



Learning Document

WASH-SDG Programme Interventions - Lumanti

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1. BACKGROUND

The WASH SDG programme is currently being implemented in seven countries across Africa and Asia by a collaboration between WASH Alliance International, SNV, and Plan. In Nepal, these three consortium partners have established three distinct sub-programs throughout the country. WASH Alliance International's sub-program specifically focuses on Kohalpur Municipality, Baijanath Rural Municipality, Bheriganga Municipality, and Barahatal Rural Municipality, located in Banke and Surkhet districts within the provinces of Lumbini and Karnali, respectively.

The primary objectives of the project are threefold. Firstly, it aims to increase the demand for improved WASH facilities and practices. Secondly, it strives to enhance the quality-of-service provision. Lastly, it seeks to strengthen WASH governance and institutional frameworks in the sector. Additionally, gender equality and social inclusion, as well as climate vulnerability and resilience, are crucial aspects of the initiative.

In Banke, Lumanti takes the lead as a prominent partner and focuses primarily on strengthening WASH governance and institutional frameworks within the sector. This effort is concentrated in Kohalpur Municipality and Baijanath Rural Municipality. Lumanti closely collaborates with Water and Sanitation Users Committees (WSUCs) to develop and promote Water Safety Plans and WASH Improvement Plans. Moreover, they facilitate an increase in household connections to piped water supply through microfinance institution loan schemes.

Lumanti has been working directly with municipalities and major water and sanitation users' committees to improve functionality and expand access to safely managed drinking water. One noteworthy achievement during their tenure is the successful operation of seven water users' committees. Despite the completion of some water supply systems 15 years ago, these committees had been unable to function effectively until Lumanti's involvement. Similarly, when Lumanti began working with these municipalities, they were newly established under Nepal's new constitution, with freshly elected representatives. These local governments lacked essential acts, guidelines, directories, and even periodic plans for WASH. Lumanti provided technical assistance in creating the necessary laws, by-laws, and periodic plans to ensure sustainable WASH access and services.

This document outlines Lumanti's key approaches, which include functionalizing seven water supply schemes, developing and approving acts and regulations, preparing and endorsing a comprehensive WASH plan, establishing a dedicated WASH section within the municipality, and increasing household connections through microfinance institution loan schemes. The document also addresses the challenges, barriers, and processes involved in the project and discusses how they were overcome.

2. THEMATIC LEARNING CASES

2.1 Functionalization of Water Supply System

The water supply system in Baijanath and Kohalpur heavily relies on tubewells for drinking water, with 99.7% and 86.3% of households depending on them respectively. To improve the situation, the DWSSM, in collaboration with local chapters and agencies like the Fund Development Board, has been constructing deep boring systems with raised water tanks. However, despite the completion of these tanks, water delivery to households has not been achieved. The key challenge lies in effectively operating these systems, as the major construction work is already done, and only the distribution system needs to be established using pipes and fittings provided by the Federal Water Supply and Sewerage Management Project.

Lumanti initiated meetings with the water supply systems at the project's inception to identify the bottlenecks hindering the system's functionality. Through discussions with stakeholders such as local government representatives, WUSCs, Federal Drinking Water Supply and Sewerage Management Project (FDWSSMP), and Federation of Drinking Water and Sanitation Users Nepal (FEDWASUN), major bottlenecks were identified.

The first bottleneck is the requirement for a 20% contribution from the local community towards the budget, mainly in the form of labor costs for constructing the distribution pipeline. However, due to coordination issues, the community's unwillingness to contribute, and the absence of elected bodies in the local government, the projects were never completed as the WUSCs failed to gather the required contribution.

The second bottleneck is consumers' resistance to installing pipeline supply. The cost of installation and the monthly tariff for piped water is relatively high compared to the one-time cost of a tubewell. Additionally, consumers believe that the water from shallow tubewells is safe, as they have consumed it historically. This perception has led to their reluctance to adopt a pipeline system, resulting in low priority given to completing the water supply system.

