

End Water Poverty campaign journey in Nepal



A WaterAid in Nepal publication

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A copy of report can be downloaded from www.wateraid.org/nepal



WaterAid transforms lives by improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation in the world's poorest communities. We work with partners and influence decision makers to maximize our impact.

Overview

Nepal loses annually 10,500 children below 5 years age due to diseases caused by inadequate access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. The root cause of the problem is less political will and funding from donor and government as per the scale of the moral crisis. The campaigners called on world leaders from North and South to support Global Framework for Action on water and sanitation.

The campaigners are urging Nepalese government to ensure safe drinking water and sanitation services as constitutional right. It is also advocating the government stakeholders to implement all the commitments made in the South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) III Delhi Declaration. The specific demands of 2009 included endorsement of Master Plan for Sanitation and Urban Water and Sanitation Policy, sustain incremental growth of separate sanitation budget, integrate special sanitation needs of women, establish sanitation focal unit, adopt one coordination, one planning and one monitoring mechanism.

End Water Poverty campaigning journey revealed that the influencing efforts of the campaigners helped in increasing advocacy momentum of establishing sanitation and water as constitutional right. It had facilitated in the process of increasing budget in the sector with separate budget for sanitation and recognition of water and sanitation as fundamental right in SACOSAN III declaration. There was an increasing trend of consolidating influencing efforts that enabled quicker and impacting changes in the sanitation sector.

What is the End Water Poverty campaign?

End Water Poverty is campaigning wedge to end the global sanitation and water crisis. In a consolidated effort civil society organizations across the world have joined hands together to amplify the unheard voices of people, so that governments and donors move ahead to fulfill the most basic rights of all citizens.

Nepal is one of many countries affected by deprivations of inadequate water and sanitation. End Water Poverty Nepal has brought together civil society organizations and professionals with the aim of ensuring water and sanitation for all citizens.

Why are we

Sanitation, water and hygiene is global crisis that kills nearly 4,000 children every day, and undermines efforts to combat poverty, ill-health and inequality. It is estimated that over 2.2 billion people do not have access to safe sanitation and almost 900 million are deprived of clean water.

Nepal has to bear a loss of 10,500 children under 5 each year, due to diseases caused by unsafe water, poor sanitation and unhygienic scenario. In the country around 14 million people do not have access to sanitation. Forty two out of seventy five districts in the country have sanitation coverage below the national average.

[The country is in the process of drafting new constitution. It has provided immense opportunity to influence for incorporating people's agenda of sanitation and water in the legal framework of the country.


The problem

The root of the problem is inadequate political will and funding on the part of donor and national governments, given the scale of this moral crisis. Poorly coordinated interventions and weak monitoring prevent accelerated progress in the sector.

The solution

A Global Framework for Action

We call on world leaders from North and South to support a Global Framework for Action, in which:

-  Southern governments develop credible national plans to provide sanitation and water for all, and invest more in their implementation.

campaigning?

- ✎ Donor governments support the development of these plans, and ensure that no credible national plan fails for lack of finance
- ✎ International systems are developed to monitor and drive progress in the sector, including specifically a global task force, an annual review and an annual global high-level meeting.

A National Framework for Action

We call on Nepalese government to support a national framework for action to:

- ✎ Ensure safe drinking water and sanitation services as a constitutional right
- ✎ Implement all commitments made in the SACOSAN III Declaration (third South Asian Conference on Sanitation)

The specific demands for the year 2009 to be incorporated in the national framework are:

- ✎ Endorse the Master Plan for Sanitation and Urban Water and Sanitation Policy at the earliest opportunity
- ✎ Sustain incremental growth of a separate sanitation budget line item, equitably and transparently
- ✎ Integrate special sanitation needs of women including menstrual hygiene management in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating program outcomes
- ✎ Establish a sanitation focal unit in the concerned line ministries of drinking water and sanitation
- ✎ Adopt one coordination, one planning and one monitoring mechanism

Why do we **want** it?

It really pays to invest in sanitation and water because:

- ✎ It brings a nine-fold economic return by keeping people healthy and in work and education.
- ✎ It could prevent 10,500 child deaths annually.
- ✎ It improves the lives of women who would otherwise have to spend time and energy collecting water.
- ✎ It reduces the students' dropout rate from school.
- ✎ Beside water and sanitation MDG, it helps in achieving other MDGs on infant mortality, maternal mortality and universal access to primary education and primary health care.

