

# UNBLOCKING RESULTS

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## CASE STUDY

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### Rural water in Tanzania

**Helen Tilley**

May 2013



Centre for Aid  
& Public  
Expenditure

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The views expressed in this paper and all responsibility for the content of the study rests with the author.

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# Executive summary

This case study explores how SNV's (the Netherlands Development Organisation) aid interventions in Tanzania have affected the ability of local councillors to realise their roles and responsibilities, through the interventions addressing constraints to villagers' access to water. Water point mapping, councillor coaching and community empowerment are part of SNV's capacity building work to improve the rural water supply, in line with the Water Sector Development Programme (WSDP). SNV's approach strengthens relations within the accountability triangle for service provision, and is based on process facilitation, as it creates coherence between different interventions implemented by advisers and capacity building organisations. The approach is multi-level (addresses national and local levels simultaneously); multi-dimensional (works with councillors, communities and district staff at the same time); and multi-year (takes a long-term approach which enables reflection and adjustment). Activities include classroom-based training, learning by doing, and coaching by providing feedback and working through problems.

The focus of this case study is on: (1) council technical teams and communities; and (2) councillor coaching. The intervention helped the council technical team (the District Water and Sanitation Team) understand their responsibilities and how they can actively help communities manage and take collective responsibility for their water facilities. Councillor oversight coaching achieved collective action solutions and performance disciplines, by helping councillors better understand their roles and how problems could be solved. The coaching brought councillors together as a team so they could challenge the technical staff, and subsequently, opportunities for improved financial management of the council were taken. A positive and mutually reinforcing increased capacity was achieved by working with communities and council technical staff.

The discussion of the design and delivery of the intervention highlighted some elements of the intervention that have been particularly important.

These included: (1) starting with a power-and-change analysis allowed an understanding of the political economy context to shape the programme design, and to enhance its relevance and impact by ensuring a direct problem focus; (2) the flexibility of an iterative and evolutionary approach allowed changing circumstances to be responded to; (3) through the accountability component of the intervention, highlighting the roles of different actors encouraged a sense of responsibility to develop; and (4) this multi-layered approach mutually reinforced increases in capacity.

A number of challenges remain. The legal and institutional context prevents service delivery blockages being overcome, with overlapping mandates resulting in a confusion of roles and responsibilities. There is a lack of direction from central government, along with a lack of organisation and capacity in communities. Complex and overlapping social networks among individuals make it difficult to enforce sanctions, preventing increased local ownership.

The intervention was delivered during a window of opportunity for increasing accountability in Tanzania, when the wider socio-political context provided a positive environment for change, and when existing norms could be challenged. While some consensus has been built among sub-groups, for example of councillors, the persistence of personal incentives was apparent. Therefore the intervention has an effect on changing incentives where wider environmental or personal factors are in confluence, but this effect is constrained where such a synergy is absent. It remains to be seen whether there will be a return to business as usual after the intervention has ceased.

# 1

# Introduction

This case study forms part of a larger ODI research project on aid and governance constraints, findings of which are summarised in the synthesis report, 'Unblocking results: using aid to address governance constraints to service delivery. It is one of four case studies of aid packages in Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda that appear to have engaged successfully with governance constraints to service delivery.

While the development community has long recognised that weak governance and incentive problems hinder the delivery of broad-based public services in developing countries (Keefer and Khemani, 2003; World Bank, 2004; Collier, 2007), the last decade has seen a growth in research that seeks to understand and diagnose the nature of these governance problems. In particular, this research builds on earlier ODI research by Booth (2010) and Wild et al. (2012) that categorises typical constraints and incentive problems to service delivery, and shows that a number of common constraints underlie much of the variation in service delivery performance in developing countries.

However, there is little evidence on whether, and how well, aid can help release or ameliorate these governance problems. Research that does exist tends to focus on the impact of specific types of accountability structures on service delivery, rather than the design and delivery features of aid programmes necessary to address such constraints. This research project begins to address this gap in literature by studying the interaction between constraints and aid packages in particular country contexts. This research is exploratory and the findings should be treated as preliminary. It does not aim to evaluate the programmes against their stated objectives, nor measure their impact. Rather it examines the types of aid-funded activities that seem most relevant to improving governance constraints, making some speculative conclusions about their ability to do so as well as about the elements of the design and implementation approach that have facilitated the execution of these activities.

