Water Point Mapping – a tool for increasing transparency and accountability?

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Abstract

Sector performance monitoring is promoted in many developing countries in order to improve transparency and accountability in delivering water supply, sanitation and hygiene services. Water Point Mapping (WPM) is a tool that visualises sector information highlighting, for example, equity in distribution of water supply services. Through the visualisation of sector information, WPM has the potential to support sector performance monitoring.

The paper argues that the availability of WPM evidence in itself does not yet bring about any changes. The information needs to be made accessible to different actors to increase transparency and its use needs to be encouraged to increase accountability of water supply service provision.

The paper discusses the challenges of WPM in improving transparency and accountability of rural water supply services and ways to overcome them based on WaterAid's experience in WPM in East Africa. It differentiates between three types of challenges: technological, operational and governance-related; and argues that, generally, not enough attention is paid to overcoming the latter. It holds that operational and governance-related challenges impact on the use of WPM information but cannot be overcome by mapping alone. The paper proposes '"policy space analysis" based on a power analysis tool by Gaventa et al to identify entry points for engagement through WPM. Depending on the openness of the policy space in a country, formal government reporting and alternative feed-back channels can be used to support sector performance monitoring through WPM in East Africa. The paper concludes by providing examples for engaging with formal reporting mechanisms and alternative feed-back channels based on experiences from WaterAid in East Africa.

Keywords

INTRODUCTION

The paper is based on a strategic review of WaterAid's Water Point Mapping (WPM) approaches in four countries in East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) carried out between December 2009 and February 2010 (Welle 2010).[1]

The present paper draws broader lessons based on WaterAid's experiences for using WPM as a tool to increase transparency and accountability of water supply services. The examples in the paper are taken from Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda because of WaterAid's longer experience with WPM in these countries.

The paper is divided into three parts. The first part is conceptual, reflecting on what increasing transparency and accountability may mean in the context of Sector Performance Monitoring and the role that WPM can play in this process. The second part introduces WaterAid's progress in WPM in the three countries and the major challenges faced, broken down into technological, operational and governance-related. The third part discusses ways of addressing these challenges with a focus on entry points to overcome governance-related issues.

SECTOR PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND WATER POINT MAPPING

Definition and background to Sector Performance Monitoring

The Development Assistance Committee of the OECD defines performance-based monitoring as

"A continuous process of collecting and analyzing data to compare how well a project, program, or policy is being implemented against expected results." (OECD-DAC 2002: 30)

The OECD definition clearly points out the focus of performance-based monitoring: compared to traditional project and programme Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), which is primarily concerned with implementation aspects – inputs, activities and outputs – performance-based M&E focuses on results – the outputs, outcomes and impacts of a project or programme.

In international development, performance-based monitoring is at the heart of the Aid Effectiveness agenda, which dominates recipient country – development partner relationships including in East Africa. One of the five principles underlying Aid Effectiveness is 'Managing for Results' (High-Level-Forum 2005). At sector level, Managing for Results is measured via performance monitoring frameworks that are increasingly being developed as

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[1] The original report can be accessed on:
http://www.wateraid.org/documents/plugin_documents/east_africa_wpm_final_for_web.pdf

part of an ongoing shift towards sector-wide approaches (SWAps)[2]. An important rationale for encouraging performance monitoring as part of SWAps is to strengthen domestic accountability and demonstrate value-for-money to the public. Sector Performance Monitoring (SPM) is also being pushed by the need of donor organisations to demonstrate to their own constituencies that aid money yields results.

Recent developments in Sector Performance Monitoring in the water sector in East Africa

Traditionally the water sector measures financial inputs and activities. This means that, on a yearly and multi-year basis, water ministries monitor the use of financial resources allocated to them and the progress of water supply construction activities within a given period of time. Often, ministries of water have a regular reporting mechanism on inputs and activities and conduct internal progress reviews.

In addition, the sector captures outputs i.e. the construction of water supply schemes through occasional surveys of improved water supply schemes. However, such surveys are costly and time-consuming and therefore often not carried out on a regular basis. Outcomes, i.e. user access to water supply services are most easily captured through household surveys. These tend to be carried out by agencies outside the sector e.g. by national statistical agencies at differing intervals. Because outputs (water schemes constructed) and outcomes (access to water supply) are different, there is often a discrepancy between the data obtained from household surveys and data from water scheme surveys with the former showing lower levels of access to water supply.

