

2015

# WASH Global Advocacy Landscape



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WASH Advocates

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## Introduction

Advocacy has become a foundational part of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sustainable service delivery globally. The number of organizations and coalitions engaged in advocacy in developed and developing countries has increased significantly in the last 10 years including increases in dedicated advocacy staff, increases in budget allocations, new and amended legislation, and improvements in citizen rights and government accountability.

In 2005, Water Advocates became the first independent advocacy organization for WASH in the United States. In 2015, WASH Advocates, the follow-on organization to Water Advocates, will sunset. This landscape intends to provide a 10-year lookback at the progression of advocacy for WASH; a current snapshot of WASH advocacy globally including gaps and areas of opportunity; and recommendations for WASH Advocacy in 2016 and beyond. The landscape intends to demonstrate the incredible work and accomplishments of the diverse actors in the WASH advocacy space. This document does not cover all WASH advocacy efforts across the globe but intends to capture examples of the advocacy work happening around the world.

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## WASH Advocacy: A Lookback

Over 40 years ago, the United Nations Water Conference was one of the first global advocacy movements to raise awareness about the importance of water in developing countries. Since then, advocacy efforts across the globe have brought attention to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and elevated it as an important development issue.

### Global history and movements

In 1977, the United Nations gathered Member States for the UN Water Conference held in Mar del Plata, Argentina. The conference focused on

“All peoples, whatever their stage of development and social and economic conditions, have the right to access to drinking water in quantities and the quality equal to their basic needs.”

*UN Water Conference Action Plan, Mar del Plata, March 1977*

water resources as well as water for communities. A result of the conference was an *Action Plan* that recognized water as a right for the first time. To continue to bring global awareness to water and sanitation, the conference also recommended the years 1980 to 1990 serve as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. The goal of that decade would be to provide potable water and sanitation facilities to all, and to accelerate political will and investment in the water sector.

The conference was a launching point for advocacy for WASH. After the UN declared the [International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade](#), the 1980s provided an opportunity and obligation for all countries (developed and developing) to focus on water and sanitation. The decade called on Member States to focus on political prioritization, policy creation and implementation, and resource mobilization. Following the campaign, the Dutch and UK governments held the [Ministerial Conference on Drinking Water and Environmental Sanitation](#) in Noordwijk, The Netherlands in 1994 to help drive political will into action.

With the UN serving as one of the first advocates for WASH, the number of global movements and organizations involved in advocacy for WASH has increased over the last 40 years. WASH has appeared in many UN conferences and conventions including ones focused solely on WASH and others focused on children, gender, and sustainability. After extensive advocacy, water appeared as a target under Goal 7, “Ensure Environmental Sustainability,” in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), launched in 2000. With the help of sanitation advocates, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 recognized sanitation as a key component of the MDGs and retrospectively introduced it under target 7C. The MDGs were an effective advocacy tool used at all levels.

The Water and Sanitation Decade sparked several advocacy efforts including increased focus on advocacy by the [Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council \(WSSCC\)](#).

Created in 1990, WSSCC began integrating advocacy into their work in 2000. They were a pioneer for WASH advocacy and remain a strong advocacy voice for the entire sector today. During the early years of their advocacy work, they were responsible for many global campaigns and advocacy materials, particularly for sanitation and hygiene, that continue today. In addition to the work of WSSCC, [Freshwater Action Network](#) provided another opportunity to advocate at the developing country level for adoption and implementation of the MDGs. This network created a platform and voice for civil society in developing countries.

UN-Water was formalized in 2003 as an inter-agency coordination mechanism. They coordinate World Water Day and other global campaigns focused on water and sanitation. They have extensive advocacy resources associated with each of the campaigns.

In 2005, the UN launched another advocacy campaign to drive progress for the MDGs for water and sanitation called the [International Decade for Action 'Water for Life'](#). This campaign intended to bring awareness and action again for the neglected WASH issue. As the issue gained attention and traction, there was a push to ensure that WASH was recognized officially as a human right by the UN. Advocacy came from human rights, gender, WASH, and other groups to ensure this declaration passed.

In preparation for the [International Year of Sanitation](#) (IYS) in 2008 came the launch of the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA) in 2007. SuSanA played (and still plays) a key role in advocacy for sanitation within the WASH sector. The IYS was a pivotal point in advocacy for sanitation. For the first time the WASH sector was speaking with a cohesive set of messages for this neglected issue.

In 2010, the UN officially declared water and sanitation a human right. Since then, the UN, civil society, the private sector, and other actors have continued to advocate for WASH at all levels.

