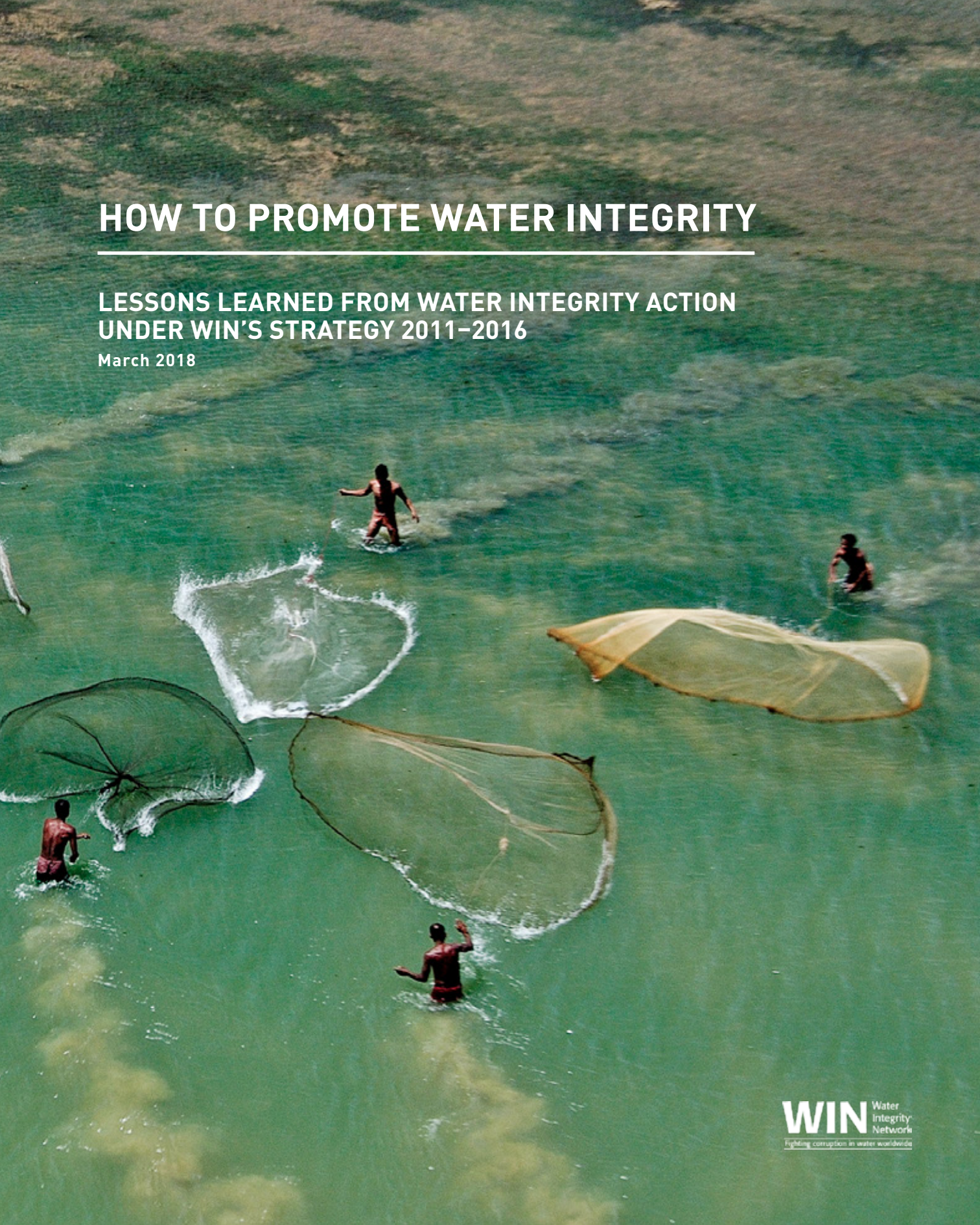


HOW TO PROMOTE WATER INTEGRITY

LESSONS LEARNED FROM WATER INTEGRITY ACTION UNDER WIN'S STRATEGY 2011-2016

March 2018



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FOREWORD

WIN's journey in the water sector has been one of learning: trying to understand the different strands of corruption, their sources, and ways of countering them. We have drawn lessons by sifting through our experiences of the last several years in an effort to analyse and come to terms with corruption in a way which can be absorbed and used by those who actively seek to promote high ethical standards of governance and management in the sector. We offer our accumulated knowledge, with the implicit understanding that much more remains to be done. But at the very least this report should attract the attention of those who occupy offices of authority and influence as well as those who seek to invest in water security programmes.

At times, we have encountered an impatience with the subject of integrity in the sector, although that may be slowly changing. Too often, good practice in the water sector, as indeed in others, is viewed as simply applying techniques, without undergoing the rigour of examining governance systems, centres of influence and power, and the routing of financial resources.

Experiences we discuss in this report include actions taken by public authorities and others, covering several facets of the fight for integrity: the need to anticipate rather than react, the use of tools and processes which increase transparency and accountability, and, crucially, the importance of building coalitions of committed partners – not only to strengthen voices of advocacy but also to bring new insights to the task.

Underlying any and all discussions of increasing efficiencies and improving processes in the water sector is the moral imperative. The march towards water security goals often leaves behind a residue of people, disadvantaged and voiceless because they have been bypassed or short-changed by more powerful forces. Unwavering attention to this injustice is an undertaking which does and will continue to engage WIN's commitment.

Ravi Narayanan

Chair, Water Integrity Network

INTRODUCTION

The issue of integrity, the issue of corruption, is essential to achieving any single Sustainable Development Goal. Because if you support programmes, for example, in the water sector but the funds you allocate for these programmes are not used well, you will never achieve your targets.

— Kees Rade, Director, Climate, Water Food Security, Energy and Natural Resources at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the Water Integrity Global Outlook 2016 launch, The Hague, April 2016.

On a global scale, the levels of capacity and coordination to protect and improve vulnerable water resources and services are inadequate. Water governance is not effective and is hindered further by corruption. Poor and marginalized communities, people who are the least empowered speak out against these issues, are the most affected. By corruption, we mean 'the abuse of entrusted power for private gain' (TI 2010).

Corruption can wear many faces and occur at all levels: from the farmer who pays a bribe to illegally connect to an irrigation scheme, to the utility manager who employs his unqualified relative, to politicians or powerful groups who influence water allocations and rights to favour their own interests. We have little reliable, up-to-date data on the actual cost of corruption in the water sector. However, we know that the water sector is twice as capital-intensive as other sector utilities and that the estimated investment required to upgrade water and sanitation infrastructure by 2050 is in the trillions of dollars. The Water Integrity Global Outlook 2016 highlights that every 10 percent of investment lost to corruption translates to more than US \$75 billion lost annually in the sector. Potential losses are likely much higher.