Performance-based monitoring links financial inputs to results, mainly in the form of outputs or outcomes in the water sector. In principle, the Millennium Development Goals at the international level and equivalent national- level access targets establish an entry point for performance-based monitoring. However, in practice, the shift towards SPM is still in process in many countries and there are a number of obstacles that make the relationship between financial inputs and results less than straightforward.

In Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda, improving performance monitoring was identified as a key undertaking in joint sector review processes (n.a. 2008). In January 2010, all three countries were undertaking efforts to improve their Sector Information Management Systems and intended to, or were in the process of, conducting baseline surveys to feed into new or reviewed databases. In Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda, the databases under development were being designed to allow the display of geo-referenced information. Ministries were also considering using a web-based interface to display sector information.

These national sector efforts were complemented by two regional initiatives in East Africa, namely the 'WATSAN Portal' (WSP 2009) and the h.20 Inform and Empower Initiative (Google.org & UN-Habitat 2009). Both initiatives aimed to support performance monitoring

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[2] Sector-wide approaches aim to establish a single policy and expenditure programme within which all sector stakeholders operate, and in some cases involve pooling of funds and direct support to government budgets.

and to strengthen independent user feed-back on levels of services in rural and urban water supply.

The role of Water Point Mapping in Sector Performance Monitoring

The strength of Water Point Mapping (WPM) is that it visualises the relationship between physical and socio-economic data related to access to water supply and thereby reveals patterns that would otherwise be difficult to see (MacDonald et al. 2009). While rural WPM can be used to support a variety of analyses, it is most often used to highlight equity issues and schemes functionality levels below the district level.[3]
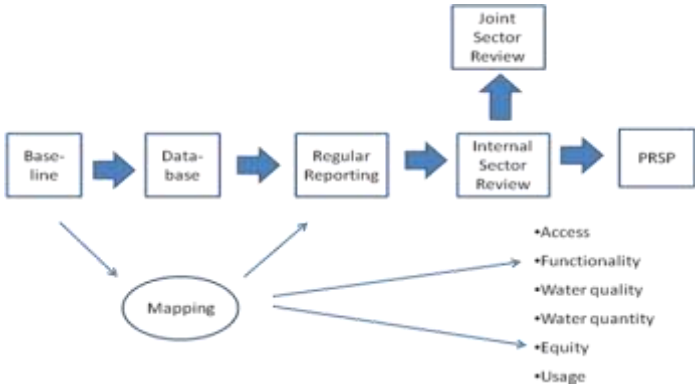

Figure 1   Role of Water Point Mapping in Sector Performance Monitoring

As shown in Figure 1 above, WPM is a tool that supports the process of establishing a baseline and regular reporting as part of sector performance monitoring. While performance monitoring frameworks intend to measure changes in access, it is often impossible to know whether access levels have changed based on simply adding up the number of schemes constructed. By showing the spatial distribution of water facilities and overlaying this point data with information about population and administrative boundaries, a picture about differences in levels of access to water supply services can easily be obtained. The strength of water point maps is that they carry a clear message on which areas are and are not served. One person described the power of the message carried by a map compared to descriptive information by referring to the television compared to the radio. The draw-back of water point maps, however, is that they are only as accurate as the underlying information and often leave out various parameters but still convey a seemingly clear picture.

Sector Performance Monitoring links with transparency and accountability

WaterAid conceptualises its engagement with sector performance in East Africa as a stepped approach as displayed in Figure 2 below. The first step is making available reliable sector data that helps to measure performance. The second step consists of making this data

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[3] WPM is also often undertaken to establish a baseline for a project or programme. In this paper, I refer to the use of WPM to support sector performance monitoring.

accessible to all relevant stakeholders. The third step is promoting the use of the data for taking decisions that increase performance.[4]

Transparency and accountability are central concerns in current debates on international development. But what do they mean in the context of rural water supply? What are the linkages between transparency and accountability and how can theoretical linkages be operationalised and translated into concrete improvements in service delivery outcomes in a particular sector context?