The third bottleneck is the lack of coordination among WSUC, the municipality, and FDWSSMP. WSUC, lacking knowledge about administrative details and lacking an active presence, struggled to approach FDWSSM and the municipality for system operation. The municipality hesitated to allocate a budget to WSUC as the project had not been officially handed over to them from FDWSSMP. Moreover, the municipality desired to bring FDWSSMP under its jurisdiction to handle all procurement, including pipes and fittings. However, at the national level, DWSSM maintained authority and was not ready to transfer these rights to the municipality. FDWSSMP had legal obligations that prevented them from providing a budget for labor costs related to pipeline installation. Lumanti played a crucial role as a mediator, bridging these stakeholders to ensure the successful operation of the projects.

- **Meetings and public hearings**

During the initial stage of the intervention, Lumanti conducted several meetings with stakeholders, including WSUCs and municipalities, in order to identify bottlenecks and propose solutions for the

successful operation of the water supply systems. Furthermore, they convened a joint meeting with all stakeholders to finalize the solutions and documented them in writing, with signatures from all parties involved. However, despite these efforts, there was still some resistance to progress. Consequently, Lumanti organized a public hearing in March 2022, where representatives from various stakeholders, such as FDWSSMP, provincial ministry, FEDWASUN, and local government representatives, were questioned by the public regarding the delay in the operation of the water supply systems. The hearing was broadcasted locally and covered by both national and local journalists, leading to a significant impact. As a result, all stakeholders made a commitment to collaborate and ensure the successful operation of the systems.

- **Capacity building of WSUCs**

Lumanti closely collaborated with all WSUCs to enhance their capacity for the successful operation of the water supply systems. They provided assistance in areas such as tariff settings, business plans, bookkeeping, and training for maintenance workers. Lumanti also took the lead in preparing water safety plans for ten WSUCs and water management plans for four WUSCs. Another local partner, Sahakarmi Samaj, worked alongside the community to generate demand for installing piped water supply and facilitated financial institutions, both formal and informal, in providing loans to households that couldn't afford pipeline installations. These collective efforts have enabled the WSUCs to operate the systems seamlessly. Consequently, seven water supply systems have begun delivering safe water to the community within one year, with further expansion in progress to reach more areas.



Figure 1 Technical training on repair and maintenance of water supply schemes.

2.1.1 Learnings

The approach has provided several insights, including:

- **Communication and coordination**

Local governments have the constitutional responsibility to ensure water supply assurance, and they need to establish a functioning WASH unit or section to facilitate regular coordination between FDWSSMP, WUSC, and themselves. Furthermore, Lumanti, local FEDWASUN, and journalists should organize mass media events to keep stakeholders informed and cautious.

- **Capacity enhancement**

WUSCs need to transition from paper-based systems to digital tools for regular operation and hold meetings to document agendas and minutes. They should institutionalize bookkeeping, accounting, and administrative procedures, and capacitate themselves in tariff settings, transparency, and revision of all decisions and processes. A working committee with representatives from all castes, genders, and communities should be democratically elected to ensure inclusivity.

Municipalities should also capacitate their WASH section to coordinate and monitor the services provided by WUSCs and FDWSSMP. They need to monitor construction work, establish proper monitoring formats and tools, and a coordination system with scheduled meetings based on periodic planning documents like the WASH plan. Furthermore, they require a proper channel and budget for regular updates of all required data for evidence-based planning.

2.1.2 Challenges

- **Reluctance to move forward**

Despite the multiple meetings and discussions with stakeholders, Lumanti faced challenges in overcoming initial reluctance to move forward with the proposed solutions for the successful operation of the water supply systems. Overcoming resistance and gaining consensus required persistent efforts to address concerns and build trust among stakeholders.

- **Need for public accountability**

Lumanti encountered challenges in ensuring the accountability of stakeholders involved in the delay of the water supply systems. This led to the organization organizing a public hearing to question representatives from various stakeholders in a public forum. Overcoming resistance and addressing concerns in a transparent manner required careful management and effective communication.

- **Limited capacity of WSUCs**

Lumanti identified the capacity gaps within the Water and Sanitation Users Committees (WSUCs) and faced challenges in building their capacity for the successful operation of the water supply systems. Assisting with tariff settings, business plans, bookkeeping, and training maintenance workers required continuous support and training to enhance their knowledge and skills.

- **Financial accessibility for pipeline installation**

Lumanti recognized that some households faced financial constraints in affording the installation of pipelines for piped water supply. Overcoming this challenge involved working with local partner Sahakarmi Samaj to create demand and facilitating loans from formal and informal financial institutions. Ensuring accessibility to financial resources required coordination and collaboration among stakeholders.