Integrity is key to building water sector institutions which are effective and credit-worthy – politically, financially, and socially. We need to win the confidence of stakeholders from the marginalized communities, from large water users to public and private investors – and rally them to contribute to our shared cause. Urgent action is needed to make sure clean governance is at the top of our agenda, so that we can make real progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensure equitable and sustainable access to a clean environment, and make the human right to water and sanitation a reality for all.

The Water Integrity Network (WIN) was created in 2006 to bring attention to issues of corruption and guide action for integrity in the water sector. Between 2011 and 2016, WIN and partners pursued its Global Strategy with the objective of promoting integrity to improve the performance of the sector and ensure sustainable and equitable access to water and a clean environment for all.

In implementing the Strategy, WIN has established itself as a reference on water integrity with the publication of in-depth analyses and reports such as the Water Integrity Global Outlook. WIN also supported the development of national water integrity coalitions, led trainings in 23 countries for more than 300 participants, and developed a set of tools to promote integrity at different levels. These tools were used in WIN's country-specific water integrity programmes in Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, and several other countries with the support of partners.

As we begin the implementation of our new strategy 2017–2022, we feel that a careful evaluation of the work we have achieved will help steer our collaboration with partners, clarify our approach, and clearly demonstrate our commitment to integrity, by acknowledging the challenges we face and learning from our mistakes. This document is our attempt to provide insight on the key lessons we take from the water integrity work which we have led, supported, and documented across the world.

We want to show that change may be slow but it is not impossible, and that there is no single or best way to approach integrity and ensure it is adopted as a pillar of work in the water sector. We wish to show what results look like and how they can vary: in some countries, such as Nepal, we have seen the highest levels of government take notice and make integrity a component of the national water strategy; in other countries, we have seen organizations take concrete steps to reduce their risks for malpractice and individuals take the lead in holding their local government to account for poor service. Success isn't always obvious or straightforward. Progress, when it is measurable, is often slow and fraught with hurdles.

We have challenged ourselves to move away from our regular frameworks of action and niche governance jargon as much as possible, to go beyond our usual reporting, deepen our analysis, and make sure we have practical takeaways to feed our future work and that of our partners. We aimed to avoid demotivating our committed and always inspiring partners with a dry and critical assessment, but to show that one can acknowledge failures and difficulties as building blocks for bigger, better work. We also aimed to show our donors, and all potential new partners, the true essence of how we work, the challenges we face, and how we make sure to overcome them. Our work has improved because, together with our partners, we strive to constantly refine our approach and learn from what works and what does not. We welcome the questions and feedback of our readers, to challenge us further and jointly plan integrity work that will enable the water sector to be more sustainable and equitable, for all.

Since the launch of our work on integrity in Benin in 2008 supported by WIN, we have seen a real transformation in how different stakeholders understand and are receptive to the topic. At first, we would almost get chased away. Now, in 2016, the stakeholders are with us and we have a minister of water who has voiced his willingness to become an ambassador for a water integrity charter.

— Arnauld Adjagodo, Programme Coordinator, Global Water Partnership (GWP) Benin, interviewed at the Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN) Forum, December 2016

TO SPEAK, OR NOT TO SPEAK ABOUT CORRUPTION?

Corruption should no longer be a taboo topic. We must discuss it more openly to better understand its economic, social, and political dimensions and subsequently develop more effective ways to tackle it. At the same time, we have been witnessed how sensitive the subject of corruption can be. Water sector stakeholders at different levels often avoid the topic to avoid losing support or endangering relationships. Their fears are well grounded.

When considering how to broach the topic, a nuanced approach is required, taking into account context and culture, and the (power) relationship between interlocutors. Such an approach also has to take into account how talking about corruption can actually be an important way to address root causes of failure or inefficiency in the sector, as well as a means to build trust and relationships with new stakeholders.



1.1 Lesson 1: Corruption happens everywhere. Keeping it hidden makes it thrive. Being transparent about it can build trust.

Few talk about it. We cannot accurately measure it. And yet corruption is draining billions of dollars from the water sector. Corruption happens everywhere in the world, at all levels, for many different reasons. It also happened to us.

In 2015, a WIN staff member committed fraud, putting personal expenses on WIN's account by forging required signatures. When WIN management made the discovery during routine management checks, we fired the staff person, communicated the issue to the team, donors and partners, reported wrongdoing to authorities, and took immediate action to strengthen its payment procedures. As a result of the incident, one donor

initially suspended funding until further evaluations of WIN and the case were conducted. However, considering the scale of the issue and the immediate action taken by WIN, other donors did not immediately withdraw funding or support.

This was a small-scale case involving limited sums of money and only one person, but it is still a revealing example. We know first-hand that corruption is common and hard to prevent, sometimes even among people sensitive to the topic of water integrity. We also have reason to believe that revealing information about corruption cases does not mean irreversible damage. Being open about corruption is sometimes risky, but this can be a way to show responsible management and a dedication to practicing what you preach: qualities which are often appreciated by investors, donors, clients, and stakeholders.



1.2 Lesson 2: It is critical to carefully evaluate how far one can go when discussing corruption and only gradually push the limits.

We encourage openness whenever possible and are convinced that in many cases users and water sector stakeholders appreciate honesty and forthrightness about problems, risks, corruption, and what is being done to avoid them. But we acknowledge that there can be downsides to discussing corruption openly, and in some cases there are risks, even security risks. The prospect of assessing or examining corruption issues in the water sector, or even simply discussing the topic as a possibility, can imperil entire projects or collaborations.

In certain countries, we have seen potential partners walk out on presentations of our work. In



Being sensitive about the topic means taking into account cultural relativity and using positive entry points to generate discussion and action

Nicaragua, we were very kindly warned by potential partners that despite the topic being particularly interesting, no one would be willing to even mention corruption for fear of jeopardizing their other projects and relationships. In Bangladesh, some water stakeholders have been more reticent to work with WIN partners depending on how explicit these partners were about corruption, or even integrity. These fears can be entirely legitimate: when working on governance and participatory processes in the water sector, alienating some stakeholders or losing partners can mean the end of a project or be a crippling blow. For these reasons, every water integrity initiative should begin with a careful evaluation of whether the topic can be addressed and with whom. Alternative strategies to tackle corruption and integrity from different angles can be developed when direct action is not possible. The subject of corruption can then gradually be introduced, or might even come up naturally.

