

# Technical Assistance Facility Phase 2

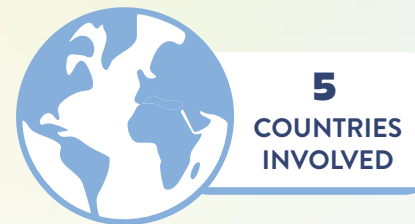
## CAPTURING EVIDENCE OF IMPACT ON WASH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING



A4C members from over 15 countries came together for the Global Strategy Lab in Lilongwe, 2025. Pictured here are colleagues from Uganda, Guatemala, Cambodia, Nepal, and the UK.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The \$450,000 Technical Assistance Facility Phase 2 (2023-2025) supported WASH systems strengthening across five countries, directly engaging approximately 200 stakeholders.



#### RETURN ON INVESTMENT

##### Signs of Indirect Impacts:

- ✓ Scaling up trainings and leadership capacity for systems thinking
- ✓ Strengthened sector coordination
- ✓ Potential nation-wide benefits of new regulatory arrangements
- ✓ Important gains for funders interested in strengthening WASH systems over the longer-term

#### LIMITATIONS AND GAPS

Concrete evidence of longer-term and indirect impacts on WASH systems is less quantifiable. This is partly due to:

- Systemic changes unfold over extended timeframes
- Impacts depend on other stakeholders acting upon TA outcomes
- Focus on upstream activities makes indirect impacts harder to identify
- Weaknesses in monitoring



#### KEY TAKEAWAY

Small, flexible funding can play a meaningful role in advancing systems strengthening when strategically aligned with government priorities and existing initiatives.

Funding that is timely, locally anchored, and modest in size can help address specific system gaps, strengthen collaboration, and build momentum for longer-term change.






**TA-funded activities that have a clear rationale and buy-in and which are embedded in, and supported by, formal (government-led) structures have the greatest chance of long-term impact.**

## INTRODUCTION

To help Agenda for Change country collaborations improve their capacity to utilize systems strengthening approaches, Agenda for Change launched the first phase of the Technical Assistance Facility ('TA Facility') in 2019. Building on lessons from the first phase, Agenda for Change launched a second phase in 2023 with US\$ 450,000 in funding for a further three-year period.

This learning brief captures experiences from this second phase across five countries (Cambodia, Ghana, Guatemala, Rwanda, and Uganda), including emerging impacts on the WASH system, and key successes and challenges.

## COUNTRY ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

	<b>CAMBODIA</b>	<b>Building Blocks training + Young Professionals Programme</b>	111 people (91 govt officials, 20 youth)	<b>COMPLETE</b>
	<b>GHANA</b>	<b>Climate-resilient WASH training</b>	62 participants + 29 cascade	<b>COMPLETE</b>
	<b>GUATEMALA</b>	<b>Regulatory authority establishment</b>	TBD (potential: 18M people)	<b>IN PROGRESS</b>
	<b>RWANDA</b>	<b>WASH sector performance review &amp; MYAP development</b>	78 stakeholders	<b>COMPLETE</b>
	<b>UGANDA</b>	<b>Framework for inter-ministerial coordination</b>	35 stakeholders	<b>AWAITING APPROVAL</b>

## KEY PATTERNS ACROSS COUNTRIES

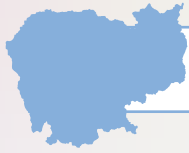
### **Successes**

- Government-led processes
- Building on existing initiatives
- Cascade training models
- Enhanced systems thinking capacity

### **Challenges**

- Long-term impact measurement
- Monitoring frameworks
- Sustained government ownership
- Timeline underestimation

## COUNTRY SNAPSHOTS



### CAMBODIA



#### DIRECT IMPACT

- 91 govt participants trained (17 national, 28 provincial, 46 district)
- 20 young people completed YPP (13 female, 7 male)



#### SYSTEMS CHANGE

- Increased capacity for systems thinking
- ODF roadmap includes lifecycle costs
- Training participants influencing resource plans

### BUILDING SECTOR CAPACITY FOR WASH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

**Overview:** Two complementary initiatives to build capacity: WASH Systems Building Blocks training for government staff, and Young Professionals Programme (YPP) for youth and university students.



#### Key Success

Supporting young people to engage in WASH sector helps introduce innovative solutions and rejuvenate the workforce.



#### Key Challenge

Systems strengthening terminology can be alienating for local stakeholders; significant effort needed for context-appropriate language.