One way of thinking further about transparency and accountability is to relate them to the sector performance engagement steps outlined by WaterAid. While increasing transparency covers the first two steps, namely making data available and accessible to all relevant stakeholders, accountability relates to making use of this data for taking decisions.
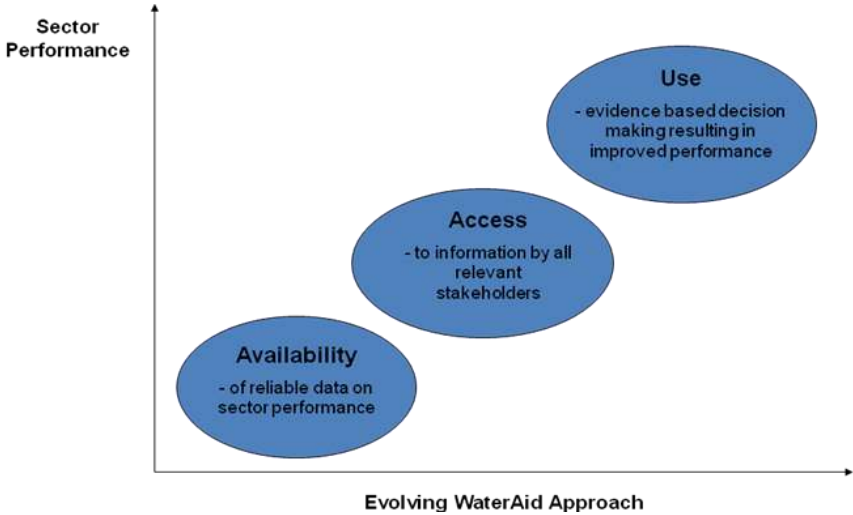
Figure 2   WaterAid's approach to engaging with SPM

Source: Musaazi (2009); Musaazi et al. (2009)

Consequently, WPM is a tool that has the potential to help increasing transparency of service levels, and via that, accountability of water supply services. If information is made accessible to policy officials, citizens or pressure groups, WPM can help them to point out issues and demand improvements in services. However, while WPM information has the potential to help improve accountability in service provision, it is not sufficient, in itself, to eliminate the influence of other factors on these services. In practice, there are problems with producing WPM information, in making it accessible and in promoting its use for taking decisions on water supply provision.

The next section gives an overview of WaterAid's progress in using WPM to support SPM based on the ladder of engagement above and highlights the major challenges faced.

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[4] The diagram was developed by Tom Slaymaker to help WaterAid reflect on its future engagement with sector performance monitoring.

WATERAID POINT MAPPING ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN EAST AFRICA

WaterAid has a wide ranging experience in water and sanitation mapping for advocacy.[5] In WA's Sub-Saharan Africa country programmes, including in the East Africa Region[6], mapping approaches are most developed for rural WPM. In East Africa, the main focus of rural WPM activities to-date has been on improving targeting of marginalised communities below the district level, and increasing sustainability i.e. the functionality rates of water points.

Water Point Mapping progress by country

In **Ethiopia**, WPM was at the first step of the ladder, in a situation where evidence still needed to be developed. Between 2006 and 2009, WaterAid had collected geo-referenced information in three districts but had not always produced maps. Starting from 2010, WaterAid Ethiopia started to trial a new WPM software, the WaterAid WPM Spreadsheet Mapper, in one of its programme districts. At that time, however, WPM was not yet established as a known tool to inform planning at the district level in Ethiopia.

In **Uganda**, WPM was making headway on step 1 but struggling with steps 2 and 3, making data accessible and using it for informing decisions. In 2010, information based on WA WPM was available for some districts in Uganda, and in other districts it was being collected by the Ministry of Water and Environment, as well as by a local partner of WaterAid for some sub-districts. WaterAid's achievement in rural WPM in Uganda was its on-the-ground experience with the implementation of the tool and, particularly, its successful support in testing and sustaining a regular updating mechanism in one of the districts, Masindi (WaterAid n.d.). However, how to make government WPM data accessible to all relevant stakeholders was not yet clear in early 2010. Similarly, there was no reliable information documenting the use of WPM information in the past to inform decisions on access to rural water supply.