For example, in November 2014, WIN, and HELVETAS conducted a five-day training on water integrity in Mozambique for about 40 participants from civil society, the media, training institutions, and government institutions. Because the subject of corruption is politicized and very sensitive in the country, the training was initiated in a guarded manner, with a focus restricted to more general and

less controversial terms: integrity, transparency, and poor governance. The discussion only gradually opened up, starting at the end of the first day, when one participant pointed out: 'I think there is a name for what we are discussing here: it is corruption'. Different views on the topic could then be presented and confronted. While there were at times heated debates between participants from government and civil society, the discussions remained constructive and did not end up in finger-pointing. We have had similar experiences across the globe in different workshops, which start off very neutrally and gradually shift to concrete discussions on corruption on the initiative of participants.

1.3 Lesson 3: Being sensitive about the topic means taking into account cultural relativity and using positive entry points to generate discussion and action.

All cultures have a concept of corruption, and corruption is always condemned. However, there are patterns of behaviour which some see as corrupt and others see as grey areas or simply acceptable. For example, the line between a gift and a bribe is not universally clear. Nor is the line between nepotism, patronage, and taking care of one's community. Ambiguity needs to be considered

in integrity campaigns — not to make excuses for corruption, but to initiate discussions about ethical behaviour without imposing definitions or antagonizing key stakeholders.

As stepping stones to discussing the topic of integrity and corruption, it helps to use entry points and alternate agendas which are strongly related to water integrity and have a positive dynamic in the sector, are commonly used, or may be seen as less confrontational: equity, efficiency, performance, creditworthiness, sustainability, SDGs, and so on. Accountability is a particularly potent alternative entry point. The human rights-based approach, with its focus on transparency, accountability, and participation, is directly related to water integrity but in some cases can gain more traction with stakeholders without attaching the corruption or

integrity label. Using such an entry point can be an important way to move forward on integrity with less resistance in difficult contexts. For example, the synergy between water integrity and a human rights-based approach has worked particularly well in HELVETAS and WIN's Multi-Country Water Integrity Programme in Guatemala, Mozambique, and Nepal. Water integrity is explicitly a part and aim of the programme, but activities have been targeted at increasing either transparency, accountability, or participation with a human rights focus, especially in early phases. For this reason, the programme has included legal and regulatory training for local authorities in Guatemala and support to local water user associations in Nepal.

Guatemala. Credit: WIN



We organized workshops for civil servants of the municipalities and the Ministry of Health. They were interested in understanding the laws and in learning how to implement them. The programme is fulfilling a need; it is making important legal information easily accessible.

— A beneficiary of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)-funded Multi-Country Water Integrity Programme in Guatemala (WIN 2014)

While pragmatism in framing the issue is useful, having a good and explicit understanding of the issues is equally crucial. The concept of integrity risks can help open a space for discussion which can be relatively comfortable for many different stakeholders. Indeed, the notion of integrity risks points to the possibility that something may happen, but doesn't necessarily imply that this is happening already. It also leaves a grey area between corruption and (unintended) poor management and governance, making it easier and more comfortable to voice issues.

Combining the notion of risk with a positive, solution-oriented approach also makes the topic appear manageable. For example, our experience with the Integrity Management toolbox shows that by starting with a risk analysis and then focusing on practical tools and solutions which directly relate to people's daily work, stakeholders gain confidence that integrity issues can actually be addressed. When the toolbox is used by water sector organizations, we often see that partners initially focus on technical or managerial tools which indirectly prevent corruption

and then slowly move towards more explicit anti-corruption or integrity tools.

So: to speak, or not to speak about corruption? It depends, of course. Where corruption is at the heart of an issue, sometimes it is best to be circumspect, tread with care, and use alternative entry points where necessary. This approach it will likely help move towards describing the problem more directly and eventually address the root issues which affect our work, especially if the tone is constructive rather than judgemental. Having learned to navigate entry points, we work with our partners to help open the door to more targeted and effective discussions.

2

PREVENTING RATHER THAN CLEANING UP A MESS



Preventing corruption from taking root is less costly and complicated than having to tackle the problems once they begin.

—Global Corruption Report 2008: Corruption in the Water Sector (TI 2008)

2.1 Lesson 4: Prevention is a sign of due diligence: it can build trust with financing partners and ensure effectiveness of projects.

The example of the Ziga Dam, which WIN documented, illustrates how proactive integrity risk management and cooperation with donors can support large-scale project effectiveness.

The implementation of structural projects requires an effective organizational set-up, an implementing agency with an appropriate structure, and an excellent mastery of the procedures and processes; all this alongside a firm will on the part of the politicians and the actors involved to enable the objectives to be achieved and corruption to be prevented.

— Fighting Corruption in the Construction of Large Dams: The Ziga Dam Experience, Burkina Faso (Lamine Kouate 2014)

The Ziga Dam on the Nakambé River in Burkina Faso was built to provide drinking water to the capital, Ougadougou. The first phase required an investment of more than US\$ 250 million, built with the support of 12 major donors and commissioned by the National Water and Sanitation Agency of Burkina Faso (the Office National de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement, ONEA) in 2006. From the start,

the project was designed and developed with efficiency and anti-corruption in mind. As part of ongoing restructuring efforts, ONEA set up a specific project management department for the dam and streamlined its units. The agency also strictly regulated and controlled the procurement process to minimize risk of corruption. For example, special attention was given to defining and reviewing detailed project specifications, getting integrity commitments from potential suppliers, and controlling the offer submission process. These safeguards thwarted supplier attempts to provide incorrect or fraudulent bids and ensured a strong, effective foundation for the project. Processes were also set up to independently review project works and report back regularly to donors and project owners.

These measures were taken proactively, in close cooperation with and with support from the donors. Exceptionally, the first phase of the works was completed on time and within budget. To date, no major damages have been reported, a testament to the quality of construction. The Ziga Dam case is now cited by the World Bank and the German Corporation for International Development (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ) as a good practice case for infrastructure development in West and Central Africa.

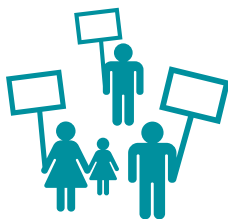
Corruption has a direct financial, environmental, and social impact worldwide. The costs are undeniably enormous and widespread – corruption in the water sector has ramifications for health, education, economic development, and even national security. In the short term, prevention work also has a cost but a manageable and more predictable one. The potential gains and long-term savings are tremendous even if they are difficult to measure accurately. From the start, WIN has aligned its work more with the potential for improvement, with a focus not on punishment, but on capacity building and prevention.

NOT A FIGHT TO FIGHT ALONE: ENGAGING WITH PARTNERS FOR CHANGE

*If you act alone, you will be targeted.
Form groups first.*

— Jasper Tumuhimbise, Anti-Corruption Coalition
Uganda (WIN Annual Report 2009)

There are special people who can take or have taken a stand alone to change an organization, change a system, and change the world. Whistle-blowers, for example, most often have to stand up alone to corruption. Their courage is exemplary and they deserve support and protection. However, when corruption is institutionalized or when speaking up is politicized and dangerous, working alone is not always a realistic option. A critical mass provides protection and strength when discussing sensitive topics.