Other important international platforms have contributed to global WASH advocacy. For example, the [Sanitation and Water for All](#) partnership – originally referred to as the Global Framework for Action (GF4A) and initiated by the Dutch and UK governments – launched in 2009 as a mechanism to “catalyze political leadership and action, improve accountability and use scarce resources more effectively.” Strategically planned in coordination with the World Bank meetings which occur every two years, in 2010, the partnership brought Ministers of Finance to the table to secure commitments for action including budgeting for WASH. To date there have been three High Level Meetings (HLMs) in Washington, DC and each has garnished more participation from both developed and developing country representatives as well as commitments. Despite the success of these meetings, the number of SWA members does not compare to the number of countries still in need of WASH services.

## History of WASH advocacy in the US and Europe

Advocacy for WASH in Europe and the US has been ongoing for many years. Over the last 10 years, there has been a significant increase in the number of actors fully dedicated to advocacy for this issue. This can be seen through the increases in funding; designated advocacy staff; campaigns; organizational frameworks and advocacy strategies; and external resources and materials to demonstrate effective ways to conduct advocacy. There has also been a rise in champions in other development sectors that have integrated WASH messaging into their own nutrition, child survival, education, or other advocacy work.

**In the United States** in the 1980s and 90s, there were individuals within organizations and the US government (USG) who were championing and advocating for WASH but efforts were uncoordinated and often sporadic. In 2005, Water Advocates began to fill this gap in WASH advocacy. As the first fully funded organization solely focused on advocacy for water and sanitation, Water Advocates raised the level of importance of the water and sanitation issue within US policies and budgets as well as with



other US actors (government, academic, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civic and faith groups). Water Advocates, along with the support of key Members of Congress and other US-based NGOs, advocated for the introduction and passage of the [Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act](#) in 2005.<sup>1</sup> This advocacy success was the first of many over the last 10 years by Water Advocates and many others. Other successes in advocacy included increasing the budget allocated for WASH from the US government<sup>2</sup> (see table 2 below<sup>3</sup>); hiring and institutionalizing the Global Water Coordinator position at USAID; and the launch of USAID's Water and Development Strategy that includes language on post-project monitoring and resolution.<sup>4</sup> There have been a multitude of collaborative campaigns and actions around World Water Day, Global Handwashing Day, and World Toilet Day focused on advocacy with US decision makers. Many

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<sup>1</sup> The Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act, passed in 2005, strategizes ways to address the accessible safe water challenges that occur for the global poor.

<sup>2</sup> For FY 2015, congress enacted USD 382.5 million for the Water for the Poor Act.

<sup>3</sup> This table highlights USAID funding for the water sector from fiscal years 2003-2009. Additional funding information for fiscal years 2009-2014 can be found here: [2009](#), [2010](#), [2011](#), [2012](#), [2013](#), and [2014](#)

<sup>4</sup> *Resolution* is the process of addressing problems identified through monitoring and evaluation results. The USAID Water and Development Strategy states, "Will seek investments in longer-term monitoring and evaluation of its water activities in order to assess sustainability beyond the typical USAID Program Cycle and to enable reasonable support to issues that arise subsequent to post-completion of project implementation."

individual organizations, including those with a multi-sectoral development mission, have engaged in these awareness days and reach out to their grassroots networks to support legislation and raise awareness.

**TABLE 2: ESTIMATED USAID OBLIGATIONS FOR THE WATER SECTOR BY THEME, FISCAL YEARS 2003–2009 (MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)**

Theme	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Drinking Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene	159.80	239.80	216.93	265.00	213.22	389.92	481.85
Water Resources Management	105.70	82.50	60.73	56.00	27.41	58.58	30.27
Water Productivity	115.60	68.40	45.35	22.50	17.39	38.91	45.30
Disaster Risk Reduction	20.60	10.00	6.76	5.84	5.65	2.20	41.33
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>401.70</b>	<b>400.70</b>	<b>329.77</b>	<b>349.34</b>	<b>263.67</b>	<b>489.61</b>	<b>598.75</b>

Coordination of efforts increased with the establishment of coalitions of organizations focused on advocacy for WASH, such as the WASH Working Group housed at InterAction and the Health/WASH Network coordinated by PATH. The power of these coalitions to create cohesive messaging and advocate individually and collectively with the same goals and objectives has been a key component of WASH advocacy efforts in the US. The membership within these coalitions has changed over the years, but has always included WASH-focused organizations (i.e. Millennium Water Alliance, WaterAid, Water.org, etc.) as well as multi-sectoral development organizations (i.e. CARE, PATH, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), World Vision, etc.). Individual organizations, as singular actors or in partnership, have used celebrity power, coordinated events, and media stunts to influence US decision makers and bring media attention to the issue. Grassroots advocacy for WASH in the US has also changed over the last 10 years. Organizations such as charity: water and Water.org have led efforts to raise awareness among the American public and encourage compassion for the WASH challenge. Typically, grassroots engagement in the US has been associated with fundraising, but the educational component of their advocacy has changed the way the US public views water and sanitation in developing countries.