In **Tanzania**, WPM data covered 51 out of 133 rural districts (MoWI n.d.) in 2010. Yet, for those districts that had been mapped as far back as 2004/5, one could also argue that the information is outdated and can therefore not really be considered as being available. Equity studies by the NGO network TAWASANET showed that WPM data was not always made available at district level and often not used (TAWASANET 2008, 2009). In January 2010, a programme by the Tanzania-based organisation Daraja was launched, aiming at substantially increasing access to WPM information at district level via the distribution of maps and through complementary radio programmes. In Tanzania, therefore, WA's WPM activities were making headway towards step 2.

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[5] See (Welle 2007b) for more details.
[6] WaterAid's East Africa Programme comprises Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda with a new country programme soon to open in Rwanda and policy-focused work currently being explored in Kenya.

Challenges related to Water Point Mapping

Although WPM was at different stages of progress and acceptance in the three countries, the challenges faced were similar. In all country programmes, WaterAid struggled with establishing WPM evidence as a basis for planning at the district level and above. At the same time, the regular updating of WPM data remained a challenge. This created a vicious circle: the more outdated WPM data became, the less useful it became for future planning purposes.

The underlying reasons for these two major challenges can be broken down into technological, operational and governance-related. There is a tendency in WPM to focus on the technological challenges, namely improving software, and on data collection and analysis for the production of WPM information. However, serious challenges also relate to the operationalisation of updating information and to governance issues that impact on the use of WPM information for informing decisions. All three types of challenges are described in more detail in this section.

Technological Challenges

In all three countries, WPM outputs were produced using ArcGIS software. The challenges related to ArcGIS are well-known. The software is expensive and, more importantly, it requires advanced GIS skills, which cannot easily be transferred via short trainings. It is the exception rather than the rule that district staff trained in GIS are subsequently able to use the software. Retaining GIS skills for WPM at district level had already previously been reported as a problem in Malawi and Tanzania (Welle 2006), in Ghana and Nigeria (Welle 2007a) and in Ethiopia (MacDonald et al. 2009) and was also repeatedly mentioned as a key challenge in interviews during the East Africa review of WPM activities.

At the same time, there are now a number of new technological developments that reduce the financial and skill-input of GIS for producing certain custom-made or pre-defined maps. An example of an alternative to GIS is WaterAid's Spreadsheet Water Point Mapper, an excel spreadsheet that is used in combination with Google Earth to produce a map with a few mouse clicks (see also http://www.waterpointmapper.org/).

Operational Challenges

Operational challenges relate to problems of putting a policy or procedure into practice. With regard to WPM, regular updating of information was a particular concern across Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda.

One issue related to the lack of updating was that, in WaterAid's previous WPM initiatives, the emphasis was first of all on the process of collecting, analysing and presenting information, whereas the challenge of handing over to government authorities and institutionalising mapping approaches within routine planning and monitoring processes only started to be addressed later on.

Second, in the water sector, reporting structures below the district remain weak compared to health, education and agriculture in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda. Regular reporting was more difficult because the water sector did not have dedicated extension workers based at sub-district level who could regularly report on the status of water supply schemes and related issues. For water officers at district level, visiting schemes on a regular basis was logistically challenging because of the number and geographical dispersion of water schemes and because of very limited operational budgets and transport available to them.

Third, regular reporting procedures on the functionality of water schemes had not been put in place in some countries. In Ethiopia, for example, no official procedures or budgets existed to enable water office staff to regularly report on functionality. Similarly, development partners and NGOs had often not established structures to report on scheme functionality and other data beyond project completion. This situation is partly related to an ambiguity of scope in defining results. As scheme ownership is handed over to communities after project completion, the government or NGOs are, in a narrow sense, not responsible for monitoring functionality rates.

Governance-related Challenges

The governance-related challenges to WPM are linked to the wider sector situation that WPM intends to address. The use of WPM information for planning and implementation is contingent on progress made on these wider challenges. WPM is a tool to support sector performance monitoring. However, in all three countries, these monitoring structures are in transition and incentives for accurate and timely reporting are weak.