- **Continuous expansion and sustainability**

As the water supply systems started delivering safe water to the community, Lumanti faced the challenge of ensuring their continuous expansion and sustainability. Ongoing efforts were required to maintain the smooth operation of the systems and address any future challenges that may arise.

2.2 Cooperative Mobilization for Pipeline Distribution

One of the key initiatives of Lumanti was to increase the number of households connected to the Kohalpur Small Town Water Supply System (KSTWSS) in Kohalpur Municipality. When Lumanti began its intervention, only about 4,000 households were connected to the system, even though it had the capacity to serve at least 7,000. Lumanti organized community sessions to dispel rumors that the water supplied by the KSTWSS was polluted and that the tariff was too high. The organization shared the water quality report of the water supplied by the system and ran a mass awareness campaign to highlight the benefits of piped water systems over traditional shallow tube wells.

To help make connections more affordable, Lumanti partnered with Basobas Cooperative and Dalit Mahila Sangharsha Sahakari to provide a loan scheme of up to NPR 15,000 with an interest rate of only 12% per annum. With the help of this scheme, around 250 households from ward no. 1 & 2 connected to the pipeline system. Lumanti also worked with the cooperatives to develop credit products for installing pipeline systems and got KSTWSS to provide a subsidy of 50% on its membership fee for six months in areas where pipe connection was very low.

Lumanti's intervention had several components. The organization hired staff from Basobas Sahakari and Dalit Mahila Sangharsha Sahakari for two years to create demand for pipeline connections, while community mobilizers from Sahakarmi Samaj continued the work. Lumanti also worked closely with the cooperatives to develop credit products for installing pipeline systems and to reduce the interest rate on WASH-related loans. In addition, Lumanti helped to establish a water quality mini-lab inside KSTWSS and worked with another partner, ENPHO, to provide technical support for regular water quality monitoring.

From this initiative, Lumanti learned several valuable lessons. First, mass awareness campaigns are essential to educate people about the importance of consuming safe water and the risks associated with shallow tube wells. Second, instead of relying solely on subsidies, loan schemes can encourage investment from financial institutions in WASH and give households ownership of the system, promoting water efficiency and maintenance. Third, evidence-based advocacy and awareness, such as sharing water quality reports, can be an effective way to convince people to switch to piped water systems.

2.2.1 Learnings

- **Importance of mass awareness campaigns**
Lumanti gained insight into the significance of carrying out extensive awareness campaigns to educate the community on the significance of consuming safe water and addressing misconceptions or rumors. These campaigns played a pivotal role in fostering trust and enhancing the community's acceptance of piped water systems as a preferable alternative to traditional shallow tube wells.
- **Promoting loan schemes for affordability**
Lumanti discovered that offering loan schemes through partnerships with cooperatives can make connections to the pipeline system more affordable for households. By providing financial support with low-interest rates, more households were able to access the system, promoting ownership and sustainability.
- **Evidence-based advocacy and awareness**
Lumanti realized the effectiveness of evidence-based advocacy, such as sharing water quality reports, in convincing people to switch to piped water systems. Providing tangible evidence of the water's safety and quality helps build confidence and encourages adoption.

2.2.2 Challenges

- **Overcoming misconceptions and rumors**
Lumanti faced the challenge of dispelling rumors and misconceptions surrounding the water supplied by the KSTWSS. Addressing concerns about water pollution and demonstrating the safety of the piped water system required targeted communication and engagement with the community.
- **Affordability of connection cost**
Initially, the cost of connecting households to the pipeline system may have been a barrier for some community members. Lumanti addressed this challenge by partnering with cooperatives and providing loan schemes to make connections more affordable. However, ensuring widespread access to affordable connections remains an ongoing challenge.
- **Financial sustainability**
Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the intervention posed a challenge. While subsidies and loan schemes helped make connections affordable, identifying mechanisms for long-term operation, maintenance, and revenue generation for the system requires ongoing efforts.
- **Technical support and capacity building**
Lumanti collaborated with partners to provide technical support, including establishing a water quality mini-lab and conducting regular water quality monitoring. However, building technical

capacity within the community and ensuring continued support for maintenance and monitoring can be a challenge.