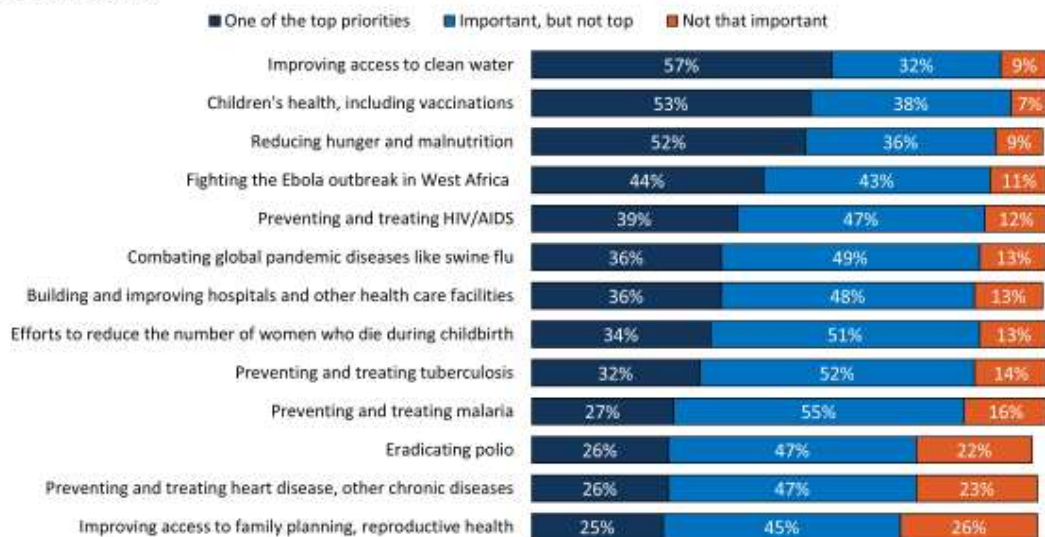
A poll conducted by the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) in 2014 found that American’s think “improving access to clean water” should be one of the top priorities of US government contributions to improve health in developing countries (see chart below).

In addition to policy and budget advocacy, Water Advocates and its successor organization WASH Advocates supported the creation and facilitation of the WASH Grantmakers Network to engage funders who are interested in or already supporting WASH in developing countries. Through advocacy on an individual basis, in-person Network meetings, and ongoing communication, the WASH Grantmakers Network aimed to increase knowledge sharing between grantmakers, as well as drive more sustainable investments in the sector. In addition to broadening the number of grantmakers involved, the Network brought together diverse types of funders for WASH including corporations, foundations, private philanthropists, and bilaterals. As with any advocacy, the goal of most US-based advocacy efforts is to raise awareness and action

among decision makers and ultimately increase the amount and effectiveness of resources going towards WASH in developing countries; the same was true of the WASH Grantmakers Network.

## Clean Water, Children’s Health, Nutrition Rise To Top Of Public’s Global Health Priorities

I’m going to read you some different areas in which the U.S. might contribute to efforts to improve health in developing countries, and for each, I’d like you to tell me if this should be one of the top priorities, important but not a top priority, or not that important.



NOTE: Items asked of half sample. Not at all important (vol.) and Don't know/Refused answers not shown.  
SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted December 2-9, 2014)



**European** advocacy for WASH spans across many countries and organizations. In some countries there are one or two key organizations leading advocacy efforts, and in other countries the advocacy-focused groups have formed coalitions to lobby and raise awareness for WASH with one voice and collaborative messaging as groups have done in the US. For example, WaterAid UK and TearFund have been holding the UK government accountable to its commitments and raising awareness among the general population since the 1990s. The Dutch WASH Alliance in The Netherlands brings together WASH organizations for both collaborative programming and advocacy work. These partnerships have raised the profile of WASH in Europe as a major development challenge. The Danish, Dutch, French, Finnish, German<sup>5</sup>, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Swiss, and British governments are all supporting some level of WASH work and civil society in each country has played a significant role in ensuring that support continues year after year.

<sup>5</sup> The German government has provided core funding for the secretariat function of the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance since 2007. SuSanA has over 250 partner organisations and almost 6,000 members as of Nov 2015.



Many European bilateral governments have agreements or established fora in which to consult with implementing partners and other stakeholders. Many of these fora are formalized – for example, the Swedish Water House or Dutch Water House. They provide a focus for advocacy in addition to their other work.

As in the US, European WASH advocacy efforts took many shapes and forms over the years, including behind-the-scenes and formal meetings with national level decision makers about investments in and policies around foreign assistance for WASH; country, regional, or global campaign participation and/or leadership; and public demonstrations and grassroots outreach.