### GHANA



#### DIRECT IMPACT

- 62 participants from different organizations
- 29 people received cascade training
- 93% rated training as excellent



#### SYSTEMS CHANGE

- 7 organizations developed action plans
- Improved climate-resilient WASH knowledge
- 1 organization piloting technological interventions

### ENHANCING CAPACITY FOR CLIMATE-RESILIENT WASH SERVICES

**Overview:** Two 3-day capacity-building workshops (Northern and Southern Zones) focused on climate risk assessment, technological solutions, financing mechanisms, and policy strategies.



#### Key Success

A4C members' involvement in selecting the consultant and evaluating the first training led to including lifecycle cost analysis in the second training.



#### Key Challenge

Understanding of climate finance mechanisms and access remains a gap for many organizations.



## GUATEMALA



### CONTEXT

Guatemala is one of few Latin American countries without a formal WASH regulatory authority.

A4C Building Block assessment identified this as a critical system weakness.

## CREATING A REGULATORY AUTHORITY (ONGOING)

**Overview:** TA supporting government to create water and sanitation regulatory authority through consultant engagement, regional exchange visits, and stakeholder consultation workshops.



### Progress

- Exchange visits completed to Panama and Peru; technical collaboration underway with key stakeholders.
- Potential to benefit ~18 million people if successful, though timeline and impact depend on legislative approval, budget allocation, and political commitment.



## RWANDA



### DIRECT IMPACT

- 28 stakeholders in performance review
- 50 stakeholders in validation workshop
- 5 thematic working groups established



### SYSTEMS CHANGE

- Activities underway: policy dissemination, new WASH law
- MYAP embedded in govt planning processes
- Stronger sector coordination through quarterly reviews

## WASH SECTOR PERFORMANCE REVIEW & MULTI-YEAR ACTION PLAN MYAP 2024-2029

**Overview:** National reflection workshop, stakeholder consultations, and Building Blocks assessment led to development of detailed, costed 5-year MYAP. **Formally approved by Ministry of Infrastructure (MINIFRA) in February 2025.**



### Key Success

TA activity was specific and closely aligned with existing government processes, making MYAP a sector-owned coordination tool with strong stakeholder buy-in. MINIFRA has existing WATSAN Secretariat for monitoring.



### Key Challenge

Broader funding constraints and global financing dynamics remain barriers to full MYAP implementation. Private sector investment remains unaddressed priority.



## UGANDA



### DIRECT IMPACT

- 35 individuals in consultation (9 national govt, 19 district/municipal, 6 partners)
- National & District WASH Coordination Committees established



### SYSTEMS CHANGE

- Framework provides clarity on priority actions
- Most senior ministry officials accepted Framework
- Awaiting formal ministerial approval

## FRAMEWORK FOR INTER-MINISTERIAL ROADMAP OPERATIONALIZATION

**Overview:** Framework to guide stakeholders in operationalizing pre-existing roadmap for strengthening national WASH system. Framework developed through sector consultations and validation workshops.



### Key Success

Developing Framework brought together wider stakeholder group than typical WASH initiatives, continuing momentum for cross-government action. Built on long-term A4C engagement including Catalytic Fund support.



### Key Challenge

Although Framework completed, long-term government engagement needed for validation and implementation. No single government entity responsible for driving Framework forward or monitoring performance.



Lillian Mabonga, Grants Manager at Living Water Uganda (L) speaking to Jane Nabunnya, Country Director of IRCWASH Uganda, at the A4C Breakfast event in Stockholm, 2023.



Joyce Magala (L), Country Director of WaterAid Uganda and Jane Nabunnya (R), Country Director of IRCWASH Uganda work together during the A4C Strategy Lab in Lilongwe, 2025.

# KEY LESSONS FOR MAKING SMALL-SCALE TA EFFECTIVE

1

## Be Clear on the Rationale for TA Facility Activities

Being clear on how interventions are expected to contribute to wider change is essential. The small monetary size makes this critical, as there is little chance of funded activities having wider impact in isolation.

### EXAMPLES:

- RWANDA: Developing MYAP was direct government request, supports national WASH strategy implementation
- UGANDA: Revised activities explicitly supported government-led Roadmap
- GHANA: High-quality training remains de-linked from structured government initiatives

2

## Technical Assistance Needs to be Anchored in Formal Structures

To have sustained impact, small-scale TA needs to be anchored in formal institutions and co-owned by government. Where TA is anchored technically and politically, there is greater likelihood of appropriate follow-up.