Sanitation, water and hygiene are key building blocks of development and basic rights of people. All stakeholders should urgently act to ensure these provisions to promote dignified, healthy and productive lives for all citizens.

How are we campaigning together?



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Campaign action 1: **End Water Poverty inception rally**

It was a historic moment where around 2,000 people gathered in the streets on 16 June 2007, on the occasion of Sithi Nakha (a festival of cleaning traditional water sources i.e. wells and stone spouts) with various slogans and messages demanding solutions to combat the water and sanitation crisis. The End Water Poverty (EWP) Campaign in Nepal was formally launched amidst this crowd to provide momentum to the task of raising people's voices. Popular celebrity duo Madan Krishna Shrestha and Hari Bamsha Acharya inaugurated the rally from Mangal Bazar, Lalitpur in the presence of senior culture expert Satya Mohan Joshi.



2



***Campaign action 2:
End Water Poverty petition (Signature campaign)***

This petition symbolically stated the people's solidarity about the concerns that matter most to their lives. About 150,000 people from 31 districts out of 75 districts of the country offered their signatures to support EWP calls. The campaigners were granted an audience by then Hon Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala on 22, March 2008 for submitting the signatures. He assured the campaigners of the political commitment to combating the concerns of the sector. The meeting offered an excellent way to capture attention of the media.



**Campaign action 3:
Meeting with all prime ministers**

The country is in the phase of transition. During the campaigning period there were three Prime Ministers in the country. The campaigners grabbed all available opportunities to meet each of them, to express concerns about the sector and request increased political commitment to conquer the challenges of the water and sanitation.



**Campaign action 4:
Lobbying with political leaders**

Influencing political personalities was essential to increase debates of water and sanitation in the political forum. Besides meeting with Honorable Prime Ministers, several lobby meetings were arranged with the Honorable Finance Minister and National Planning Commission's representatives for more and better financing. There are also ongoing interactions with parliament members and political parties for increased political commitment on sanitation and water, as well as establishing water and sanitation as constitutional rights.



***Campaign action 5:
Meeting with excellency ambassadors and consuls***

Foreign delegates were strategic mediators for raising popular national concerns in the global development discussions, to influence the global development agenda. The G8 was regarded as the major international arena for the development agenda. His Excellency the Ambassador of Germany held a courtesy meeting with the campaigners who demanded the support of the German Government in proposing that the G8 develop and endorse the global water action plan. This process was continued into 2009. The campaigners called upon Mr. Ravi Bhakta Shrestha, Honorary Consul, Consulate of Italy, urging him to recommend that the Italian Government endorse the Global Framework for Action in the forthcoming G8 meeting, hosted by the Italian Government.





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**Campaign action 7:
Engaging media**

Media engagement is another strategy adopted in the campaign for gearing up political debates as well as raising concerns of water and sanitation to a wider audience. Identification of media partners helped in spreading the campaign messages smoothly. The campaigners are not relying on only one media partner for disseminating information. Each and every opportunity for sensitizing media to the calls of EWP campaign was tapped by each and every organization involved in the campaign.



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**Campaign action 6:
Declaring sanitation brand ambassador**

There is a view that sanitation and safe water deals with dirt and waste. The mindset of people should be changed and the issue should be given glamour and grace. Ms. Jharana Thapa, a well known actress of Nepal; joined hands with the campaigners as a Citizens' sanitation brand Ambassador on 19 September 2008. This also became the centre of attraction for media and the general public. The messages were covered by major national television, audio and print media.



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Campaign action 8: Moving beyond sector

Water and sanitation is not only issue of people working in the sector. It is a problem that affects all human beings and their dignity. EWP Nepal campaigned together with health professionals and currently working towards mobilizing more youth in the campaigning to bring more creativity and vibrancy in the influencing process.