In 1981, during the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, WaterAid was created to support safe water projects in impoverished countries around the world. Shortly thereafter, WaterAid found that advocacy was a gap in the UK and global landscape. In the mid 1990's, WaterAid began to take a more serious and strategic approach to advocacy.

Action research played, and still plays, a huge role in advocacy for WASH. Many European organizations such as IRC (formerly IRC the International Water and Sanitation Centre) have created guidelines or standards that the WASH sector used to advocate for global change in WASH policies and budgets. This is something that was historically lacking, but has improved in the last 10 years. Over the last decade, many joint publications provided the evidence base policy leaders were looking for to inform their decision-making.

## History of developing country advocacy for WASH

Advocates for WASH in numerous developing countries have been around for many years. In the last 15 years, the coordination of their advocacy efforts has increased significantly at the national, regional, and global levels. Regional conferences such as [AfricaSan](#)<sup>6</sup>, [South Asian Conference on Sanitation \(SacoSan\)](#), and [Conferencia Latinoamericana de Saneamiento \(LatinoSan\)](#) played and continue to play a key role in advocacy to and with developing country governments. They were a precursor to SWA and were first held in 2002, 2003, and 2007 respectively. Through advocacy within and between governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector, the conferences have guided regional agendas for sanitation and hygiene.

Some of the first formal efforts to coordinate and provide a voice for developing country civil society were the regional coalitions of Freshwater Action Network (FAN).

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<sup>6</sup> AfricaSan is an initiative “to promote political prioritization of sanitation and hygiene and attended by Ministers responsible for sanitation and the key agencies working in sanitation and water in Africa”  
<http://www.africasan.com/pages/6/background>

Established after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Water Forum in 2000, FAN added an additional platform for WASH implementing organizations regarding their participation in global and local processes for WASH. From the beginning, FAN intended to be southern-led<sup>7</sup> and became “the voice of organized civil society working on water issues.” Between 2003 and 2008, five regional networks emerged in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, including the African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEWS), FAN South Asia (FANSA), Central American Freshwater Action Network (FANCA), FAN Mexico, and FAN South America (FANAS). Over the last 10 years, the participation in and strength of each regional network has fluctuated.

Feeding into regional civil society networks were national and sub-national organizations and networks in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. National level advocacy networks emerged to coordinate civil society voices to advocate for changes in policies and budgets related to WASH. In 2000, UWASNET (Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network) launched as an umbrella organization to coordinate civil society at the national level in Uganda. UWASNET focused on transparency and accountability, in addition to contributing to and supporting national level dialogues between NGOs, CBOs, and the Ugandan government. Following the creation of UWASNET, other national coordinating organizations emerged including KEWASNET in Kenya, TAWASNET in Tanzania, and CONIWAS in Ghana. Advocacy alliances in Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nepal, and Uganda, supported by The Dutch WASH Alliance, started in the same time window. These alliances had both programmatic goals and goals to influence decision making on WASH service delivery.

In 2010, over 200 representatives of community water associations from 12 countries in Latin America gathered to share successes and challenges in their work. They also “talked about the importance of strengthening their participation in partnerships to achieve social and political recognition in the decision-making process of their countries.”<sup>8</sup> Meetings of civil society from the local, regional, and national levels in developing countries were a great way to share knowledge, build capacity of all stakeholders, and advocate for stronger policies and increased budgets.

More recently, similar initiatives have emerged in India and other countries in South East Asia.

## **WASH Advocacy: The Current Situation**

The momentum has continued to grow for WASH advocacy around the world. In the last few years, the number of organizations engaging in or planning to engage in more

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<sup>7</sup> Southern-led refers to being led by representatives of developing countries, rather than by organizations in developed countries.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.avina.net/eng/oportunidades/acceso-al-agua/>

strategic advocacy is impressive. In addition to organizations focused solely on WASH advocacy, traditional WASH implementing organizations are seeing the value in planning and implementing strategic advocacy alongside infrastructure, behavior change, community engagement, and service delivery work.

## The Global Situation in 2015

With the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, many advocates for WASH at both a global level and national level are looking toward the next steps in achieving sustainable and universal coverage of WASH. Within the last few years leading up to the SDGs, most of the global advocacy focused on Member States and those with influence over the next global goals. There were efforts surrounding the inclusion of hygiene in the water and sanitation goal as well as outreach and collaboration with other development sectors to integrate WASH into draft language for other related goals such as health and education. For example, the nutrition sector welcomed input from WASH advocates throughout their engagement with the SDGs and outreach processes to Member States and UN leadership for the inclusion of a nutrition goal. This stemmed from years of advocacy to and within the nutrition sector. The collaboration between technical WASH actors and WASH advocates, in addition to cross-sectoral coordination, remains important to ensure that evidence translates into the most appropriate messages for advocacy targets.