The case studies were selected after a set of interviews with governance specialists from a range of donor agencies. They were asked to name projects that they thought had been particularly effective in addressing common governance constraints. This long list of projects was narrowed down after a desk review of the available project documents and an assessment of their relevance to common governance constraints.

SNV's rural water programme in Tanzania was selected because it worked directly with those involved in service delivery and aimed to assist them in overcoming problems that negatively impacted on their access to water. The intervention supported this by attempting to increase accountability for service delivery by clarifying the roles and responsibilities of those overseeing the running of local councils. The first stage of increasing information, through water point mapping in 2008, provided information for policy and budgeting on the functionality of water points and contributed to more water points being functional. In 2011, this was developed into an accountability component which used coaching techniques to help local councillors, district water teams and Community Owned Water Supply Organization (COWSO) members to realise their roles and responsibilities in holding the Government and their community to account for water services. This helped improve the management of the case study council's finances.

The sections that follow discuss, first, the context for the intervention in Tanzania. This is presented by an examination of the political regime, with a focus on the local level. How the three blockages constrained the provision of public goods before the intervention will then be reviewed. Second, the intervention is analysed considering the activities undertaken by SNV and the theory of change of the intervention. The interaction between the context and the activities is analysed through a consideration of the style and features of the intervention, and the degree to which it interacted with the blockages. This allows us to suggest some lessons for the design and implementation of future interventions.

# 2 Political context and service-delivery blockages

## 2.1 Political context

The modern state in Tanzania is not highly centrally coordinated; rather there are competing factions and elites vying for power. Incentives for rent seeking to maintain political support persist over and above acting collectively in the pursuit of a wider economic benefit. Political stability is maintained through payoffs both within the ruling party and between politicians and supporters, as politicians deliver goods to ensure votes. While the outcome may be the delivery of goods and services, these are not necessarily those that are prioritised by communities.

How does this elite competition at national level influence local politics? There has been a loosening of repressive structures at the local level through the processes of elite re-configuration in the districtization of politics.<sup>1</sup> There are three aspects of districtization: declassing; education; and multi-party politics. Considering each in turn, declassing happens when the state retreats and the established class identities become more fragmented, as sources of wealth proliferate to include private and ethnic sources that are more likely to involve local connections. The state provision of education has declined, and therefore elite reproduction through education has proliferated. Instead, new sources include 'local elites with links to nationally influential kin and in some cases foreign donors. They are sources of money, influence, and politicking' (Kelsall, 2000: 15).

Society in Tanzania was, historically, relatively homogenous, allowing the ruling party to achieve inclusivity with little factional competition, which required only a limited redistribution of rents (Khan and Gray, 2006). Since the mid-1990s, elites have

become more fragmented, with different groups functioning through their separate clientelistic networks. The emergence of a credible opposition party, an increased regionalism in politics and reduced state institutional capacity are all factors that have played a role in this.

The nature of multi-party politics has had an impact at the local level. As electoral competition has increased, money has played a more prominent role in elections, and the links between businesses and political positions have become more entrenched (Tilley, 2013). In recent years, increased voice has resulted in large scale corruption cases being uncovered. However, despite public shame for those with pending convictions, they are still able to credibly campaign for high-level positions. This reflects the institutional fragmentation of the state as it behaves in an uncoordinated manner, and also the nature of political corruption in Tanzania.<sup>2</sup> This is offset by apparent increasing demands for accountability at the local level and electoral patronage appearing to be no longer sufficient, as people are demanding results from their representatives. Although it is not possible to determine clear trends, this is expected to be a change that will increase in significance.

Stability has been ensured; the inclusiveness of Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the ruling party, has successfully kept dissenting influences mainly within the Party, and has helped maintain its legitimacy. CCM has successfully co-opted businesses such that party endorsement facilitates business establishment

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<sup>1</sup> This term was formulated by Gibbon (1998) and developed by Kelsall (2000).