Campaign action 9: Candlelight memorial for saving untimely death of children

High-profile celebrities, top politicians and over 3,000 people attended a candlelight memorial at the holy 'Monkey Temple' on the World Water Day. Constituent assembly chairman Mr. Subas Chandra Nembang called on political parties to unite to tackle this issue urgently and supported the call of ensuring water and sanitation as a constitutional right. Constitution assembly member, Nabindra Raj Joshi committed to tabling EWP concerns in the forthcoming Nepalese parliament. Sanitation brand ambassador and Kollywood actress Jharana Thapa called on the Nepalese government to honor its commitments in ensuring access to sanitation and water for all. The gathering observed one minute's silence in memory of deceased children followed by the symbolic lighting of 10,500 candle, appealing to stop the untimely deaths of 10,500 children each year. Together with the Nepalese crowd, the campaign launch was also witnessed by delegates from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri-Lanka.

Campaign action 10:
Amplifying voices for effective and sustainable WASH services

The campaign embarked on an event with a high profile audience to indicate their solidarity and amplify the voices of the WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) sector. Minister Bijay Kumar Gachhadar, Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, received the national EWP calls and shared his political commitments to the sector and the achievement of the SACOSAN III commitments. Minister Ganesh Shah, Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, and constitution assembly Member, Nabindra Raj Joshi expressed their solidarity in ensuring water and sanitation to be recognized as constitutional rights. The constitution assembly member also appealed for G8 countries to incorporate the WASH agenda in the G8 meeting in Italy. Barbara Frost, CEO of WaterAid in the UK gave an overview of the global End Water Poverty campaign and expressed a need for collective action to deal with the concerns that affect all human beings. The gathering was also witnessed by Jharana Thapa – sanitation brand ambassador, Margaret Batty – Director of Policy and Campaign Department, WaterAid in the UK; and Mr. Tom Palakudiyil – Asia Regional Manager, WaterAid.





**Campaign action 11:
Children water race**

Children are the ones who suffer most from inadequate WASH services. Children water races were organized where school children showed their solidarity for the campaign by taking part in the race. These races raised people's awareness of water and sanitation concerns and demands for urgent action to deal with the crisis, affecting thousands of citizens in the country. Busy traffic routes were selected to draw public's attention. The campaigners organized the races on 21 June 2007 and 29 May 2009, providing continuity for engaging children in the good cause.



**Campaign action 12:
Moving EWP beyond Kathmandu**

EWP campaigners had organized a series of campaigns targeted at urban centers and global audiences. With the realization that there should be further initiatives focused on rural communities, the campaigners organized series of gatherings in rural settings of Nepal. The campaigners covered 31 districts out of total 75 districts of the country to raise awareness of rural communities on water and sanitation concerns.



**Campaign Action 13:
EWP and SACOSAN**

Campaigners were engaged in the process of the Third South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) as well as in pre-SACOSAN civil society gathering. It is noteworthy that almost all major points demanded in the civil society gathering have been reflected in the third SACOSAN declaration including recognition of access to sanitation and drinking water as a basic human right. Besides, campaigners organized a series of post SACOSAN gatherings in rural areas for sharing outcomes of the conference, including the declaration.

**Campaign action 14:
Participatory planning and sharing**

EWP campaigners believe in participatory planning and review. A series of planning meetings and discussions have taken place among the campaigners for concretizing the campaign plan. The campaign planning meetings helped in allocation of responsibilities to different campaigning organizations, based on their strength in the areas of political lobbying, media campaigning, urban and rural mass mobilization, knowledge sharing and coordination. There are a number of periodic review meetings of the campaign to drive progress in a more systematic manner. Besides these, online collaborative tools like blog, wiki, flickr, google groups have been introduced to ensure effective sharing culture among the campaigners. These gatherings helped in developing a consolidated campaigning framework.

What are campaigning tools used?

calls to different stakeholders. These leaflets are a handy means to disseminate demands of the campaign during workshops, interactions and mass actions. These are very inexpensive means to spread the information.

Tool 2: Media campaigning

The media has played a great role in changing political dimensions and debates in the country. It is a strong actor for influencing the external environment. Media briefings are organized and press briefings are prepared to systematize the information flow. These briefings have helped to maintain a coherent and authoritative information flow to all the concerned media stakeholders.

Radio is proved to be affordable means of communication to reach masses ranging from political leaders, to academics, to rural illiterate communities. Radio public service announcements are used to disseminate campaign messages and demands widely to these varied audiences.