2.3 WASH Policy, Law, By-law and WASH Plan

Initially, when Lumanti began working with the municipalities, they lacked any policies, laws, by-laws, and WASH plans related to water, sanitation, and hygiene. During its four-year intervention, Lumanti helped develop numerous WASH-related documents, including WASH laws, by-laws, and WASH plans. The following is a list of WASH-related documents that Lumanti helped develop in both municipalities:

1. Baijanath WASH Act 2078
2. Baijanath Water Act 2078
3. Baijanath WASH Plan 2078
4. Kohalpur Fecal Sludge Management Policy 2078
5. Kohalpur Health Act 2078
6. Kohalpur Solid Waste Management Act
7. Kohalpur WASH Capacity Building Strategy
8. Kohalpur WASH Policy 2078
9. Kohalpur Water Act 2077
10. Kohalpur Water Procedures 2077
11. Kohalpur WASH Plan 2078



Figure 2 Handover of WASH policies, guidelines and by-laws to Baijanath Rural Municipality.

To develop these documents, Lumanti conducted a situation analysis by meeting with various sections within the municipalities, including the Legislation Committee, to identify the need for different laws and policies. Lumanti then prioritized the laws needed for each municipality. For WASH Plan formation, Lumanti coordinated with the provincial government to collect household data and inventory data of all the water supply systems using N-WASH MIS system and procedures development by the Department of Water Supply and Sewerage Management (DWSSM).

Lumanti formed closed groups within the municipalities, led by municipal legislative personnel, to draft the first version of all the laws. This closed group was approved by Municipal WASH Coordination Committee (M-WASH-CC) and was provided with the necessary mandate to draft the required laws, policies, and WASH plans. Lumanti provided details, reference documents, led discussions with stakeholders, and provided technical input for drafting these documents. After presenting the first draft to the municipal executive committee, Lumanti incorporated all comments and recommendations, and the laws were approved and published in the local government's gazette (*Rajpatra*).

Lumanti organized workshops, discussions, and assessments of the municipality for drafting and finalizing the WASH plan, as per the format provided by N-WASH.

2.3.1 Learnings

- **Importance of municipality involvement**

Lumanti learned that the active involvement of municipality representatives in leadership roles is crucial in identifying and prioritizing the need for WASH laws, by-laws, policies, and plans. Their knowledge of local priorities and contexts is valuable for effective endorsement and implementation of these documents.

- **Capacity building for municipal executives**

Lumanti discovered the importance of capacity building for municipal executive bodies responsible for approving WASH laws and plans. Providing training and support on the content, scope, and finalization procedures of these documents helps enhance their understanding and facilitates smoother approval processes.

2.3.2 Challenges

- **Lack of WASH policies and plans**

Lumanti faced the challenge of starting intervention in municipalities where there were no existing WASH policies, laws, by-laws, or plans. This required significant efforts to develop comprehensive and context-specific documents to guide WASH interventions effectively.

- **Coordination and collaboration**

Coordinating with multiple stakeholders and sections within the municipalities to develop WASH documents can be complex. Ensuring effective collaboration and communication between different departments and groups, such as the Legislation Committee and municipal executive bodies, requires continuous effort.

- **Capacity gap within municipal executive bodies**

Lumanti encountered challenges related to the capacity gap within municipal executive bodies responsible for approving the WASH laws and plans. Providing training and support to enhance their understanding of the content and scope of these documents was necessary to facilitate their endorsement.

- **Technical input and reference documents**

Lumanti had to provide technical input, reference documents, and lead discussions with stakeholders to support the drafting of WASH laws, by-laws, policies, and plans. Ensuring the availability of accurate and reliable technical information required extensive coordination and engagement with relevant experts and organizations.

- **Endorsement and publication process**

The process of endorsement and publication of the drafted WASH laws and plans required careful consideration and incorporation of comments and recommendations from the municipal executive committee. Overcoming bureaucratic procedures and ensuring timely approval and publication were other challenges.