Currently, the most influential global advocacy mechanism is the Sanitation and Water for All partnership that brings together Ministers of Water and Finance from developed and developing countries, along with external support agencies, civil society organizations, and other development partners to prioritize WASH within each country. The preparation is underway for the Fourth SWA High Level Meeting (HLM) in 2016. Since the last HLM in 2014, national level advocates have been supporting their government leaders in the process of identifying the next set of commitments. At the global and national levels, there are accountability and monitoring mechanisms that provide the leverage that advocates need to engage and hold their governments accountable to their commitments. The SWA review from 2014 showed however that in only 25% of the countries, civil society organizations (CSOs) are involved in both the drafting and monitoring of SWA commitments. This demonstrates that the monitoring mechanism within SWA is still weak. In 2015, SWA held a partnership meeting in The Hague that brought together civil society and national leadership to discuss the next steps leading up the HLM in 2016.

The Keep Your Promises Campaign currently run by End Water Poverty has nearly 750,000 supporters globally. The main purpose of the campaign is to hold governments accountable for the promises already made to recognize and realize water and sanitation as human rights. The campaign provides toolkits (election, digital campaigning, etc.), appropriate messages, and social media platforms to ensure all

voices can be heard. In addition to WASH specific global advocacy work, other global development sector advocacy initiatives incorporate WASH messages and outreach. For example, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement includes multi-sectoral approaches in their framework, including WASH. Their website houses WASH messaging, reports, and case studies that outline the links between WASH and nutrition and they actively engage WASH actors in their Civil Society Alliances. More information on WASH integration is located later in this landscape.

## Current State of WASH Advocacy in the US and Europe

From more strategic programming for WASH advocacy to grassroots awareness raising for sanitation, the state of WASH advocacy in the US and Europe is continually improving. There are more actors in the WASH advocacy space than ever before and it continues to grow. At the end of 2015, WASH Advocates will close its doors, but the WASH sector is being left in good hands. By no means has WASH Advocates been the only actor in the space nor were they the first but they have played a huge part in driving US-based advocacy forward for the last 10 years. There are no shortage of great advocates within multi-sectoral and WASH-specific organizations working on US government advocacy and advocacy for more sustainable practices including a service delivery approach and effective MERL (monitoring, evaluation, resolution, and learning).

The key organizations driving US policy advocacy are InterAction, Millennium Water Alliance, WASH Advocates, WaterAid, and World Vision. All of these organizations have dedicated staff to coordinate efforts and push advocacy forward. One example of a coordinating mechanism for advocacy to the US government is the WASH Working Group hosted by InterAction and chaired by World Vision and WaterAid. The Working Group sets policy and budget goals and targets as well as creates and disseminates supporting messages to the members of the group. This allows the WASH sector to coordinate, use shared messages, and speak with one voice. The passage of the [Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act](#) in 2014<sup>9</sup> is an advocacy success that could not have been accomplished without the members of the Working Group and other WASH advocacy partners.

In the US and Europe, grassroots advocacy is also on the rise. Groups like the Global Poverty Project through their Global Citizen platform have been able to educate youth around the globe about poverty, health, water and sanitation, and more. Organizations such as charity: water, CARE, NRDC, WaterAid, Water.org, and Water For People have all educated the general public about the importance of WASH and encouraged them to take action. Celebrities have played their part including the creative advocacy work of

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<sup>9</sup> The Water for the World Act was passed by the U.S. Government and signed into law in 2014 to aid in providing safe water to those around the world that lack it.

Matt Damon for Water.org or the number of stars that have performed at the Global Citizen Festival in New York where sanitation was on the agenda.

Many organizations in both the US and Europe have started to integrate advocacy into their work by creating advocacy or influence strategies. In addition, some organizations are forming alliances to do collective advocacy around sustainability, service delivery, and systems change. Aguaconsult, IRC, WaterAid, and Water For People have joined together to put forth an Agenda for Change. This concept is a new way for organizations to work toward the Sustainable Development Goals and full sustainable WASH coverage across the globe. This type of advocacy work is between organizations and occurs mostly within the WASH sector. This is very different than the grassroots or external advocacy mentioned prior. In addition to this collaboration to drive WASH sector change, organizations like Improve International are advocating to WASH partners, funders, and the US government to pay more attention to sustainability and monitoring and evaluation.

Recently, bilateral and private funding has gone to support teams of international and local NGOs to strengthen the capacity of developing country advocates as well as work to identify government advocates. Initiatives like WASH IT! with funding from the Dutch Government or the West Africa Sanitation Service Delivery program funded by USAID are great examples of the growing interest in WASH advocacy by bilateral donors.

There are many organizations that have historically been engaged in WASH advocacy in Europe and they continue to make it a key component of their work as well as a programming priority such as IRC, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, SNV, Simavi, Tearfund, and WaterAid.