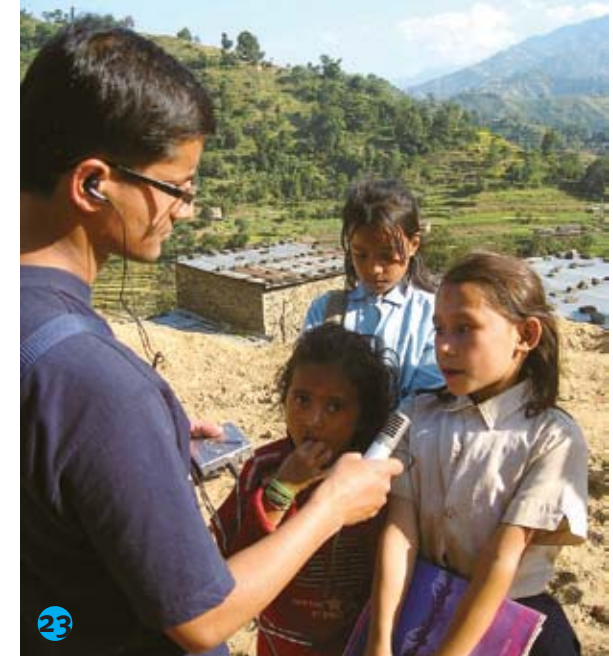
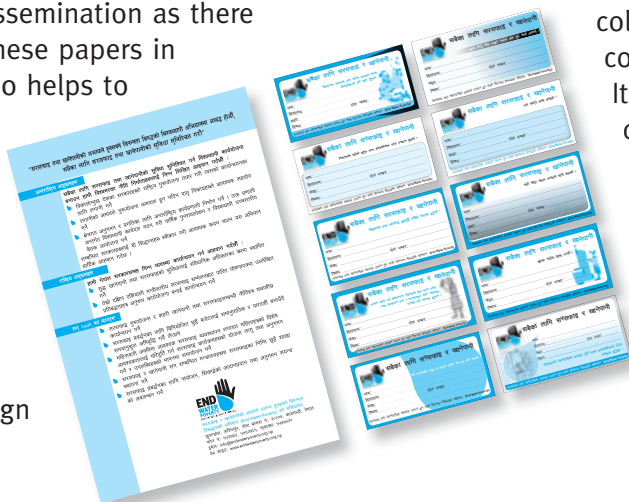
EWP alliance members are collecting all media coverage concerned with the sector. It support in validating the concerns raised by the campaigners. In most cases, these news digest are uploaded in respective websites and are published preferably in both Nepali and English languages.

Tool 1: Political and policy briefings

Political leaders are also human beings and they may not be aware of all the concerns and issues related to sanitation and water. Political Briefing Paper provides concise information to these leaders taking their busy schedules into consideration. These papers have helped political leaders to gather analytical information of the issues, to generate valid political discussions.

The petition paper provided the means to disseminate people's concerns to political leaders. It is a formal means of dissemination as there is official registration of these papers in government records. It also helps to generate mass pressure on political leaders to rethink their priorities for the development agenda.

Pamphlets and brochures have helped in sharing information of the campaign



Tool 3: Providing interactive platforms

Interactive discussions have been organized for developing a common understanding among the



concerned stakeholders. These discussions can ensure participatory planning so that those involved own the plan, thereby ensuring its effective implementation.

Public hearings provide space for citizens to question and debate with responsible agencies. They help to promote accountability of concerned stakeholders. This tool is widely used in rural settings during campaigns for water and sanitation.

Competitions with sanitation and water themes were organized to raise awareness of the concerns of the sector. The Children water race, essay competition and speech competition for children were some examples of the tools used during the campaigning process. Such tools are found to be effective both in urban and rural areas.



Tool 4: Adding sentimental values

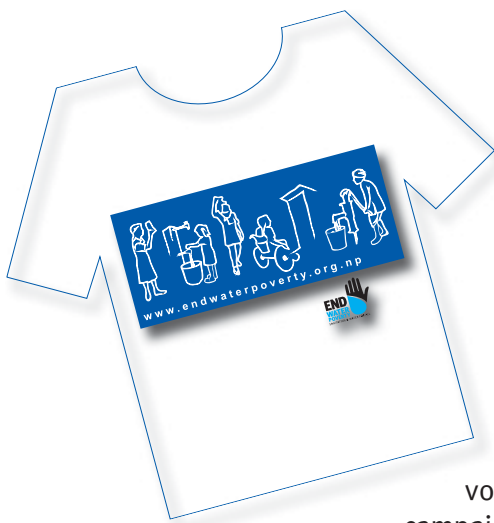
A candle light vigil was used as the means to memorize death of children caused due to inadequate access to water and sanitation. The campaigners used lighters with the EWP logo for lighting these candles. The vigil touched people's hearts and generated a mass of campaigners supporting the cause: to ensure water and sanitation for all.