2.4 Preparation and Endorsement of WASH Plan

A major intervention was undertaken by Lumanti to prepare and endorse a WASH plan in Kohalpur Municipality and Baijanath Rural Municipality. The approach included the following steps:

- **Stakeholder engagement:** Relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, local authorities, community representatives, NGOs, development partners, and international organizations, were identified and engaged. A multi-sectoral coordination committee with the leadership of local government was formed to oversee the process.
- **Situation assessment:** A comprehensive situation assessment was conducted using mWater and N-WASH to understand the existing WASH conditions. This assessment included data on water availability, sanitation coverage, hygiene practices, health outcomes, and inventory of existing water supply systems.
- **Needs assessment:** A needs assessment was conducted to identify priority areas and target populations for WASH interventions. Geographical disparities, marginalized communities, schools, healthcare facilities, and other vulnerable groups were considered.
- **Strategy development:** Based on the situation and needs assessments, a comprehensive WASH plan was developed as per the format provided by N-WASH. This plan outlined specific goals, objectives, targets, and activities to be implemented over a defined period i.e., up to 2030 with the financial needs per year to implement the plan.
- **Resource mobilization:** The financial and technical resources required to implement the WASH plan were estimated. Potential funding sources, both local and external (national and international), were identified, and a resource mobilization plan was developed.

- **Planning and implementation framework:** A detailed action plan and implementation framework for the WASH plan were developed as part of the WASH plan. This plan included specific timelines, responsibilities, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and coordination mechanisms.
- **Endorsement and implementation:** The drafted WASH plan was presented to the executive board of local government unit for endorsement. Their commitment to support the implementation of the plan was sought, and once endorsed, the implementation phase began.
- **Coordination and collaboration:** Strong coordination and collaboration among all stakeholders involved in WASH implementation were ensured. Regular coordination meetings were convened, information was shared, and efforts were coordinated to maximize impact and avoid duplication.



Figure 3 Prioritization program for development of WASH plan.

2.4.1 Learnings and challenges

While developing a plan, several learnings emerged. Here are some common lessons that Lumanti encountered during the process:

- **Contextual understanding**
Developing a WASH plan requires a deep understanding of the local context, including social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors. It is crucial to gather accurate and up-to-date data on water sources, sanitation practices, hygiene behaviors, and prevailing health conditions to inform the planning process effectively.
- **Multi-sectoral collaboration**
WASH interventions involve multiple sectors, including water supply, sanitation, hygiene promotion, health, education, and more. Collaboration and coordination among different

stakeholders, such as government agencies, NGOs, community groups, and development partners, are vital to ensure a holistic and integrated approach to WASH planning and implementation.

- **Community engagement and ownership**

Meaningful community engagement and local ownership play a central role in the success and sustainability of WASH initiatives. It is essential to involve communities in the planning process, seek their input, and empower them to actively participate in decision-making, implementation, and maintenance of WASH facilities and practices.

- **Behavior Change Communication**

Promoting behavior change around water, sanitation, and hygiene practices requires targeted and effective communication strategies. Understanding local beliefs, attitudes, and practices related to WASH is crucial for designing contextually appropriate behavior change interventions. Consistent and culturally sensitive messaging, combined with innovative communication approaches, can contribute to positive behavior change outcomes.

- **Capacity building**

Building the capacity of local institutions, government officials, community leaders, and WASH practitioners is critical for the successful implementation of a WASH plan. Capacity-building initiatives should focus on technical skills, institutional strengthening, monitoring and evaluation, and sustainable management of WASH infrastructure and services.

- **Sustainability and maintenance**

Ensuring the long-term sustainability of WASH interventions is essential. This includes establishing mechanisms for regular maintenance, operation, and repair of infrastructure, as well as developing strategies for financial sustainability. Exploring innovative financing models and strengthening local governance structures can contribute to sustainable WASH services.

- **Monitoring and evaluation**

Robust monitoring and evaluation systems are essential to track progress, measure outcomes, and identify areas for improvement. Regular data collection and analysis enable evidence-based decision-making, facilitate adaptive management, and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the WASH plan.

- **Policy and advocacy**

Engaging with policymakers and advocating for supportive WASH policies and legislation is crucial. WASH plans should align with national development priorities and be integrated into relevant policies and strategies. Advocacy efforts can help create an enabling environment for WASH interventions and mobilize resources for implementation.

