Reminds about long-term financial implications of decisions today	<i>"What will happen after the chlorine subsidy ends? Who will be able and ready to take up that cost in the long-run? Why will they pay for it later but not now? What do we need to prepare for now?"</i>



7th RWSN Forum
 29 Nov - 1 Dec 2016
 Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

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