This is so, in part, because of the weak relation between the targeting of inputs (in the form of financial allocations) and the reporting of results (for example, levels of access to water supply in a district). There are a number of different bottlenecks related to this:

a) *Parallel financial channels prevent consistent planning*: often, there are multiple channels for financing rural water supply projects and not all of them may be captured in the national sector budget. Bi- and multi-lateral donors are increasingly reporting their financial resources through the national or sector budget, but the allocation of their financial resources is not always aligned with government allocation rules. Furthermore, investments of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) remain mostly outside the sector budget. This leads to parallel financing mechanisms with different formula that can become an obstacle to coherent sector planning and performance-based management. In Ethiopia, for example, there were at least eight parallel financing modalities for rural water supply in 2009 (World Bank 2009).

b) *There is no accurate and timely data on performance to allow for targeting of resources*: agencies working in the sector such as different sector ministries, development partners and NGOs often collect different information and analyse data in different ways for reporting progress on their activities. The lack of harmonisation of reporting may lead to gaps in progress reporting on coverage as, for example, NGOs do not always report their activities to the government. In Ethiopia, for example, only a very rough calculation of the NGO contribution to the sector was possible (WaterAid 2007). Lack of alignment of regular

reporting also results in contested coverage figures as different organisations may collect information on different indicators and use different methods to calculate access based on the respective national definition of access.

c) ***Ambiguity of scope in defining results****:* development results encompass a hierarchy of i) outputs, ii) outcomes and iii) impact. In rural water supply, this hierarchy translates into a) water supply schemes constructed, b) people with access to improved water supply schemes and c) people enjoying an improved health status, time savings etc, based on access to water supply. In many developing countries, the principle of community ownership, and community responsibility for scheme Operation and Maintenance (O&M) applies. This means that the responsibility of the state extends primarily to the provision of improved facilities while it is the responsibility of the users to sustain the services. In a narrow sense, therefore, the ministry's reporting responsibilities relate only to outputs. Most national development plans include targets which focus on development outcomes (access to services) but the roles and responsibilities of different line ministries in contributing to these outcomes are not always clearly defined. This ambiguity may have contributed to weak reporting mechanisms on access on the side of the government. It may partly explain, for example, why regular updating of scheme functionality is not part of the sector monitoring framework or poses a logistical challenge for water sector staff.

For WPM to support SPM, technological, operational and governance-related challenges need to be tackled. However, overcoming the latter two is more difficult because they are dependent on wider processes that can only be partly influenced by WPM. Addressing operational and governance-related challenges requires going back to the wider SPM issues and engaging in a dialogue for which WPM information is only one building block. The entry points for such a dialogue differ between countries and even between sectors. The next section introduces an analytical tool for identifying entry points for WPM for engaging in SPM in a particular country and sector context.

ENTRY POINTS FOR ENGAGING IN POLICY DIALOGUE AROUND WATER POINT MAPPING

In this section, I first introduce 'policy space analysis' as a tool to determine entry points for engaging through WPM in engaging in sector governance issues and describe how the tool was used to determine spaces for engagement in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda. I then distinguish between different channels of engagement depending on the policy space in a country and give examples from WaterAid's experience on engaging to overcome technological, operational and governance-related challenges.

Policy space analysis

Over the past years, John Gaventa and others developed a method to identify spaces for policy engagement. Gaventa (2006: 26) defines 'spaces' as "opportunities, moments, and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and

relationships that affect their lives and interests." Based on Gaventa (2006), a distinction is made between closed, invited and created spaces for participation (see Figure 3 below).

Space	Description
Closed	State-based decision-making behind doors, decisions are made without consultation or involvement of non-state stakeholders
Invited	Spaces where different stakeholders are formally invited to participate but the scope (how and what) is controlled by the state; e.g. by invitation such as a one-off consultation, or by right
Created	Spaces created or claimed by less powerful actors to challenge more powerful actors; those spaces may be created out of a common identification or concern. In addition to collective action, spaces can also be created by CSOs and by other non-state institutions such as donors, faith-based organisations or political parties.

Figure 3   Policy space

Source: Gaventa (2006)

When analysing the policy space in relation with WaterAid's engagement in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda, three different aspects were taken into consideration:

a) formal opportunities for engagement from the side of NGOs in the water sector;

b) whether these opportunities had been taken up; and

c) the general strength of NGO policy and advocacy work in the sector.