3.1 Lesson 5: Concerted action for advocacy and tool implementation is key, even if it is difficult to keep up.

KEWASNET, the Kenya Water and Sanitation Civil Society Network, launched its second annual civil society organization (CSO) performance report on March 20, 2017. WIN supported KEWASNET in refining the report methodology, analysing data, and publishing results. The report is a frank self-assessment of how CSOs have contributed to the water and sanitation sector in the financial year 2015–2016. It also provides estimates of the extent to which corruption affects the water projects of CSOs in Kenya. The publication of the report was a risk: it critically assesses the performance of CSOs and acknowledges the presence of corruption

without shifting blame to other stakeholders. Many CSOs in Kenya chose not to participate. Those who did accepted the risk primarily because they were able to present a united front and worked together with KEWASNET as an umbrella organization. The methodology used for the assessment also provided a solid reference to guide concrete improvement measures and was resolutely forward-thinking. KEWASNET built strong relationships with the government and the donors supporting many of its members. The trust which was created helped ensure the report would not be used against its contributors but it was not a guarantee. In this case, fortunately, the donor community supporting projects in the region and the Kenyan regulator welcomed the report. The united approach was an essential element of the strategy and fortunately it was not met with backlash – on the contrary.

A united front is a stronger front. A large and diverse front will also build credibility and provide protection. Building a coalition, ideally a multi-stakeholder coalition, is a way of working inclusively, making sure that important but often overlooked views are not left out and reaching agreement on the contours of an issue so that it is presented in the most convincing way. Such a process is slow and difficult. It requires dedicated resources to maintain motivation and momentum – but it is also crucial.

CSO Report launch by KEWASNET Credit: WIN



4

COMBINING TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP APPROACHES FOR LASTING CHANGE

We regularly hear ‘political will’ being singled out as a missing element needed to drive change. Here’s an example.



Many African countries have developed or established anti-corruption policies, legislation, guidelines, processes, and organizations. Anti-corruption measures often focus on improving procurement procedures, increasing stakeholder participation, and setting up functional monitoring and evaluation systems... Unfortunately, many of these countries continue to lack the necessary human resource capacity to implement these reforms effectively and do not have sufficient political will to drive them forward.

— McGarry et al., 2010, cited in the Water Integrity Global Outlook 2016 (WIN 2016b)

At the same time, many are disenchanted with top-down approaches, which they believe are often not adequately targeted or are not planned to address real needs. The picture is muddled: we hear of growing distrust of decision makers and how it stems from poor service and responsiveness, just as it impairs government action. Corruption is a central topic in this discussion. But the question is: can corruption and poor integrity be effectively addressed by the top or bottom? Does integrity spread or are we bound to see isolated integrity initiatives fade out? Where does one get started?

4.1 Lesson 6: Political will or top support helps.

Experience tells us that in many cases, political will is indeed a missing crucial ingredient. Let’s look, for example, at the case of the development a national anti-corruption strategy for the water sector in Mozambique. At the beginning of the process, in 2009, the National Water Directorate (Direcção Nacional de Águas, or DNA) initiated and supported an anti-corruption scoping study for the water sector. Many essential elements of good strategy development seemed to fall into place. The strategy development was recommended and supported by key donors in the sector. Other sectors had already implemented such strategies and some general measures in procurement and finance had also been implemented, providing momentum to the water sector initiative. The process was also a multi-stakeholder one which elicited rather broad consensus, included awareness raising and capacity building activities, and was based on a strong diagnosis of water integrity risks in the country. Eight years later and counting, the strategy which was then developed still has not been approved.

In other contexts and on other levels, we’ve again seen that top support often helps. In Benin, water integrity action plans developed after multi-stakeholder assessment workshops have stalled in some municipalities (and not in others) because of a lack of enthusiasm from local authorities. Even when working within just one organization, the fact that top management directly and unequivocally support an integrity change process or the that top managers are present at workshops goes a

long way to ensure buy-in from other stakeholders. Such commitment also ensures that sufficient resources are allocated to the process for it to be sustainable and effective. For example, the express and concrete support of top management at the Khulna Water and Sewerage Authority (Bangladesh) has given a big boost to its Integrity Management programme.

There is political will to eradicate corruption. We need to transform that amorphous will into something that can be monitored and measured.

— Dr. Canisius Karangire, Executive Secretary of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW)

At the Guma Valley Water Company in Sierra Leone, a management decision to deal openly and directly with corruption issues helped keep the company out of insolvency and opened up opportunities for new partnerships with development and financing partners. Water integrity ambassadors who had been sensitized and trained played a crucial role in orchestrating the turnaround. In 2012, though, this public utility was in dire financial straits while many of its employees were thriving: constructing big houses and driving expensive vehicles. Corruption was pervasive and not perceived as anything but a completely normal process by many in the company. Against considerable resistance, management took over the billing system as a way to ensure that officers could no longer negotiate special deals with the biggest consumers in return for reduced bills, which until then was a standard practice. They also analysed the consumption patterns of the 200 biggest consumers over the past three years; renegotiated minimum monthly bills amounts with individual consumers, as well as tariff rates with trade associations; set service

guarantees; and implemented a performance incentive programme for staff. The company made significant financial gains.



4.2 Lesson 7: Acting at lower levels and building up momentum for integrity is possible and effective.

We have been working in Nepal at the grass-roots level with HELVETAS Nepal since 2012. One aim of the programme is to enable the meaningful participation of an informed and empowered civil society, including women user-committee members, to in turn encourage more transparent local decision-making processes in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) project development and implementation. FEDWASUN, an umbrella organization of water user associations across Nepal, is a key partner for the programme, which helps strengthen participation of water user associations in capacity building exercises, disseminates information, and lobbies authorities as a strong and recognized representative of rural communities. A major programme component is to make sure information on water development projects and how they affect local populations is accessible and understandable for the local population. Public hearings are now organized in early phases; district investment plans centralize information on WASH developments from different organizations and duty bearers; information

boards centralizing social, financial, and technical information about planned WASH facilities are placed at the centre of villages; and programme facilitators train local user committees and collaborate with the media to popularize and disseminate key information (for example, with programmes in popular radio shows).

It's from these local and small-scale experiences focusing on transparency for and participation of users that momentum was built for integrity at higher levels. The scope of advocacy work has progressively expanded. As a result of the first projects, more users took part in WASH-related hearings and monitoring processes. In some areas, district-level budget allocations were adjusted following participatory discussions. Thanks in part to the advocacy efforts of FEDWASUN and HELVETAS in particular, the issue was taken up at the national level in 2016: water integrity is now a central element of the Nepal Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Sector Development Plan for the period 2016–2030 and is referred to consistently.