### **Current snapshot of developing country advocacy for WASH**

National and sub-national advocacy for WASH is growing in many countries. In some countries such as India, Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda, there are strong networks of civil society organizations (CSOs) and national level dialogues that are making incremental changes in policies and budgets for WASH. In other countries, networks exist but the level of collaboration and coordination with the government is weak. There has been some success in raising awareness of water and sanitation as human rights at district and community levels. In addition to work at the national or regional level in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, advocacy is happening at the sub-national level in these countries. As citizens do not often know their rights when it comes to WASH, many NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) are working with communities to ensure that they are aware of their rights and the laws that exist in their country. They are building individual grassroots capacity to use their voice to demand the WASH services they are entitled to.

The [India Sanitation Coalition](#) is one example of a network that brings together corporations, civil society, government, financial institutions, media, donors/bi-laterals/multilaterals, experts, etc. Several of the [task forces](#) housed under this Coalition focus on advocacy and national dialogues.

Kenya is a great example of a shift in advocacy approaches due to changes in government. After decentralization in Kenya, the planning and financing for WASH became the county governments' responsibility. This change forced WASH advocates to expand beyond the national level to focus on county level decision makers. Groups like Kenya Water for Health Organization (KWAHO) and Millennium Water Alliance (MWA) have done a great job targeting their advocacy towards county budgets and political prioritization.

More and more national and regional level coordinating mechanisms are emerging globally. CLOCSAS (Confederacion Latinoamericana de Organizaciones Comunitarias de Servicios de Agua y Saneamiento) continues to hold annual meetings of their members, consisting of leaders of community water associations. Advocacy is a key focus area of these yearly conferences. Although CLOCSAS is a coordinating body, it is very different from the NGO networks that exist in many African countries. Due to the huge success of this network, there is interest from Fundacion Avina and other partners to see this model adopted and adapted in Africa. Planning and knowledge exchange is already underway between these continents.

Regional networks under the FAN umbrella are playing a key role in driving regional civil society coordination and change. In the last few years, the global umbrella for the regional FAN networks faced challenges as it separated from WaterAid and closed. This provided a gap in support and funding for the regional networks. During this time, some networks thrived such as FANSA (FAN South Asia) and others went dormant. FAN at the global level and several of the regional networks that faced challenges have been revived, including ANEW in Africa. As of today, FAN networks will continue to provide a strong advocacy presence in each region. The strength of these networks, either national or regional, depends on the leadership and contributions of individual organizations. With strong leadership and strategies, these networks provide the coordinating mechanisms necessary to change the political and budget landscape for WASH.

Support for developing country advocacy by international NGOs is on the rise. NGO headquarters are now providing more financial and technical support to field offices to do strategic advocacy than in past years. Based on the growing number of organizations looking to invest in advocacy in the last year, this trend will continue. This goes hand in hand with current initiatives such as the WASH Advocacy Challenge that combined capacity building and training for advocacy, technical assistance, and small-scale grants to support developing country advocacy. Another example is the advocacy research, capacity building, and strategic planning efforts of Water and Sanitation for the Urban

Poor (WSUP) at the country program level. The SUN and Action Contre la Faim (ACF) West Africa Regional Advocacy Workshop is yet another example. This workshop in Senegal focused on capacity building and training for current and future advocacy in the nutrition space, inclusive of collective advocacy with WASH partners to ensure an effective multi-sectoral approach. It was a collaboration between WASH and nutrition partners to strengthen advocacy capacity to effect cross-sectoral policies and budgets in West Africa.

At the developing country level, there are also accountability opportunities when leadership makes national level political commitments. For example, the Government of Nepal committed to “universal coverage of girls’ toilets in schools by 2017.” This commitment provides the advocacy community the entry point and leverage they need to drive school sanitation forward. Another example is the commitment made by India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) which includes toilet construction and the goal of an open defecation free India by 2019. As with Nepal, this is one of the largest political commitments for WASH globally that advocacy actors in India and around the globe can rally around. These few examples only touch on the vast advocacy work currently underway in developing countries around the world.

### **The Integration Landscape: the WASH Advocates perspective**

In the last few years, WASH Advocates employed an evidence-based and evidence-driven advocacy strategy with partners outside of the WASH sector (USG, implementers, advocates, UN agencies, donors). This effort aimed to empower partners to incorporate WASH integration messaging and interventions in their projects and advocacy efforts; increase awareness of the importance of WASH for international health and development and convert it into tangible actions and increased funding; and facilitate conversations, collaborations, and partnerships between stakeholders.

Much of WASH Advocates’ work has been influencing existing frameworks and platforms to include WASH in messaging and activities. Along the way, many of our partners have begun to include WASH in their efforts from conception. Going forward, WASH Advocates is confident that much of our message will continue to be spread through our current allies and champions in these sectors and organizations. This section provides a sample of integration efforts but is not an exhaustive list of integration advocacy.