<sup>2</sup> See Khan and Gray (2006: 10).

and operation, and in turn provides rents for the party. The continued dominance and control of CCM gives the appearance of centralised power (Khan and Gray, 2006), although closer and more recent examination reveals tussling, un-coordinated bargaining, the importance of rents for maintaining a balance of power among different factions and in turn, stability. The leadership has been able to maintain control as the central factions that are in competition with one another are not particularly strong. A certain fluidity allows some reshuffling across these internal factions. This rent-seeking activity, or the cost of enforcement and ensuring stability, diverts some resources from the delivery of public services and reduces efficiency in their provision. At the same time, however, it allows public services to be delivered, and the personalisation and embeddedness provides knowledge and respect, and therefore, facilitates the fulfilment of designated roles (Evans, Lam et al., 1996; Kelsall, Booth et al., 2010).

Underlying this maintenance of stability through rent seeking and the provision of public services, is a tension around the reality of service delivery at the local level and central-level reporting, such that a ritualization of reforms appears to be emerging. There is an expectation at the national level that reforms must be reported on and positive stories have been told despite there being little evidence of progress at the local level. Examples of this include the COWSO and the Opportunities and Obstacles to Development planning process. The COWSO policy was announced in 2002 and the Acts were passed in 2009.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 Degree of policy and institutional coherence

The Water Sector Development Programme (WSDP) provides a coherent vision which has filtered down to the district level, with district engineers talking the WSDP language. However the scale of the programme also brings with it a high degree of complexity and inflexibility. There are more than 300 implementing agencies; a project unit in the Ministry of Water, a steering committee, and four technical working groups – one for each component. Because of the programme's accountability requirements to donors, a long bureaucratic process must be followed to disburse funds, requiring reporting at each level of government.

Despite this apparent overall coherence of the WSDP, there is a high degree of policy incoherence

### Box 1: Turning trees into water

The school WASH situation is an example of the persistence of policy incoherence. A village committee and a school committee experienced water and sanitation challenges common to many schools. Priorities expressed at the local level have not been reflected in budgetary releases. The school does not have water, and for three years has requested funding for a deep well, but has instead received a tree planting scheme, directly reflecting national priorities. Budget submissions from the village are put forward as a formality, without any expectation of being attained, and even if the funds are allocated they often cannot be disbursed due to conditions that cannot be met.

that reflects power struggles between different levels of government. There is a power struggle around decentralisation between local and central government, as central government ministries have not accepted decentralisation and resist the transfer of power to districts. District Water and Sanitation Teams, established by the WSDP, are responsible for the coordination and management of the water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) sector. As District Water and Sanitation Teams were not established by the Prime Minister's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG), they do not have a formal place within local councils. Subsequently, their degree of activity differs from council to council, with some being active and others never meeting. Their function and roles are not well understood and the overlapping lines of management are demonstrative of policy incoherence. The teams are established by the central government yet report to the head of the local council, the District Executive Director; the extent of coordination within the teams is limited (Mmuya and Lemoyan, 2010). When this is combined with the lack of clarity around their operation, district staff are left to sort things out by themselves, with some persisting and others giving up.

3 Credit for this term goes to Rinus van Klinken.

4 The Ministry of Water reports good progress in implementation yet districts, who are implementing the policy, have been less able to report progress. The O&OD process involves village-level discussion of priorities that are compiled, analysed, costed and put into budgets, however these priorities are not reflected in the budget allocations for villages (Fjeldstad, O.-H., Katera, L. and Ngalewa, E., 2010), see Box 1.

Another power struggle is ongoing between districts and COWSOs around responsibilities for water provision. Previously, the Government supplied water, whereas it now constructs water facilities and the community is responsible for maintenance to ensure a continued supply. The limited capacity of the community to manage the challenges around their new role often presents difficulties, yet they are not adequately supported by the local government, and often there is no relationship between the two.

The legislative arrangements contain a high degree of policy incoherence that has direct implications for the management of water at the village level. The Water Resources Management Act established Water User Associations (who own water rights) and the Water Supply and Sanitation Act established the COWSO (for water supply management). There is no clarity over the relationship between Water User Associations and COWSOs, despite the two Acts both being passed in 2009.