Tool 5: Raising sensitivity and solidarity

Children suffer most because of the global crisis in water and sanitation. In order to raise awareness

among these children, especially rural and poor ones, name tags for books and copy were prepared for them. These simple messages help to raise WASH awareness among these targeted children.

Illustrations and good photographs speak more than words. Campaigners used stickers, posters and calendars with pictures to convey messages of water and sanitation as a constitutional right; menstrual hygiene; disabled friendly toilets; and separate toilets for girls and boys. These promotional materials also support in branding the campaign as it reached to wider audiences. Ultimately, it aided in raising more public awareness on the issues of sanitation and water.



T-shirts helped in showing mass solidarity of the campaigners. In case of mass actions, they have acted as the means to identify volunteers and campaigners. The

preparation of different sizes of t-shirts has helped to incorporate everyone from children to old people in the campaigning process. They have acted as the messenger of the campaign slogans and supported in branding the campaign.

Road banners with the EWP calls were displayed in various parts of the country- both urban and rural settings. These banners helped in reinforcing and reminding people about the demands of the campaign. In mass actions, banners with illustration helped in capturing attention of the public towards the cause of the campaign.

Wall painting proved to be another good means to draw public as well as political attention. The selection of the site was vital in determining the influence of the wall painting.

Tool 6: Glamorizing the issue

Sanitation brand ambassador, actress Jharana Thapa has extended her full support in raising the concerns of sanitation and water in different platforms including SACOSAN III. It has helped in gaining more public awareness on the issue that led to vibrant political discussions.



People remember messages conveyed by acts and plays in more entertaining manner, than by presentations in formal settings. The campaigners mobilized professional drama actors to portray the concerns of the sector as well as suggesting solutions as demarcated in the campaign calls.

Music is used as another means to disseminate information to high profile stakeholders. The campaigners selected music with connotations to water such as Jalatarang, literally meaning “water waves”, to symbolically emphasize the opening of the high profile gathering, which explored collaboration for the common cause of dignified lives for the people.



Tool 7: Online networking and collaborative documentation

The campaigners used series of online platforms like wiki, blog, google group, flickr and facebook to ensure proper sharing of the information and knowledge amongst the campaigners at the national as well as the global level. Photo and video documentation are used as the means to ensure effective process documentation of campaigning initiatives. The photographic EWP journey and video documentation has been prepared to recall the past efforts of the campaigners. This also helped ensure systematic process documentation of the campaigns to inspire and acknowledge energy invested by the campaigners in Nepal.

What are major achievements?

End Water Poverty campaigning coupled with influencing initiatives and commitment of concerned stakeholders supported in meeting following achievements of bringing changes.

Increased advocacy momentum of sanitation and water as constitutional right

Nepal is in the transitory phase of political development. The country is in the process of drafting new constitution through wider participation of people. In this regard, the campaigning initiatives supported in reinforcing sanitation and water as constitutional right. Some constituent assembly members have publicly announced that water has been incorporated as the right in the draft constitution. However, we are yet to wait and watch for materialization of the announcement into reality.

SACOSAN III declaration recognizing water and sanitation as fundamental right

The Third South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) declaration was a reason for the campaigners to shed tears of joy. The declaration incorporated almost all the major declarations of the Pre-SACOSAN Civil Society Meeting. The

major achievement for the campaigners was the moment when the SACOSAN III declaration reinforced that ***“access to sanitation and safe drinking water is a basic right, and according national priority to sanitation is imperative”***

Increased budget in the sector with separate budget for sanitation

The campaign has urged for a separate and transparent budget line for sanitation. Previously, water and sanitation used to be under the same heading and water used to be treated as the major head, neglecting sanitation. For the first time in the history of Nepal, a separate budget line for sanitation has been introduced. There is allocation of total budget of Rs.7.9 billion (US\$ 99 million) for water and sanitation for the year 2008/09 and NRs.50 million (just under USD 1 million) allocated separately for sanitation. The year 2009/10 observed further increase of WASH budget to about Rs. 9 billion and separate sanitation budget line to Rs. 79 million. The incremental growth of separate sanitation budget line indicated the increased attention of policy makers towards the genuine cause of sanitation issues.