### EXAMPLES:

- RWANDA: Clear structure within WASH Secretariat of MINIFRA to follow up on MYAP actions, monitor achievements, and hold stakeholders accountable.
- UGANDA: Framework sets out responsibilities but structures are disjointed with unclear overall government responsibility—contributing to lack of follow-up.

3

## Technical Assistance Needs to Be Facilitated by Active System Actors

Selection and design of TA activities was only possible because A4C members are active systems actors who understand context and have existing relationships with key stakeholders. Funding outside actors not already part of WASH system would not result in same positive outcomes.

### EXAMPLE:

- Ongoing engagement and support requires continuous funding. Catalytic Fund played key role supporting earlier initiatives (National Level WASH Systems Assessment in Uganda) that set foundations for TA activities.

**4**

### Technical Facility Most Frequently Used for Upstream Activities

In 4 of 5 cases, TA focused on upstream challenges (sector coordination, capacity building). While critical for strong WASH systems, timeframe for full impact realization can be very long.

**EXAMPLE:**

- In Cambodia, previous YPP participants now occupy senior WASH sector positions several years after involvement. Except for Guatemala regulator work, less engagement in technical areas with more direct service delivery impact. Expanding range could lead to greater impact but would require different skill sets.

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### Flexible Funding Can Be Catalytic and Always Helpful

Small pots of flexible funding can play outsized, catalytic role supporting critical work that governments and larger donors would otherwise find difficult to support. TA facility provided flexibility and gave A4C members time and budget to procure high-quality TA providers.

**TWO PATHWAYS:**

- Funded existing initiatives: Rwanda's MYAP and Cambodia's YPP were pre-existing. TA facility helped ensure continuation and expansion.
- Supported unfunded strategic processes: Uganda Framework and Ghana training addressed unmet needs. TA facility effectively filled gaps for relatively small initiatives.

**6**

### Collaborating on TA Helped Build Member Organization Capacity

TA facility provided funded opportunity for multiple A4C members to collaborate on single initiative. Where genuine and deep collaboration occurred, this built capacity in systems strengthening and strengthened foundation for future initiatives.

**EXAMPLES:**

- Ghana: Large number of A4C & CONIWAS members involved at all TA stages—increased exposure to systems strengthening concepts, particularly for smaller/newer organizations.
- Cambodia: Implementing TA through two local organizations built their capacity to provide training services to WASH sector in future.

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### Documenting and Monitoring TA Is Essential for Understanding Impact

Possible to trace direct impact (number of people reached), but little to no structured monitoring for indirect impact over time. Documentation from initial ideas through implementation is inconsistent and incomplete, making it challenging to track and understand TA facility contribution.

**NOTE:** Some work ongoing to address gap (Ghana developing monitoring framework), but structured approach should have been in place from outset.

# CONCLUSION

The TA Facility was never designed to deliver large-scale infrastructure or support service provision directly, but the evidence from this assessment shows that small, flexible funding can play a meaningful role in advancing systems strengthening when strategically aligned with government priorities and existing initiatives.

As we envision future TA investments, this learning from systems practitioners provides useful guidance for donors and development partners looking to support catalytic activities: funding that is timely, locally anchored, and modest in size can help address specific system gaps, strengthen collaboration, and build momentum for longer-term change.

**While the indirect returns may not always be immediately visible or easily measurable, the TA Facility shows that with the right conditions, even small investments can contribute to broader systems outcomes over time.**



Ghana collaborators from WaterAid, CRS, and IRC were awarded 'MVP(s) of Learning' award at the A4C Global Learning Event in Accra, 2023. Clockwise, L to R: Ewurabena Yanyi-Akofur, Fauzia Aliu, Festus Fofie, and Perpetual Diabene.



The A4C Secretariat - Bethlehem Mengistu (R) and Alec Shannon (third from L) - visit with a small cohort of Cambodia's YPP program in Phnom Penh, 2024.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This learning brief is based on the report "Capturing Evidence of the Impact on WASH System Strengthening from the Technical Assistance Facility Phase 2" by Ben Harris, Alban Bulibirha, Analia Saker, and Harold Lockwood (Aguaconsult, July 2025).



Guatemala collaborators from Water For People, Helevetas, and World Vision complete a group exercise during the A4C Global Strategy Lab in Lilongwe, 2025. Clockwise L to R: Osmar Caceres, Mario Velasquez, and Wilbert Velasquez.