The combination of the socio-political context and specifics of the water sector form an additional layer of challenge for increasing access of the rural population to water. Informal rules and norms dominate as the existing legal and institutional framework for the sector is difficult to implement and follow effectively, resulting in confusion and a lack of clarity around the processes that should be followed. Consequently, political incentives result in the longer-term needs of communities being sidelined. As water is a necessity, the sector frequently experiences direct political interference, and often policy incoherence reflects the non-developmental neo-patrimonial context. In one reported case a politician directly replaced a broken water point and therefore removed any future incentive for the villagers to organise themselves to finance repair and maintenance.

## 2.3 The extent of top-down performance disciplines or bottom-up accountability mechanisms

Non-developmental rent-seeking behaviour is combined with a lack of performance discipline and incentives. The decentralisation process in Tanzania has been highly problematic and the PMO-RALG, the agency leading this process, has insufficient capacity to effectively undertake its role. The WSDP is so large that it makes performance monitoring

particularly challenging due to the programme's organisational structure. The Ministry of Water only gets consolidated reports and cannot identify areas of poor performance; furthermore, even if it could identify problematic areas, the ability to sanction for poor performance lies with PMO-RALG. PMO-RALG in turn has limited capacity to oversee the decentralisation process. Districts are constrained by inadequate capacity which prevents oversight of implementation and results in financial discretion. The limited capacity of councillors prevents them from effectively overseeing technical council staff. Consequently, technical staff engage in rent seeking, by protecting the interests of the vocal councillors and silencing others.

The District Water and Sanitation Team is directly responsible for the construction of new projects, and not the subsequent operation and maintenance of the facilities. Part of the conflict in policies is that the District Water Engineer is responsible for delivering water-related services. In order to fulfil this mandate, he or she may require input from the District Water and Sanitation Team. Comprising representatives from various departments, such as water, public health, community development and planning, the District Water and Sanitation Team works with the community to service the water point, deal with any problems, and propose their planning priorities in budget submissions. Engineers are responsible for large areas and have neither sufficient capacity nor the incentive to undertake routine inspections. Often water pumps were falling into disrepair and not being fixed because the water engineer was either not aware of the problem or took a long time before being able to visit the area. There are reports of it taking two years to repair a water point.

The team's motivation to meet what would be a demanding inspection schedule is undermined by an evolving role with many new directives from central government. As they do not have the capacity and information to fulfil this basic inspection and repair role, developing the management capacity of communities is an unrealistic objective. Without a supportive relationship from district councils, local communities are typically alienated and discouraged from actively owning their water facilities. Village water committees were previously responsible for managing the water points, however they were largely ineffective, and in many cases did not function at all. They frequently misused funds and were disbanded by villages. In recognition of this problem, the WSDP provides for the transfer of ownership of the water

points to the users of the facilities in the creation of COWSOs - legal entities that own and manage the water point infrastructure. A person is a member of a COWSO at the point where they draw water and they participate in the nomination and election of the COWSO management.<sup>5</sup> The COWSO is funded by annual user-fee payments from COWSO members, and some also charge non-members by the bucket. A COWSO is a voluntary organisation, however it is unclear whether it is a government, civil society or private organisation.

An example of the findings from the water point mapping is one district where SNV found a 57% functionality (of 3,489 water points), with only one ward meeting the national target of one water point serving 250 people. 85% of water points were managed by village water committees, none of which were active committees, and only around half of these were functioning. Overall, the mapping highlighted that the water points were not being effectively managed and that there was little awareness of the rights of villages to own functional water points. SNV found that where water users pay monthly or per bucket, all water points were functional, but where people never pay, only 60% were functioning (SNV, 2010).

The creation of the COWSO aimed to change the management and oversight of the water points to increase their functionality. The COWSO enables a direct relationship to be maintained with the village, as the management is elected and users are members of the COWSO, but it removes the management of water from the previously dysfunctional village water committees. The village committee maintains some power as it oversees the operation of the COWSO, and often this is reflected in a challenging relationship between the two, particularly as the village water committees used to be the fund holders.