Master Plan and Urban Policy in process

The campaign was initiated with national calls demanding a National Sanitation Plan, Annual Sanitation Programme and Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Policy. The government has initiated the process of endorsement of a Master Plan of Sanitation in Nepal. The National Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Policy has been approved by the cabinet on August 2009. The members involved in the campaign were regarded as knowledge banks by the government agencies by providing space to share their comments and suggestions to make the policy and plan documents more people-centred.

Enhanced synergized efforts

The campaign helped the stakeholders working in the same sector to come together and work as a single force for addressing common goals. It helped in building trust amongst each other thus opening the avenues of collaboration and partnership for other initiatives. The synergy creation was not limited only to the member organizations but also to other initiatives like the International Year of Sanitation. The scope of networking was also expanded beyond the sector to generate a broader sense of sanitation and water issues.

What are the **actions** for 2009?

- ✎ Stand up for the right to sanitation on World Toilet Day, 19 November 2009
- ✎ Join “the World’s Largest Toilet Queue” to demand results from the UN High Level Meeting
- ✎ Promote the Campaign Petition – make the government sanitation champions
- ✎ Meet politicians and media to ensure water and sanitation as constitutional right
- ✎ Sector Financial governance initiatives to sustain incremental budget growth in the sector

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Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): Nepal profile










-  4.4 million people do not have access to drinking water facilities and 14 million people are deprived from basic sanitation services with reference to government figure (84% water coverage and 49% sanitation coverage)¹
-  10,500 children die before their fifth birthday due to diarrhea caused mainly because of inadequate access to safe drinking water and sanitation²
-  More than 80% of diseases are caused because of unsafe drinking water and unhygienic sanitation⁶
-  10 million people wash their hands with water and 3.3 million wash their hands with soap during critical times³
-  Hygiene education and promotion of hand-washing is simple and cost effective means of preventing diarrhea up to 45%⁴
-  The economic benefits of WASH is immense as investment of Rs 1 in sanitation will give back return of Rs.9⁵
-  Increased access to sanitation support in increasing attendance of students in schools. On contrary, only 41% of public and community schools have toilet facilities⁶
-  Nepal needs annual investment of Rs 7.5 billion to meet universal access to basic water and sanitation facilities by 2017.⁷ The current budget allocation of Rs 9.15 billion is sufficient to meet the national target.⁸ However, the challenge of continued financial commitment including sustainability targeted initiatives on low coverage districts are substantial.
-  Each year since 2006 an average of 4 million people are provided with basic sanitation services. At this rate, the country will achieve the universal access by 2016. It is estimated that 62 % of sanitation access initiatives are sustained.⁹

Image details

Cover:

From Left – 1st - WaterAid/ Jim Holmes;
2nd and 3rd - WaterAid/ Marco Betti;
4th and 5th Financial Times/ Charlie Bibby

Body:

FEDWASUN - 7; NGOFUWS - 3, 6, 10, 17; WaterAid - 8;
WaterAid/ Anita Pradhan - 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 16, 18, 19, 23;
WaterAid/Sundar Basnet - 26;
WaterAid/ Suraj Sharma - 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28

1 National Labor Force Survey, National Planning Commission and Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009

2 National Demographic and Health Survey, Ministry of Health and Population, 2006

3 Equity in Health Report, Ministry of Health and Population, 2006

4 Fatal Neglect Report, WaterAid, 2009

5 World Health Organization

6 International Year of Sanitation Nepal Website, www.iys2008.org.np

7 Sector Financing Study, WaterAid Nepal, 2008

8 Red Book, Ministry of Finance, 2009

9 Long term sustainability monitoring report, WaterAid Nepal, 2007

End Water Poverty campaign journey in Nepal

End Water Campaign Journey is the story of the path traveled by the campaigners for ensuring sanitation and water for all. It comprise of campaigning activities and tools used during the influencing process. It also contains brief glimpse of achievements and future directions of the campaigners.



WaterAid transforms lives by improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation in the world's poorest communities. We work with partners and influence decision makers to maximize our impact.

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