A ripple effect for integrity can be the aim and strategy of a water integrity programme. In Nepal, the ripple went from a village plan for a new pump all the way to national policy. In Guatemala, we also started our programme with HELVETAS at the municipal level in a rural district, in 2011. The programme is now slowly gaining traction among bigger water institutions and actions are being considered at the district level. A smaller, different kind of ripple seems to be getting started in Bangladesh, going from the Khulna Water and Sewerage Authority (the utility for the third-largest city in the country), which is engaged in an Integrity Management process at the organization level, to the Chittagong Water and Sewerage Authority (the utility for the second-largest city in the country), which has recently decided to pilot a similar process – and hopefully beyond.

A shift from infrastructure-oriented development to field-level interventions to improve service provision towards more equal water delivery could serve as the first building block to contest corruption rules by including farmers in the overall equation.

– Mid-level official from an Indonesian irrigation agency interviewed in 2004 (Dunford, Suhardiman, and Mollinga 2017)

WIN's approach now aims to combine top-down and bottom-up directly. We help build, mobilize, and support change agents at all levels. Our theory of change is based on the idea that action from different levels and all different change agents will enable institutionalized, and therefore sustainable, change. This means that a combined top-down and bottom-up approach is necessary – where citizens and civil society push change from the bottom and demand accountability, and top levels of government, administrations, and sector organizations commit to building an institutional framework in which integrity is the norm.

So where do we start? By understanding where entry points exist in terms of local political, sectoral, and organizational dynamics, who the change agents are or can be, what realistic targets for an initiative could look like, and finally, which actors stand to lose the most from integrity breaches and how we deal with them. Clearly, political or high-level will is important and can move initiatives forward. Top-down momentum can make the difference for an initiative in terms of sustainability and reach. Lobbying and/or campaigning for this kind of support is therefore generally an important priority in a programme. But top support is not necessarily an essential condition for success, and it is not a panacea.



Meeting in Nepal at the grassroots level. Credit: WIN

There are many ways to move water integrity forward and many entry points for a first 'ripple'. We have seen successful examples of anti-corruption starting from the ground-up, even in places where corruption is entrenched. We have seen examples of how explaining local policy, bringing users together, bringing attention to

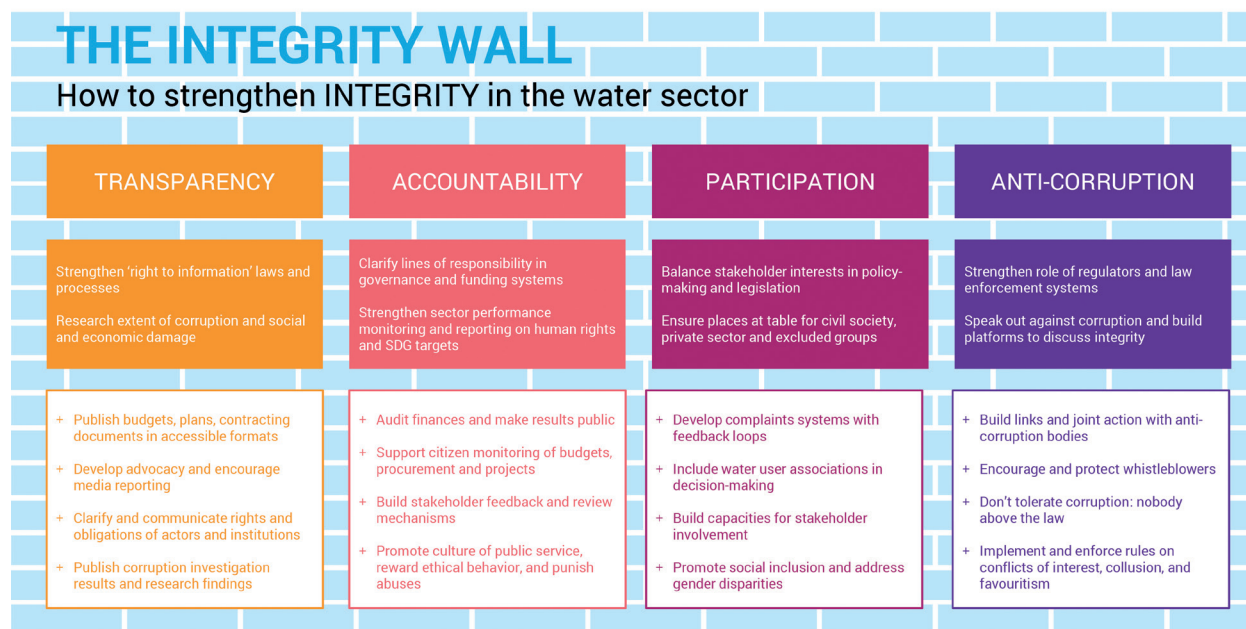
certain practices, or reconfiguring everyday work practices in even one organization, one small town, can be effective first steps for water integrity promotion.

5

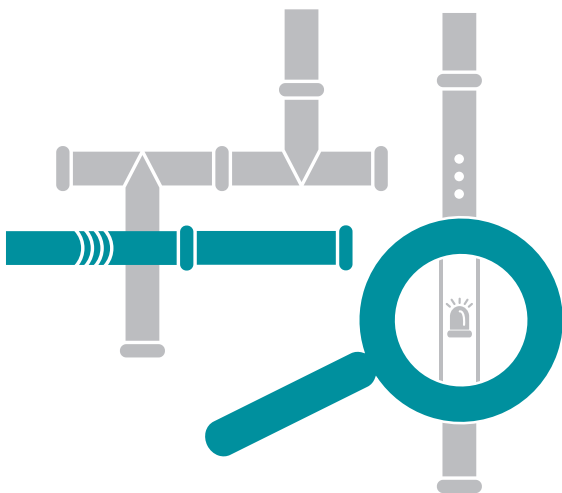
BUILDING INTEGRITY WALLS

We claim that improving water integrity is about strengthening good governance in the water sector and proactively safeguarding the sector from corruption, by promoting Transparency, Accountability, Participation and Anti-corruption (TAPA) as guiding principles. Transparency means ensuring that people know their rights, can see how decisions are taken, and how money is spent. Accountability means making sure decision makers take responsibility and answer for their actions. Participation means consulting all relevant people when making decisions which affect them. Anti-corruption means making rules stronger and enforcing them properly.

The Integrity Wall—a general action framework developed by WIN and partners in the Water Integrity Global Outlook 2016—illustrates a few of the many different ways to promote TAPA in the water sector. Local context, and the capacities and priorities of stakeholders, will define what is possible, what is most effective, and where to start. There is no order or specific list of measures to be taken, and there is no standard best way forward. Still, there are some pitfalls to avoid and lessons that can help in planning better, and more targeted, integrity programmes.