#### **Education**

The work on WASH in Schools (WinS) advocacy, driven mainly by the WASH sector, has brought in more education actors over the last several years to ensure that Ministries of Education are taking leadership for WASH in all schools. This is happening at the national, regional, and global levels. UNICEF currently leads a partnership of over 70

organizations and coordinates publications and advocacy on this issue. Sessions at major international conferences have raised the profile for WinS but, again, mostly within the WASH sector. There are several key education groups that are driving forward the WASH messages within their own organizations and externally including UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) and UNGEI (United Nations Girls' Education Initiative). Key publications are also driving WinS advocacy. The '[Three Star Approach](#)' is guiding governments and WinS partners towards a stepwise approach to improve WinS standards<sup>10</sup>. '[Raising Even More Clean Hands](#)' is another advocacy focused publication.

## Gender

There is a great amount of integrated advocacy happening specifically focused on the linkages between WASH, women, and girls. There are a variety of approaches to these linkages, including education or WinS, gender-based violence, menstrual hygiene management (MHM), or maternal, newborn, and child health. No matter the approach, collaboration between gender and WASH champions has grown exponentially in the last few years. Organizations like WaterAid have been working on this issue with their gender counterparts for years. Through advocacy-focused publications such as the Every Newborn Action Plan, WASH has been mentioned or fully integrated into gender advocacy. For three years, WASH United has been leading an advocacy coalition around MHM that now has nearly 300 members. Each year during May, the coalition members participate in a month-long social media campaign called *Menstravaganza*, which culminates in Menstrual Hygiene Day on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May.



MHM has been mainly a sub-set of the WASH sector but there is genuine interest from the gender, sexual and reproductive health, and education sectors. WASH Advocates has capitalized on the momentum of MHM in efforts to bring external partners in to the WASH space. To this end, WASH Advocates has engaged with partners (academia, implementers, advocates, UN agencies) who are part of the MHM movement to ensure the WASH lens continues to be represented in MHM messaging and advocacy work while also engaging appropriate partners from other sectors.

## Freshwater Conservation

In 2013, the African Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG) funded by USAID created the Freshwater Conservation and WASH Guidelines that outlined four areas that the

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<sup>10</sup> Models in South East Asia include the Fit for School Programme supported by GIZ, SEAMEO INNOTECH, UNICEF, Save the Children, and World Vision. <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/14407.html>



environmental conservation and WASH communities could do to drive more collaborative work including advocacy to the US government. One of the most exciting areas of engagement is the integrated monitoring and evaluation framework created in 2014, driven by Conservation International. This is the first step in providing the evidence for integrated advocacy at the national level in developing countries.

### Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)

The NTD community has several advocacy mechanisms including the STH (soil-transmitted helminthiasis) Coalition which is cross-sectoral and brings together private sector, technical experts, implementing organizations, and advocates. The Coalition has a work stream focused on supporting advocacy and resource mobilization. In addition to the STH Coalition, the Global Network for NTDs has been working with many organizations in multiple sectors for collaborative lobbying with the US government through individual high-level meetings and general public engagement via social media Twitter chats.

There are multiple collaborative resources available for WASH and NTD integration that have been driven by advocacy. There is an online manual co-created by WASH and NTDs organizations that contains a chapter specifically devoted to advocacy and how to advocate collectively. The manual provides technical information but with an underlying mission to improve policies in developing countries that would improve both WASH and NTDs. Although collaboration between actors is happening, the push to incorporate NTDs into WASH work is currently stronger than the reverse.

### Nutrition

The greatest successes appear with the nutrition sector. The number champions for WASH in the nutrition sector and tangible outputs that incorporate or mention WASH are numerous. The USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy includes WASH as a key intervention, and a WASH amendment was added to the Global Food Security Act, a piece of legislation considered in the US government in 2015. There continues to be collaborative advocacy both in the US with 1,000 Days and globally under the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Network (SUN CSN). Many other actors have begun to drive WASH and nutrition advocacy forward globally. The German WASH Network hosted the [Bonn WASH Nutrition Forum](#) in November 2015, bringing together sector professionals from WASH and nutrition for a political dialogue and thematic discussion on moving collaborative policy and programs forward. Through joint sector conference sessions, advocacy documents, and messaging, WASH and nutrition actors are collaborating for common advocacy goals. These events, workshops, and trainings occurred in the US, Europe and developing countries.

## Gaps and Areas for Opportunity

In 2010 with the sunset of Water Advocates, FSG and CARE created the “U.S. WASH Advocacy Landscape Report” and “The WASH Advocacy Landscape: Preparing for the Sunset of Water Advocates” report, respectively. The purpose of the reports was to assess WASH advocacy in the US and to identify areas of success and gaps within the sector. In addition, each report provided recommendations for the future of WASH advocacy in the US. Despite the efforts of WASH Advocates staff over the last 5 years to fill the gaps, many still remain and need attention if the sector wants to achieve the SDG for WASH by 2030.