## 2.4 The enabling environment for locally anchored problem-solving and collective action

Tanzania has particular dynamics that limit the potential for local solutions to emerge. There is limited scope for effective collective action due to allegiances to a number of groups,<sup>6</sup> the actions of the state to limit the influence of collective groups, and the limited independence and supply-driven nature

of many organisations.<sup>7</sup> Overall, it is a society of limited conflict where the control of the state through intermediate actors is high, despite the state itself not being particularly strong. These characteristics result in any issues dying down quickly as actors are co-opted by the state. Where the Government has supported local groups, they are organised to ensure deference to those in authority, rather than in a way that genuinely engages.

Recent changes in political dynamics have both supported and driven changes at the sector level. Councillors, operating in a patron-client context, are often driven by these relationships. Increasingly in recent years, dynamic councillors and vocal youth groups have emerged and have started to drive the agenda themselves. Historically, youth groups have been important in maintaining CCM dominance, however in recent years there have been instances of them actively challenging local governments about the poor provision of public goods (SNV, 2011c). This increase in voice has been facilitated by a proliferation of the media during the last decade. This expansion of the media has been encouraged by politicians who have purchased newspapers and radio stations, therefore, it has involved a co-opting of the media into elites through pervasive connections with the state class. This can be considered to represent a competition for power between the leadership and elite factions, but arguably it was also a change that was necessary to allow the continued legitimacy of the party.

Communities can generally be more resistant to change than other levels of governance, and subsequently often the established leadership has persisted, with the nomination system persisting rather than leaders being elected. However, the formulation of COWSOs presents an opportunity for the voice of communities to increase. The design of community organisations is a sensitive solution

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5 There are complications around the issue of COWSO membership including: coverage, as some villages may be covered by more than one water point; some facilities sell water by the bucket and therefore use of the water point does not necessitate membership; and it is unclear whether membership should be based on current usage only.

6 Where acting in the interests of one would be detrimental to the interests of another.

7 A detailed discussion of these influences for Tanzania can be found in Iliffe (1971), Kelsall (2004), Kelsall, Lange et al. (2005: 98), Pinkney (1997: 113, 117), Barkan (1994), Kiondo (1995: 110), Shivji (2006), Hyden (1994), Berg-Schlosser and Siegler (1990) and Sundet (2010: ix). These are supported by general theory drawn from Migdal (1988: 28), Hirschman (1970) and Sen (1999).

which respects the need for central government to maintain control, through their registration and legal foundation, alongside enabling real dialogue. There is an important interface between local empowerment and legal arrangements that places community organisations within the control of central government, thus ensuring state support. While COWSOs were designed and imposed from above, rather than emerging from the local level, their design takes advantage of a wider contextual change in Tanzania and works to empower communities.

# 3

# Intervention design

## 3.1 Activities and theory of change

The WSDP started in 2007 and has become the largest sector programme in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is now a \$1.2 billion programme over three years until 2014, since it was restructured in 2011. It consists of: (1) urban water (54% of the total funding); (2) rural water (36%); (3) water resources management (5%); and (4) capacity building (5%).

Water point mapping was initiated in 2008 as an attempt to address limited access to water in rural Tanzania. Initially covering around 10 districts, it cost approximately € 3,000 per district. An estimated €1,500 was spent by both districts from their budgets to accompany the field exercise, and by SNV for activities including preparing and informing the district, organising validation of results, providing feedback on reports and organising feedback meetings in the district.

It aimed to provide information about the functionality of water points by increasing policy coherence and providing the information base for performance discipline. The increased information was supported by popularising the results, putting in place community management structures, and training councillors to oversee the sector at the district level. WaterAid, SNV, Concern, Engineers without Borders and Plan together mapped water points in 55 districts in Tanzania. The Ministry of Water has now taken over and has contracted the mapping of the whole country (136 districts).

Water point mapping aims to increase policy coordination, and in doing so, draws out the differences between effectiveness at different levels of government. Water point mapping was initiated at the district level and subsequently aggregated to national level, to include most districts. The data

arising from the mapping exercise have been fed into the formulation of policy and planning, with the help of SNV's capacity building at the district level.