Adapted from the Water Integrity Global Outlook 2016



5.1 Lesson 8: Transparency is not just about opening up the account books.

There is more to transparency than just making data publically available, even if this is a first step. Transparency implies an audience and has a purpose: to make decision-making processes clearer and provide accurate and useful information for users. Stakeholders in the water sector do a lot for transparency when they proactively and deliberately take steps towards it rather than merely dumping data into the public space.

Here is an example. In Ecuador, WIN works with the Quito water supplier, EPMAPS – Agua de Quito, to promote integrity in the organization with support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). Ecuador’s Right to Information law of Ecuador is quite strong and elaborate. It requires that partly or fully publically-owned entities show the public all available information about the services they provide. To comply, EPMAPS – Agua de Quito publishes an extensive monthly bulletin of thousands of pages on its website. Unsurprisingly, the bulletin is overwhelming and poorly used. As part of its efforts to manage integrity, the organization targeted this issue for priority

action. EPMAPS plans to be more transparent by specifically making more relevant and structured information available, in line with the needs of the users. We see this as an example of taking transparency more seriously.

Other institutions or organizations use a different approach. Some will, for example, focus on explicitly promoting the data to make sure users know they are available. Some invite user feedback and participation through public hearings or other types of outreach activities. Some focus first on generating more accurate data and implementing controls to ensure data quality or the sustainability of monitoring efforts. We think it is possible to go even further and publish data not only on service levels and quality but also on integrity of service. This could mean being willing to publish information on failures, not only successes, or publishing information on corruption and anti-corruption policy.

One example is from Kenya, where the Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB) has been a champion of integrity. Having established transparency in the sense of performance benchmarking and clear corporate governance guidelines for commercial water utilities in Kenya, WASREB uses its annual reports to point out integrity and governance issues in the sector and has recently started explicitly monitoring corporate governance of utilities, with support from GIZ. WASREB combines these regulatory requirements with collaborative approaches such as promoting the Integrity Management toolboxes for water utilities and small water supply systems, which it helped develop.



5.2 Lesson 9: Civil society and the media play a key role in independent monitoring and reviews of budgets or service levels.

It is the role of CSOs to supervise the policies that are being implemented and to reflect whether they are working or not working.

– Doreen Wandera, Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET), at the East Africa Water Integrity Forum, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 2017

International monitoring efforts and stakeholder engagement have come a long way. Many initiatives in the sector encourage better monitoring and there are better tools and platforms to collect (even in remote areas), centralize, and compare water sector data, especially in terms of distribution and status of water points. Several countries have national databases which are accessible openly online, providing centralized information on different metrics (water distribution, infrastructure development, procurement, and water quality in some cases). But there is still a long way to go. A number of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes are sensitive or subject to manipulation. Data standardization, coordination between different levels of government, who owns data, who has access to data, how sustainable the processes are of retrieving and updating the data, and how the data are used, are all questions which directly relate to integrity risks. Independent data reviews

Mexico. Credit: Controla tu Gobierno



are examples of ways to assess integrity risks and hold the persons responsible to account. Value-for-money studies, budget tracking, and cost-benefit analyses are other important examples. Organizations and watchdogs who perform this kind of work are indispensable.

Controla tu Gobierno is one such organization active in Mexico, a country recognized as having a very good legal framework for data openness and where a large quantity of water sector information is available. Even there, Controla tu Gobierno recognizes a big need for civil society to take action and support efforts to review and deliver more socially useful data based on the public information available. In 2015, the group published a preliminary national inventory of wastewater treatment plants which showed that official data were flawed: some of the infrastructure reported as 'operational' was actually not working or was treating significantly lower volumes of water than planned or declared. They also pointed to the fact that although much data is available, they are not really accessed or useable for the people who are most directly affected by the data's implication. As an example, they told WIN the story of a farmer in Mexico State who had not been informed and was not aware that works for a new wastewater treatment were starting on his own land, even though, officially, the tender for the construction of the plant, the winning company, the assigned budget, and the date of completion of the works had all been published in open databases.

The media are also important watchdogs carrying out independent investigations and reviews of information. Their work contributes to shining a light on user grievances and integrity issues, and holding duty bearers to account. For these reasons, programmes to encourage and support media reporting or to bring into contact media representatives and authorities or users are helpful, and in our experience, largely positively received. For example, in 2013, WIN supported

the Burkina Faso WASH information and communications network, the Réseau d'Information et de Communication pour l'Hygiène, l'Eau potable et l'Assainissement (RICHE), to consider integrity angles of WASH coverage and, for example, check the implementation status of a latrine building project led by the prime minister. Coverage of the building of first latrines helped spur the project further. In Benin, from 2011, WIN partners took a different approach, supporting WASH journalists with capacity building and organizing regular meetings with water service suppliers and responsible persons at the municipal level. These 'Café-Médias' gatherings still continue and have made it possible for better and concrete information to be communicated to the general public.

It has become very clear that bringing duty bearers and right holders together is absolutely key to improving transparent decision making.

– Stef Smits, senior programme officer, IRC, speaking at a water integrity event at Stockholm World Water Week 2015

Accountability should be reciprocal. Persons responsible must provide the information and clarity on service necessary to be held to account. Users must in turn be able to voice their grievances, get answers, and hold duty bearers responsible for failures. CSOs and the media are key facilitators between the two. What we have seen in many cases is that the media's work is an important trigger for action: pushing authorities and service providers towards more transparency, or encouraging users to voice concerns. Let's take an example from Zimbabwe, which WIN recently documented: In 2014, following the publication of corruption allegations in the local news and with the support

of the Combined Harare Residents' Association (CHRA), residents of Harare organized a series of demonstrations protesting the mismanagement of funds meant for the development of a water treatment facility. Their action led to a formal investigation and at least one municipal clerk was fired. In Brazil in 2013, dozens of people marched from town to town in the region of Piauí, to directly monitor the status of planned and promised water installations and demand accountability and an end to corruption in the water sector. The march was organized by A Força Tarefa Popular (the People's Taskforce) with support from Amarribo Brasil and Transparency International.



5.3 Lesson 10: Empowered, capacitated regulators can be strong change agents in the fight against corruption.

We have identified regulatory bodies or agencies as one important partner for water integrity. As technology and tools for monitoring mature, there is space for regulatory agencies to go beyond their role of ensuring compliance with legal requirements and to strengthen their position on corruption, focusing more on encouraging improvements in service and governance. They can be catalysts for change. We are only starting to explore potential opportunities to support these processes but we see them as promising areas of work.

Although regulation of water services is not introduced per se to combat corruption, it can play an important role in improving sector and utility governance in a sustainable manner. Regulators may gradually deepen their integrity agenda by applying a combination of the two approaches to regulation – control and cooperation.