### **1. Lack of human resources and organizational capacity**

Although dedicated advocacy staff within organizations has increased over the last ten years, there is still a need for more individuals working part or full time on advocacy for WASH, especially with the closing of WASH Advocates.

### **2. Knowledge sharing and communications**

The knowledge sharing currently happening is typically from the global south to global north or vice versa. There have been small and infrequent gatherings of developing country actors to provide south-to-south learning and sharing. Along with other actors (WSSCC, IRC, ACRA-CCS, Fundacion Avina, FAN, etc.), WASH Advocates has convened these types of knowledge sharing opportunities. With the planned sunset this will be a gap.

### **3. Funding for advocacy**

Recently, WASH advocacy has been funded by several private foundations including the Hilton Foundation, Howard Buffet Foundation, Osprey Foundation, and Wallace Genetic Foundation (WASH Advocates’ funders). In addition, the Gates Foundation has funded advocacy work through the Triple-S program, SWASH+, and smaller WASH-related programs. Most of this funding has ended and there is a need to garner more support for advocacy from the donor community. There is also currently funding from the US and Dutch governments for specific programs, but the gap in funding still exists.

### **4. Advocacy with donors on sustainability, integration, systems change, and multiple uses of data**

The WASH Grantmakers Network and WASHfund.org are two mechanisms to try to address the gap of donor engagement. Through events (in-person and online) the funding community has been engaged in some of these conversations but it is not enough. Donor champions in these key areas are needed to bring their colleagues from other corporations, foundations, bi-laterals, or multilaterals on board.

### **5. Institutionalizing and mainstreaming advocacy at the national and sub-national level**

Advocacy is often an afterthought. This is a major gap with many organizations, which need to be more strategic and intentional in WASH advocacy.

### **6. Disjointed messaging to inform policy and practice**

Currently, there are many actors in the WASH advocacy space. The diverse actor groups mean diverse messages and leads to a lack of cohesive messaging to external audiences. Disjointed messages confuse and frustrate decision makers and do not lend themselves to effective changes.

**7. Strong grassroots movements in developed and developing countries**

Grassroots advocacy is often not coordinated and individual organizations deliver different messages and “asks” of their audience. There is a major gap in lack of coordinated grassroots advocacy campaigns such as the 1980s and 1990s “Don’t Drink and Drive” campaign.

**8. Coordinating mechanisms aren’t coordinating within developing countries**

There are many umbrella organizations and coordinating mechanisms in developing countries but they do not always work together. For instance, there are three groups in Uganda (UWASNET, NETWAS, and Uganda WASH Alliance) that seem to work in parallel with overlap of members and similar missions.

## **WASH Advocacy: The Future**

### **Recommendations for future engagement**

Moving forward, there are several next steps that advocates for WASH can take to make WASH advocacy more effective and achieve sustainable universal coverage. There are recommendations for what individual organizations can do, as well as sector-wide steps to take.

#### **Within Organizations**

1. Hire and fund dedicated staff to focus on advocacy. This could be a full time advocacy staff member or dedicated percentage of time devoted to advocacy of a current full time employee.
2. Create and implement strategic advocacy plans.

#### **Within the WASH Sector (between organizations)**

1. Conduct strategic planning across organizations within a country. Follow the lead and build on current collaborations already present.
2. Participate in and support national level dialogues in developing countries. When no national or sub-national civil society coalition exists, start the process to create one using the advocacy capacity already in country.
3. Continue to provide platforms and opportunities for cross-country learning and knowledge sharing. Increase the frequency and quality of the opportunities.
4. Conduct more training for advocates and non-advocates in developing countries on strategic advocacy planning.
5. Track advocacy and demonstrate the effectiveness and impact. This can help increase funding as well as improve the advocacy work to achieve greater impact.
6. Conduct stakeholder, policy, and budget mapping at the national and subnational level in developed and developing countries.

7. Engage and support global advocacy efforts including the Sanitation and Water for All process and meeting as well as international days of recognition.
8. Work more effectively with other development sectors and engage with existing platforms such as the Global Campaign for Education or Scaling Up Nutrition.

Diverse organizations ranging from donors, academia, and implementing organizations engage in advocacy at different levels. WASH advocacy continues to remain strong in many organizations and coalitions. Some organizations are engaged in advocacy within a specific program or project and others have advocacy or influencing strategies that engage all programs across the organization. To learn more about the diverse organizations involved in advocacy as well as additional resources, view the Global Advocacy Resource Guide found on the IRC website [www.ircwash.org](http://www.ircwash.org). The momentum for WASH advocacy is stronger than ever and will continue to grow in 2016 and beyond.