- **Flexibility and adaptability**

WASH plans should be flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances, emerging challenges, and new opportunities. Regular reviews and adjustments based on feedback, monitoring data,

and stakeholder consultations enable continuous improvement and ensure that the plan remains responsive to the evolving needs of the community.

2.5 Establishment of WASH Section

Another important intervention was undertaken to establish a WASH Section at the municipality. The approach included the following steps:

- **Advocacy and stakeholder engagement:** To raise awareness about the importance of WASH and the need for a dedicated section in the municipality, efforts were made to advocate for these issues. Engagements, discussions, and consultations were conducted with relevant stakeholders, including local government officials, community leaders, NGOs, and community members, to garner their support and involvement.
- **Policy development:** A thorough review of existing WASH policies and regulations was undertaken. Based on the findings, new policies and guidelines were formulated specifically for the establishment and operation of the WASH section in the municipality.
- **Organizational structure and staffing:** The municipality's organizational structure was evaluated and modified to accommodate the newly created WASH section. Detailed job descriptions and roles were devised for the staff members, and recruitment processes were carried out to hire competent personnel specifically for the WASH section.



Figure 4 Capacity strengthening of municipal representatives on WASH Plan and N-WASH.

- **Capacity building:** Special capacity building programs were organized to enhance the technical and managerial skills of the staff members working in the WASH section. Training sessions and workshops were conducted to reinforce their knowledge in crucial areas such as water management, sanitation planning, hygiene promotion, and project implementation.

2.5.1 Learnings and challenges

- **Limited financial resources**
Securing adequate funding for the establishment and operation of the WASH section can be challenging. Municipalities may have limited budgets, and competing priorities may hinder the allocation of sufficient resources to WASH initiatives.
- **Institutional coordination and cooperation**
Coordinating efforts and fostering cooperation among different municipal departments and stakeholders can be complex. Ensuring effective collaboration and communication between the WASH section and other relevant departments, such as urban planning, public health, and infrastructure, requires continuous effort.
- **Policy and regulatory constraints**
Existing policies and regulations may not always align with the goals and objectives of the WASH section. Overcoming regulatory barriers and advocating for supportive policies that enable WASH interventions can be a challenge, requiring engagement with higher-level government entities.
- **Human resource capacity**
Building a skilled and knowledgeable workforce within the WASH section can be difficult. Hiring qualified personnel with expertise in water management, sanitation, hygiene promotion, and project management can be a challenge, particularly in areas with limited availability of professionals in these fields.
- **Data collection and monitoring**
Collecting reliable and up-to-date data on WASH indicators can be challenging, particularly in areas with limited resources and capacity for data collection. Establishing robust monitoring systems to track progress, measure outcomes, and identify gaps requires investment in data collection tools, training, and analysis.
- **Sustainability and ownership**
Ensuring the long-term sustainability of WASH interventions and securing community ownership can be a persistent challenge. Generating local financial resources, building local capacity, and fostering community responsibility for operation and maintenance are essential for sustained impact.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusions

Lumanti's intervention in the municipalities of Baijanath and Kohalpur has led to significant improvements in the functionality and access to safely managed drinking water. The organization's efforts in operationalizing water supply systems and promoting pipeline distribution have been successful. Additionally, Lumanti played a crucial role in developing WASH policies, laws, by-laws, and WASH plans, which were previously lacking in these municipalities.

By addressing the bottlenecks in the functionalization of water supply systems, Lumanti facilitated the successful operation of previously non-functional systems. Through stakeholder engagement, coordination, and bridging roles, Lumanti helped overcome challenges such as community contributions, consumer resistance, and lack of coordination among various stakeholders. These efforts have contributed to providing safe drinking water to households and improving the functionality of the water supply systems.

Lumanti's cooperative mobilization approach, including partnerships with Basobas Cooperative and Dalit Mahila Sangharsha Sahakari, facilitated increased household connections to the Kohalpur Small Town Water Supply System. By dispelling rumors, raising awareness, providing loan schemes, and reducing interest rates, Lumanti encouraged households to connect to the pipeline system, promoting the benefits of piped water over traditional shallow tube wells.

Lumanti has also been instrumental in developing WASH policies, laws, by-laws, WASH plans, and establishing WASH sections in the municipalities. They conducted situation and needs assessments, engaged stakeholders, and facilitated the drafting and endorsement of these documents. This has created a foundation for effective WASH governance and planning, ensuring the long-term sustainability of WASH interventions.