– Daniel Nordmann, GIZ (Nordmann 2013)

When regulatory frameworks and agencies are weak, it is easier for corruption to thrive. This was highlighted in a recent study by our partners in Bangladesh, Transparency International Bangladesh and BAWIN, examining the use of effluent treatment plants in the garment industry. According to the study, the Department of Environment and the national regulatory agency are acutely short of staff and logistical resources. Polluting factories are seldom inspected. When they are, it is reported that in some cases water samples are not collected and no action is taken if a factory is non-compliant. In other cases, mild action is taken but appeals by industries lead to withdrawal or reduction of punishment. Allegations of corruption have been made, and it is even reported that there are cases where officials have put pressure on company owners by creating false test reports.

When regulatory frameworks and agencies have built their capacity and are willing to take a strong stance on anti-corruption, the water sector as whole benefits. This has been true in Zambia, for example. Water supply coverage is less than 45 percent in Nakonde Town, and water quality is very poor. In 2012, the Chambeshi Water Service Company received about US\$ 4 million in funding

from the government to improve services for the town by constructing a water treatment plant, expanding the network, and installing water meters. The year-long contract was eventually terminated after a year and three months, with just a little over half of the work completed. The National Water Supply and Sanitation Council (NWASCO), the Zambian water service regulator, then conducted an audit of Chambeshi Water Service Company. It uncovered corrupt practices, including collusion in procurement, shoddy works being concealed, inflated costs for materials such as pipes or pumps (up to 300 percent), and collusion with customers for illegal connections. It was estimated that the remaining work needed to complete the project would cost an additional US\$ 3.3 million: a 50 percent increase in the budget. NWASCO alerted the Anti-Corruption Commission, suspended the license of the water service company, and transferred its management to an interim statutory manager. Building on tools from the Integrity Management toolbox, NWASCO also helped with the process of reviewing systems, procedures, and policies of the utility and sensitized staff to implement these under close monitoring. The project is now about to be completed.



5.4 Lesson 11: Ensuring stakeholder engagement is a slow process but if it is real and multi-directional, integrity work will be stronger.

Even if participation is a generally acknowledged good practice, a human right requirement, and a condition of success for achieving the SDGs, too often, attempts 'merely play lip service to the idea of participation', as mentioned in the Water

Integrity Global Outlook 2016. There are certainly many challenges to ensuring effective stakeholder participation. Entrenched power dynamics, cultural practice, unwillingness of stakeholders, lack of interest, and above all superficial information sharing and poor capacity hinder efforts to make decision-making more participatory. We need to make conscious efforts and invest the needed time to overcome these barriers and ensure we do not replicate old power relationships in new programme decision-making processes.

The principles of TAP improve policy-making processes only when they change the relationships between different groups and actors, so that participation is meaningful.

– “Stakeholder Mapping and Participation,” chapter 5.1 in the Water Integrity Global Outlook 2016 (WIN 2016b)

Here is recent example we have encountered. Caritas Switzerland is leading the pilot implementation of an Integrity Management toolbox for small water supply systems with five community groups in rural areas of Kenya, with WIN support through the Multi-Country Water Integrity Programme. The project methodology is a participatory and process-oriented one which has been adapted from the institutional Integrity Management toolbox developed by WIN, GIZ, and cewas. When interviewed, project leads and coaches are generally more positive about their experiences using the adapted toolbox with community groups which truly represent the beneficiary communities. They claim these initiatives have been more successful than those in which the community groups were dominated by local elites. A lesson of the pilot phase is that



Workshop on Integrity Management for small water supply systems in Kenya Credit: WIN

better care in mapping the power dynamics and relationships in the community is needed to ensure all voices in the water community groups are heard. More representatives of the community are now invited to take part in the workshops and processes, beyond the core members of the community group managing the water systems. Better participation and representation (for example, in terms of gender, religion, tribes, business interests, community organizations and affiliations) are clearly a programme success factor.

Stakeholder engagement is a multi-directional process, and the key to improving participation is to bring different stakeholders together at the same table. Often, the most vulnerable are absent: women, the poor, the weak. But sometimes, CSOs also neglect to effectively bring duty bearers on board with our projects. The KEWASNET report on the performance of CSOs in Kenya's water and sanitation sector includes an assessment of the performance of surveyed CSOs in terms of integrity, quality, and compliance (IQC). Since 2014, CSOs score consistently lower on government engagement than other IQC factors. Yet poor engagement with the government or officially responsible persons can have a major impact on programmes and on the quality and sustainability of WASH services and water management.

Most of the time the pump breaks down within a few years, by which time I'll have moved on to another project in another country... We falsely attribute the breakdown of a pump to poor government policies, corrupt local officials or weak management by the water-user committee. So we put ourselves in opposition to the government, we ignore policies and we do not work with local government officials. We run our projects in parallel to theirs, and we do not link up to or support local government plans. When the project is finished, we hand over the management of the pump to the water-user committee and walk away. But we haven't worked with the local government, so it has no incentive to support the local community when the pump breaks down. The NGO that installed it is seen as the one responsible.

- The Guardian, 2017 (Paul 2017)

Stakeholder engagement in any direction can of course be difficult. Managers of Water Funds are in a good position to know this. Water Funds are multi-stakeholder initiatives launched by The Nature Conservancy designed to stimulate investment in conservation measures in watersheds to, in the long term, improve water quality for cities the watersheds supply. How partners (for example, private investors, large water users, local land owners, public service providers, and users) opt in and collaborate defines the types of conservation measures which will be taken and has a major

impact on their success. Without a representative variety of stakeholders on-board on the long term, and without a strong, trusting bond between them, the Water Fund cannot function. This is a major challenge which integrity can help address, as we've learned working with the Medellín Water Fund, Cuenca Verde, in Colombia. For example, clear definitions of responsibilities and transparency from partners on how they can and do contribute are crucial. Investors are also attracted by the availability of strong internal control systems, frequent social audits, meticulous reporting and expenditure tracking, and a real accountability-focused setting.



5.5 Lesson 12: Integrity programmes require thorough assessments and context analyses, detailed stakeholder mapping, and quality follow-up.

Beyond the strategic concerns related to how to present, launch, and steer water integrity work, there are also good practices which we have taken note of over the years and strive to integrate into our work. They relate in part to the integrity of our own work, which we must take particularly seriously and continuously aim to improve. We must, above all, aim to implement projects which are fair, inclusive, transparent, and sustainable. We must avoid whitewashing and be accountable for the work we do, accepting the consequences of our failures. Practically, this also means carrying out thorough context analyses and assessing integrity levels, as well as relationships, at the start of projects.