The findings from water point mapping and the governance survey have been used to stimulate dialogue about the roles and responsibilities of citizens in planning, budgeting and managing community water points, and the roles and responsibilities of councillors and water engineers. Working with local capacity building organisations, SNV has carried out learning workshops, meetings and fieldwork activities to train councillors and district water teams, and to empower community organisations. For the first year, councillor coaching and empowerment of communities each cost approximately €40,000 per district (including both direct and indirect costs), usually halving in the second year.

SNV's Lake Victoria water programme is now operating in 18 districts in Tanzania. The total budget for the Rural Water Supply programme was approximately € 700,000 in 2012 and € 1,000,000 in 2013. How have SNV's interventions interacted with blockages to the provision of public goods? <sup>11</sup> SNV works through an inter-linked set of activities, implemented by advisers and local capacity builders. The programme is multi-level, as it simultaneously addresses national and local levels; multi-dimensional, as it works with councillors, communities and district staff at the same time; and multi-year, as it takes a long-term approach which, through a learning approach, enables reflection and adjustment.

The interventions use a number of approaches, from conventional classroom-based training, to learning

8 This case study has been made possible due to the hospitality and generosity of the staff of SNV Tanzania and the capacity building organisations that coordinated a two-day visit to recipients of their coaching programme.

**Figure 1: Multi-level interventions**



by doing, coaching by providing feedback, working through problems, and creating connections with other relevant processes or information (see Table 1). This is highly flexible depending on the needs of the trainees and can be summarised as process facilitation.

A strategic governance and corruption assessment, undertaken every two years by SNV, involves a detailed power and change analysis. It presents an analysis of the socio-economic and political context of specific sectors and is used to inform the design of interventions. Through this, the challenges and constraints that are being experienced directly by service users, as well as in the organisation of the delivery of services, are identified. The interventions reflect the challenges identified by power and change analyses, those captured in the Public Accountability of Tanzania Programme, as well as direct challenges to the water and sanitation sector.<sup>9</sup> The frequency of power and change analyses provides a strong evidence base to allow the interventions to adjust to new challenges that are emerging.

The governance arrangements for the intervention summarised in Table 2 cover the running of the programme internally for SNV. They also cover local capacity builders who are closely involved in delivering training and have relationships with

**Table 1: The councillor coaching intervention - modules and activities**

Module descriptions	Activities
1. Training on the role of councillors, using water point mapping as a case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiarise councillors with process and content of the coaching sessions</li> <li>Coach councillors on plan, budget and implementation oversight</li> <li>Coach councillors on comparative analyses of plans and other data</li> <li>Coach councillors on the use of baseline data in decision-making for increased water point functionality</li> <li>Coach councillors on fact-finding reporting and analysis</li> </ul>
2. Councillor accompaniment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visits to wards by groups of councillors to assess the actual situation on the ground and to engage in a dialogue with citizen groups on water service delivery</li> </ul>
3. Reflection on outcome of field visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councillors reflect on the outcome of the ward visits for discussion in the council (full and standing committees), to agree with council staff on a plan for improving water point functionality</li> <li>Facilitate meetings of councillors with their peers, including the district water and sanitation team to compare the results of the councillors training and field visits to the analysis from the start of the district interventions. Aim to answer question: what can be improved in the planning and budgeting process?</li> <li>Facilitate an agreement on council follow-up and a monitoring plan</li> </ul>

Source: SNV (2011a)

**Table 2: Governance arrangements**

Who	Governance arrangements
SNV's water, sanitation and hygiene team	Meets twice per year to discuss progress and monitor interventions
Funders: Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (through the Public Accountability Tanzania programme) and DFID (through the AcT – Accountability Tanzania - programme)	Updated through briefs, reports and incidental field visits on demand
SNV with local capacity builders	Regular learning events
SNV with other donors and Government of Tanzania	Active participation in the Development Partner Group and Thematic Working Groups in the water sector