Figure 4 below summarises the situation in each country based on a rapid review. The results should strictly be taken as indicative only. Further work is required to establish the validity of the below classifications.

| Country	Policy Space	Explanation
Ethiopia	Closed with limited invited spaces for engagement	The policy space in the Ethiopian rural water supply sector was mainly closed with a limited number of opportunities for engaging in non-controversial, invited spaces. Human rights work was strongly discouraged by the government with NGOs self-censoring their activities. Sector consultation mechanisms were open to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) but opportunities for active contributions were limited to non-controversial topics such as capacity building. Opportunities for engagement were felt to be higher at local government and regional level compared to the federal level. One NGO had supported strategic WASH plans in six districts, which indicates that supporting local level planning is potentially possible.
Tanzania	A mixture of invited and created spaces	The policy space in the Tanzanian rural water supply sector showed a mixture of invited and created spaces. Sector consultation mechanisms were open to CSOs and the space was taken up by presenting challenging evidence through equity reports, which stirred some discussion in the sector. However, government initiative in the thematic working group on performance monitoring, where issues on monitoring

		could be addressed, was felt to be lacking. At the same time, various NGOs engaged in planning processes at the local government level and produced radio programmes to improve citizens' access to information. Additional advocacy activities such as a wide distribution of posters with information on equity in water supply service delivery were underway.
Uganda	Invited, particularly in the water sector	The policy space in the Ugandan rural water supply sector was an invited space, particularly at the sector level, from the side of the relevant directorate who actively encouraged WaterAid's support in implementing the ongoing national water supply survey. Sector consultation mechanisms were open to CSOs and the space was taken up by actively participating in the review. WaterAid and one if its local partners engaged in planning processes at the local government level and below. They also produced radio programmes to support access to information but here, messages had to be carefully balanced. The closure of several radio programmes in the recent past indicated that the possibility of moving beyond the 'invited space' was limited.

Figure 4   Policy spaces in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda

The emerging picture from the different spaces for engagement shows different opportunities across Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda. In Ethiopia where policy space was closed with some invited spaces at sector level, entry points for working on sector monitoring presented themselves mainly by working closely with the government via capacity building to support the implementation of the WASH inventory and sector information management system below the federal level. In Tanzania, spaces for engagement were relatively open but the sector government was slow to take forward sector monitoring. In this context, using alternative feed-back channels to pressurise higher government levels while also challenging local government decision making processes indicated to have the highest leverage. In Uganda, where the dynamic Director for Water Development requested support, it appeared that engagement might go furthest by actively working with the ministry on identified problem areas.

Formal and alternative channels to strengthen Sector Performance Monitoring

The distinction between different policy spaces as 'closed', 'invited' or 'created' helped to show the leeway that CSOs may have for engaging in sector dialogue and review processes. Based on this analysis, civil society actors can develop strategies for engagement around WPM. A further step in developing such strategies could be by differentiating between formal, government reporting channels on the one hand and alternative feed-back mechanisms on the other hand as represented in Figure 5 below.
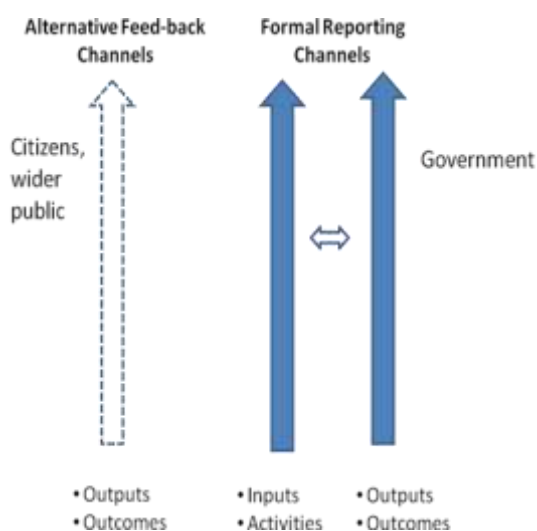
The formal, government monitoring mechanisms such as evolving SPM and existing monitoring mechanisms on financial inputs and activities are represented by the two blue arrows on the right. The alternative feed-back mechanisms are represented by the white arrow on the left. Alternative feed-back mechanisms refer to feed-back based on WPM information independent of the government e.g. through radio programmes, newspapers, or the use of maps displayed on posters to inform citizens and other relevant stakeholders about the service situation in their area.