Overall, Lumanti's interventions have demonstrated the importance of stakeholder engagement, advocacy, policy development, capacity building, and coordination in achieving functional and sustainable WASH systems.

3.2 Recommendations

- **Strengthen community engagement and awareness:** Lumanti should continue conducting mass awareness campaigns to educate communities about the importance of consuming safe water and the risks associated with traditional water sources. Emphasizing the benefits of piped water systems and addressing misconceptions can further encourage households to adopt these systems.
- **Enhance coordination among stakeholders:** Lumanti should continue playing a pivotal role in bridging stakeholders and addressing coordination issues. Facilitating regular coordination

meetings, information sharing, and collaboration among water supply systems, municipalities, and relevant agencies can ensure smooth operation and maintenance of WASH systems.

- **Promote financial inclusion and affordability:** Lumanti should explore additional strategies to make pipeline connections more affordable for households. This can include further partnerships with financial institutions to provide favorable loan schemes or exploring innovative financing models. Encouraging community savings groups and cooperatives can also contribute to resource mobilization for WASH interventions.
- **Monitor and evaluate WASH interventions:** Lumanti should establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact and effectiveness of their interventions. This will help identify areas for improvement, measure progress towards targets, and ensure accountability. Regular water quality monitoring and data collection should be integrated into the monitoring system.
- **Support capacity building and sustainability:** Lumanti should continue providing capacity building programs for staff members working in the WASH section of municipalities. This will enhance their technical and managerial skills, enabling them to effectively plan, implement, and manage WASH interventions. Additionally, efforts should be made to ensure the long-term sustainability of WASH systems through proper operation, maintenance, and governance.

WASH SDG PROJECT IN BANKE DISTRICT, NEPAL

LEARNING DOCUMENT



WASH ALLIANCE
International
Accelerating WASH



BACKGROUND

The WASH SDG initiative is being implemented by WASH Alliance International, SNV, and Plan in seven countries across Africa and Asia, including Nepal. In Nepal, the initiative is focused on increasing demand for improved WASH facilities, improving service provision quality, and strengthening WASH governance and institutional frameworks.

The first phase of the WASH SDG Project established WASH committees representing marginalized communities and developed WASH improvement plans and Water Safety Plans. The second phase focuses on completing the development of WASH Plans and operationalizing the Citywide Sanitation Plan. Nepal's Theory of Change for the project has three pathways: increase demand creation, and improve private/public sectors for sustainable and equitable WASH services.

THE PROJECT

Partner organizations work for this WASH SDG Project based on their expertise, e.g., Lumanti on institutional knowledge and rapport with local municipalities. Lumanti is driving a public sector pathway to strengthen WASH governance and institutional frameworks in the sector in Kohalpur Municipality and Baijanath Rural Municipality by functionalizing water supply schemes, preparing and endorsing a WASH plan, and increasing household connections with microfinance institution loan schemes.

It successfully contributed to the operation of seven out of ten water supply schemes that were non-functional for 15 years. The local governments lacked guidelines and plans for WASH, and Lumanti provided technical assistance to create necessary laws and periodic plans for sustainable WASH access and services.

This **learning document** outlines Lumanti's key approaches, challenges, and how they were overcome.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Municipal, ward officials, and relevant stakeholders are capacitated and aware about the importance of disaster resilient inclusive and sustainable WASH services and facilities.

Municipalities establish functional and clear institutional structure, with defined roles and responsibilities, and mechanisms to deliver and monitor WASH services.

Technically support implementation of priority actions including demonstration of replicable models on safe, water, sanitation and hygiene.

For more information visit the link



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FUNCTIONALIZATION OF WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS

LEARNING DOCUMENT



WASH ALLIANCE
International
Accelerating WASH



THE CHALLENGE

The water supply system in Baijanath and Kohalpur needed functionalization, as households have to rely on tubewells. Deep boring systems were constructed but were not able to deliver water due to bottlenecks, including the local community's 20% contribution, consumer unwillingness to install pipelines, and lack of coordination. Lumanti played a pivotal role in bridging stakeholders to overcome these bottlenecks. Only the distribution system needs to be constructed to ensure safe drinking water, using pipes and fittings provided by the Federal Water Supply and Sewerage Management Project.