Source: Author's discussions with SNV staff in Tanzania

**Table 3: The identification of blockages in SNV's intervention framework**

Blockage	Example of constraint identified
Policy and institutional coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new roles and responsibilities that are outlined for the District Water and Sanitation Teams in the context of their limited capacity, information and lack of clarity about lines of accountability</li> <li>Politicians promise to provide free water which contradicts the National Water Policy</li> </ul>
Performance disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A lack of information is provided about the management and operation of water facilities</li> <li>The misuse of funds collected from water users, and districts profiting from the provision of a cheaper water facility</li> </ul>
Collective action solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When a water point breaks down, communities do not know where to seek support. The burden of water collection falling on women, yet village decisions being made by men who sit on the village committees</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from SNV 2011a

fundes, SNV's participation in the water sector and interactions with other donors and the Government. To understand how effective this approach has been, the degree to which this strong analytical base has fed into interventions must be considered, and their appropriateness to the context should be assessed. Considering the three blockages used in this framework, SNV's intervention framework for improving water point functionality identifies causes of non-functionality that directly relate to all three of the blockages (SNV, 2011a). Table 3 presents a selection of some of the challenges that the intervention framework identifies, organised into the three blockages.

In asking how this situation could be changed, a key objective was identified as being, 'to enhance the claim-making power of the community' by providing

it with the formal status of a COWSO. Having a more formal status aims to allow the community to formalise its relationship with the district. It also aims to empower councillors to recognise the demands of communities and to integrate them into the planning and budgeting process. Two interventions followed from this framework and are investigated in this case study: (1) councillor oversight coaching; and (2) empowering communities.

### 3.2 How the engagement worked

This section will consider specific examples of how the three blockages identified in this framework

9 Public Accountability of Tanzania is a collaborative programme between the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN), SNV and VNG International – the co-operation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities.

have been addressed by SNV's interventions. The first case is empowering the District Water and Sanitation Teams through technical team training and community collective action. This involved helping the District Water and Sanitation Teams understand their responsibilities and how they can actively help communities manage their water facilities by forming COWSOs, and the communities themselves taking collective responsibility. The second case is councillor oversight coaching which engaged with collective action solutions and addressed the constraint of performance disciplines. This involved helping councillors understand the rules governing their roles and how problems could be solved.

### **Council technical team and community collective action**

The relationship between the District Water and Sanitation Teams and COWSOs is crucial in reducing the obstacles that are presented to a greater or lesser extent by all three of the blockages. In particular, the lack of clarity around the role of the District Water and Sanitation Teams relates to policy incoherence; there is an impediment to finding local solutions to problems, both in communities, and between communities and their District Water and Sanitation Teams. These emerge from two persistent challenges that were highlighted in sector reviews: (1) limited financial resources for the COWSO registration process and subsequent follow up; and (2) the limited capacity of District Water and Sanitation Teams to manage projects and finances (URT, 2012). Therefore, the intervention aimed to tackle all aspects of this by supporting communities and District Water and Sanitation Teams through coaching and facilitating information sharing. The aim was to empower communities by formalising the organisation of COWSOs in support of the 2009 Act, therefore providing the basis for a transparent relationship with their council.

The intervention involved sensitising the community to the legislation, as well as their rights and responsibilities, using the information provided by the water point mapping. Communities were then supported in registering themselves as COWSOs which involved developing a constitution detailing leadership roles and punishments for non-compliance. Finally, they were trained in financial management, leadership and participatory planning. The involvement of District Water and Sanitation Teams at all stages of the community

intervention was crucial to allow a relationship to be developed.

The challenge of changing the attitudes of community members persists, as there is still some unwillingness to pay for water services, particularly among those living further away from the water point. Subsequently, those further away are less likely to attend the COWSO meetings, which are sometimes irregular (SNV, 2011b). The lack of compliance to the rules of water point usage was highlighted as a problem and there was a reluctance to enforce sanctions. In particular, it is important to remove footwear before using the water point to reduce the risk of transmitting disease, however persistent non-compliance by some users has been observed. Due to overlapping roles and responsibilities, the risk of offending someone who is, in another context, in a more powerful position, is unwise. Yet this complex network of power results in persistent challenges around the local ownership of water facilities.