Figure 5   Different influencing channels

In either of the two channels, civil society actors can choose a combination of addressing technological, operational and governance challenges, depending on which stage they are in WPM and on the openness of the policy space in the country. In the following two sections, entry points for engagement are illustrated first for formal and then for informal channels based on experiences by WaterAid.

Supporting formal government monitoring mechanisms

Technological challenges relate to the use of GIS. The latest development of WaterAid's Water Point Spreadsheet Mapper and an excel-mapping tool from Malawi were used by WaterAid to pilot alternatives to GIS. Support to overcome technological challenges is a classical capacity building activity that is feasible even in closed policy environments provided the sector is interested to explore WPM.

Operational challenges centre on updating of WPM information i.e. newly constructed schemes and of non-functional water points. There are a number of positive examples of possible updating mechanisms explored in different countries, for example, in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda, which are documented in the original review (Welle 2010). Updating is also an area where sector governments have already expressed demand (Uganda) or are likely to require support in the future. It may thus be a relatively uncontroversial area of engagement including in closed policy environments.

While there is a lot of enthusiasm now about introducing mobile-to-web technology to overcome existing reporting problems, some caution is in order. Mobile phone network coverage and use differs widely and therefore using mobile phone technology for updating may not yet be appropriate in each country context. More importantly, a focus on developing technological solutions may overlook the underlying governance issues that

hinder existing paper-based reporting mechanisms in the sector. As long as these problems are not addressed, new technologies are not likely to have a strong impact.

Overcoming technical and operational challenges relates mainly to making information available and accessible to different stakeholders, the first two steps of engagement with SPM relating to increasing transparency.

Governance-related challenges are mainly related to the use of WPM information for planning. Adverse incentive structures partly explain delays and inaccuracies in regular reporting. Addressing governance issues via formal, government monitoring mechanisms is probably most realistic by providing support at the local government level and below. For example, WaterAid conducted feed-back meetings to share WPM outputs and subsequently supported the development of a district water supply (and sanitation) strategic plan and its implementation in some districts in various countries.

Supporting alternative feed-back channels

Working through alternative feed-back channels is implicitly governance-related. This type of work may not be possible in all situations as indicated in the policy space analysis above. It has most scope in those situations where civil society is able to create new spaces for engagement.

Examples for using alternative channels to make WPM information accessible to a wider public are the use of radio programmes in Uganda and Tanzania and of printed posters displayed widely in public spaces to foster discussion in Tanzania through the NGO Daraja. Daraja also planned to use mobile phone text messaging in the rural water sector of Tanzania to enable citizens to give feedback on the state of their water supply schemes. The idea is that this information will be forwarded to relevant government authorities so that they can respond quickly to breakdowns. It will also be used in regular radio programmes that Daraja plans to broadcast on water supply and sanitation.

At national level, for example in Tanzania, the NGO sector network TAWASANET used WPM evidence to prepare a yearly equity report that was discussed at the Joint Sector Review meeting. In addition, there may be other opportunities to target parliamentarians or other stakeholders that can put pressure on relevant government authorities and service providers.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has argued that WPM provides data about the distribution of water supply services at sub-district level and about the functionality of individual schemes. The visual display of information clearly points out priorities for water supply interventions below the district level. It thereby has the potential to strengthen the link between financial inputs and results, which is the main aim of performance-based monitoring. But WPM also goes beyond SPM by explicitly highlighting equity issues. The availability of WPM evidence in itself, however, does not bring about any changes. The information needs to be made accessible to different actors and its use be encouraged. This is how WPM can enhance transparency and accountability.

Based on a review of WaterAid's experiences in WPM, the paper has argued that the organisation is still making headway on steps 2 and 3 of the ladder of making WPM data accessible to relevant stakeholders and to encourage its use for taking decisions. Three types of challenges were identified: technological, operational and governance-related. Of those, governance-related challenges were found to be particularly difficult as they are partly contingent on issues that cannot easily be influenced through WPM activities alone.

The paper suggested using policy space analysis as an analytical tool to identify entry points for engagement with sector performance monitoring as a first step to overcome governance-related challenges. Based on examples from Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda, it showed how spaces for engagement differed between the three countries and provided examples of engaging with formal government reporting mechanisms and through alternative feed-back channels.

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