INTERVENTIONS

Lumanti's WASH SDG project supported by WAI identified bottlenecks in the water supply systems and proposed solutions by holding meetings and public hearings with stakeholders. The project enhanced the capacity of WSUCs by providing assistance with tariff settings, business plans, bookkeeping, and training maintenance workers. Lumanti also led the preparation of water safety and management plans. Sahakarmi Samaj worked with the community to create demand for installing piped water supply and provided loans to households, resulting in seven water supply systems delivering safe water within a year.

PROJECT LEARNING

COMMUNICATION & COORDINATION

Communication and coordination among stakeholders are crucial, with local governments needing a functioning WASH unit for regular coordination.

CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT

Capacity enhancement is necessary, and WUSCs should adopt digital tools and institutionalize bookkeeping, accounting, and administrative procedures.

MONITORING SYSTEM

Establishing a working committee with community representatives, capacitating WASH sections, and using periodic planning documents like the WASH plan are important for ensuring inclusivity and proper monitoring of services.

For more information visit the link



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MOBILIZING WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES FOR PIPELINE DISTRIBUTION



WASH ALLIANCE
International
Accelerating WASH



THE CHALLENGE

One of Lumanti's key initiatives was to increase the number of households connected to the Kohalpur Small Town Water Supply System (KSTWSS) in Kohalpur municipality. At the outset of Lumanti's intervention, only 4,000 households were utilizing the system, despite its capacity to serve at least 7,000 households. Lumanti conducted community sessions to dispel rumors about polluted water and high tariffs, shared water quality reports, and launched a mass awareness campaign to emphasize the advantages of piped water systems over traditional shallow tube wells.

INTERVENTIONS

Lumanti partnered with Basobas Cooperative and Dalit Mahila Sangharsha Sahakari to provide a loan scheme with an interest rate of 12% per annum, helping around 250 households in ward no. 1&2 connect to the pipeline system. The organization also worked with cooperatives to develop credit products for installing pipeline systems and obtained a subsidy of 50% on KSTWSS membership fees for six months in areas with low pipe connection. Lumanti hired staff and mobilizers to create demand for pipeline connections, established a water quality mini-lab inside KSTWSS, and collaborated with ENPHO to provide technical support for regular water quality monitoring.

PROJECT LEARNING

MASS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Mass awareness campaigns are crucial to educate people about water quality and risks associated with traditional tube wells.

BETTER LOAN SCHEMES

Loan schemes can encourage investment from financial institutions and promote water efficiency and maintenance, instead of relying solely on subsidies.

EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY

Evidence-based advocacy and awareness, such as sharing water quality reports, can convince people to switch to piped water systems.

DEVELOPING WASH POLICIES, LAWS, BY-LAWS AND PLANS



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Accelerating WASH



THE CHALLENGE

Initially, when Lumanti began working with the Kohalpur and Baijanath municipalities, they lacked any policies, laws, by-laws, and plans related to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). Working without local policies and laws in municipalities created challenges such as lack of clarity, inconsistent standards, difficulty in attracting investment, and limited ability to address local issues. This resulted in difficulties in local governance and providing effective WASH facilities and services to local communities.

INTERVENTIONS

Lumanti worked for four years to develop various WASH-related documents, including laws, by-laws, and plans in two municipalities. The project conducted a situation analysis, prioritized the acts and laws needed for each municipality, and coordinated with the provincial government to collect household data and inventory data of all the water supply systems using N-WASH for WASH Plan formation. Lumanti formed closed groups within the municipalities, led by municipal legislative personnel, to draft the first version of all the laws. Lumanti provided details, reference documents, led discussions with stakeholders, and provided technical input for drafting these documents. The laws were approved and published in the local Rajpatra (Gazette) after presenting the first draft to the municipal executive committee.

PROJECT LEARNING

LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Municipal representatives have the best understanding of local needs and should lead the development of laws, by-laws, policies, and plans.

CAPACITY GAP

The capacity gap within municipal executive bodies is a major challenge that needs to be addressed through appropriate training and support.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Building the confidence of municipal representatives and executive bodies is essential for the successful endorsement and implementation of laws, by-laws, policies, and plans.