In Sri Lanka, a strong understanding of the local context, strong footing in the region, and good

relationships with sector stakeholders made it possible for WIN partners to steer a campaign against illegal river sand mining much more effectively. Two court cases against river sand mining led to the practice being banned in the Deduru Oya and Maha Oya Rivers in 2004. The practice continued illegally, however, and hardly abated. The Sri Lanka Water Partnership (SLWP) launched a campaign against illegal sand mining in 2005, building on its early successes in raising awareness of the ecological and social damage caused by a booming river sand mining industry. WIN supported the work of SLWP from 2008. The campaign was unique in that it pushed for national dialogue processes and included awareness raising and capacity development activities specifically targeted at the police, because enforcement was identified as a key weakness. In 2009, a special task force of the police was put in charge of protecting natural resources. This drastically cut the opportunities for corruption, as officers were not answerable to local politicians and were directly supervised by the Defence Ministry in Colombo.

As a counter example, one experience in Tanzania made us particularly aware of the need to assess context and stakeholder relationships more carefully. WIN and partners organized a workshop on water integrity with high-ranking government officials in 2011. WIN pushed for the workshop to take place without previously meeting individual participants or agreeing with partners on commitments for follow-up. As a consequence, we were not able to find the right tone in discussing the sensitive topic of integrity with the participants. We also lacked a plan for longer engagement in Tanzania and could not motivate partners to engage in follow-up themselves. Learning from this failure, we now put much more effort into understanding partners' objectives, sector discussions, and political relationships between actors before engaging in a country for any type of intervention. We are especially careful about not conducting

workshops or studies on water integrity without a clear idea of a feasible follow-up plan.

Ensuring sufficient resources are available for follow-up and making sure that the tools used to support integrity are also backed up by capacity, buy-in, and reach is key. Here is an example we discussed in the Water Integrity Global Outlook 2016. In 2013, Daraja, a CSO in Tanzania, launched the Maji Matone programme to enable communities to report breakdowns of water points directly to the local authorities via SMS. Such a complaint management mechanism was initially received positively, and was successful in drawing attention to problems. However, it soon appeared that problems in rural areas were not addressed and received less attention than problems in urban areas. Complaints slowed down considerably when it became clear that the government's reaction to complaints was not positive and people began to fear it might be unsafe to use the service. The full extent and implications of such local government resistance may not have been foreseeable from the beginning, but the evolution of these difficulties certainly made significant shifts in project development necessary.

Capacity development of stakeholders is another programme component which can play an essential role in ensuring a change process is followed through and sustainable. We are seeing some success in integrating various capacity development elements in the long-term process of implementing tools, in particular the Integrity Management toolbox, which includes built-in training, coaching, and monitoring by local, independent coaches to ensure continuity. Although it is not always easy to find qualified local coaches with the authority to advise and encourage action by organizations which use the toolbox (as we have seen in Kenya and Costa Rica), when we do, Integrity Management processes are strengthened considerably. In Albania, the local coaches supporting municipal water utilities in implementing the Integrity

Management toolbox include the former chair of the water regulator as well as consultants who are supporting other utility management reforms. They are well-respected and well-positioned to motivate action, support knowledge sharing, and maintain momentum for the reform processes.

Transparency, Accountability, Participation, and Anti-Corruption are not in themselves practical or concrete paths for action, and we cannot map out quick fixes or foolproof formulas for success in promoting integrity. We rely on big principles and frameworks to explain, promote, and plan our work. On the other hand, experience has taught us to be keenly aware of how lofty principles can quickly become empty promises, as we have shown here, in terms of Transparency or even Participation.

We have seen that these messages nonetheless have value and can help spur multi-directional engagement towards integrity and anti-corruption work in constructive ways, with minimal confrontation. The Integrity Wall has proven to be a useful entry point and tool for discussion and action planning. With the Integrity Wall as a reference, WIN's approach as a network has been to identify new target groups and help water sector practitioners consider the bigger picture and a wider network of supporters and stakeholders for their work. In water integrity programmes we have been involved in, we have worked with CSOs, the media, local government, regulators, and other players. We see that it is key to critically assess one's role and relationship with different stakeholders to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of water integrity programmes and by extension, water programmes generally.

This also means making sure our integrity work is done with integrity. Practically, this means careful planning, critical assessments, and a willingness to acknowledge and learn from our mistakes and successes.

CONCLUSION: THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW

The Water Integrity Global Outlook 2016 demonstrates that we now know what the issues are in relation to corruption in the water sector. These need to be addressed systematically, politically, professionally – and urgently. The time has come to act.

– Water Integrity Global Outlook 2016 (WIN 2016b)

We have seen that working to improve water integrity is not always a straightforward matter. Because water integrity is complex, how the topic can be approached, who to target, and even how to practically interpret key principles and prioritize actions are considerable challenges. We can only highlight how we and our partners face these challenges, improve, and move forward to effectively support improvements in water management and WASH services.

We still have a lot to learn, but we have seen directly that reducing corruption is not an impossible task. Corruption and poor integrity are challenges but not mysteries. They are prevalent but not unavoidable. We can change practices which allow corruption to thrive. We can manage risks within organizations, and at the local, national, and international levels. Water integrity change agents aren't necessarily exceptional, powerful people. They come from all walks of life. They are committed and perseverant. It helps when they are given dedicated time and the means to do their work.

There are no excuses – we must ramp up investments to promote water integrity and take action, now.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMCOW	African Ministers' Council on Water
BAWIN	Bangladesh Water Integrity Network
CHRA	Combined Harare Residents' Association (Zimbabwe)
CSO	civil society organization
DGIS	Directoraat-Generaal Internationale Samenwerking (Directorate-General for International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands)
DNA	Direcção Nacional de Águas (Mozambique)
FEDWASUN	Federation of Drinking Water and Sanitation Users Nepal
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GWP	Global Water Partnership
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IRC	International Water and Sanitation Centre
IQC	integrity, quality, and compliance
KEWASNET	Kenya Water and Sanitation Civil Society Network
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NWASCO	National Water Supply and Sanitation Council (Zambia)
ONEA	Office National de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement (Burkina Faso)
RWSN	Rural Water Supply Network
RICHE	Réseau d'Information et de Communication pour l'Hygiène, l'Eau potable et l'Assainissement (Burkina Faso)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLWP	Sri Lanka Water Partnership
TAP	Transparency, Accountability, Participation
TAPA	Transparency, Accountability, Participation, Anti-Corruption
TI	Transparency International
UWASNET	Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network
WASH	water, sanitation, and hygiene
WASREB	Water Services Regulatory Board (Kenya)
WIN	Water Integrity Network

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The Water Integrity Network (WIN) promotes integrity to eliminate corruption and increase performance in the water sector worldwide. To achieve this mission, WIN connects, enables, and promotes the work of organizations and individuals who recognize the impact of corruption – especially on poor and disenfranchised communities – work to assess risk, and promote practical responses.

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