The training provided to District Water and Sanitation Teams focused on financial management, leadership, accountability, operation and maintenance, and cost sharing, and facilitated the engineers in building relationships with COWSOs. One notable change has been clarifying roles and developing clear responsibilities between the District Water and Sanitation Teams and the COWSO. This is evident in a database of COWSO management that is held by the District Water and Sanitation Team that was visited. It contains names, mobile numbers, and P.O. Box numbers of the chair, treasurer, etc. The District Water and Sanitation Team engineer had supplied his mobile phone number to the villagers to enable them to report problems, demonstrating the establishment of a communication channel and a willingness to respond. Limited information about where to obtain spare parts, and their cost, had been a persistent challenge to both the District Water and Sanitation Team and the COWSO. In an attempt to overcome this obstacle the capacity builder who was assisting the District Water and Sanitation Team was developing an initiative to identify a spare-parts chain and to quickly source parts from private companies. This is an example of an activity that presents opportunities for personal rent seeking, yet has the potential to offer an important solution to a local information problem.

These developments reflect the relationship that has been built between District Water and Sanitation Teams and communities and indicates a degree of

local organisation that has enabled problems to be solved, which in turn has the potential to increase performance discipline in the future. While a substantial amount of progress has been made, there is still some distance to go to instil a strong sense of ownership of water facilities at the local level. Developing stronger leadership is challenging, as the complex and overlapping networks of the socio-political context make it difficult to enforce rules.

### **Councillor coaching, collective action and performance measures**

Recent changes in political dynamics have both supported and driven changes at the sector level. As there has been more vocal media and increasing demand for information from society groups, an opportunity has been provided for councillors to respond, and to also to advance requests for information to higher levels of government. Councillor oversight coaching helped councillors understand their roles and how problems could be solved. It gave councillors a clear understanding of how councils are being run, and their responsibilities to contribute to the delivery of public services. They learnt about their rights to information and how this information can be used, applying this to the council planning, budgeting and implementation cycle. Coaching was carried out on comparative analyses of plans, using data in decision-making, fact finding and reporting and analysis.

Councillors are often motivated by patronage relationships, however in recent years dynamic councillors have emerged and are starting to demand performance and results. The case of the special audit report is one example of local collective action by councillors which resulted in a change in leadership of the council and disciplinary measures being taken. This was directly supported by SNV's councillor coaching programme which was on going at the time.

A special audit of development funds for eight districts covering the last five years revealed irregularities due to theft and false contracting, amounting to approximately £1m, partly involving a water project in an area that suffers from a water shortage. Just before the audit report was released, the councillors started the coaching programme. Attempts were made by the council leadership to hide the findings of the audit report, claiming that it was confidential and could not be discussed in the party caucus meeting, as outcomes of the meeting are legally binding.

Through the coaching programme, the councillors learnt that party caucus meetings are informal gatherings to agree a party position, and do not have legal implications, and that the audit reports are not confidential.

This information encouraged two councillors to object to the attempt to hide the findings of the audit report, after which they were disclosed and it was agreed that the findings would be discussed in the party caucus meeting. These meetings usually only involve district participants, however the Regional Commissioner and district security officers also participated. Although this was perceived by the councillors as an attempt to intimidate them, they persisted in their demand for the disclosure and discussion of the audit report and directly challenged the Regional Commissioner. Subsequently the report was taken to a full council meeting which was open to the public. An ethical disciplinary committee was called to review the conduct of the two councillors and the issue was raised to PMO-RALG, at the central government level. The two councillors resigned and defected to the opposition party, Chadema, as they felt that CCM was repressing the truth and attempting to intimidate them. Five days after their resignation PMO-RALG announced the suspension of the District Executive Director along with 12 technical staff, of which eight were departmental heads.<sup>10</sup>

Although the challenge from the councillors was strongly resisted by local, regional and central government, the dispute resulted in a disciplinary performance measure against the council staff involved in the misuse of funds. It is possible that there were political motivations for this response, but it is notable that the council's capacity was substantially reduced, up to the point of non-functionality, in order to initiate this disciplinary measure.<sup>11</sup> The extent of effort that the ruling party has used to resist this challenge to rent seeking indicates that they are either experiencing an unusually high threat and their routine efforts at co-optation have been unsuccessful, or that the local power base is being genuinely undermined.

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<sup>10</sup> As District Executive Directors are appointed by the Prime Minister, the suspended District Executive Director was subsequently reinstated nearby, where councillors tried to resist her appointment.

<sup>11</sup> The suspended staff are pursuing a case of unfair dismissal requiring the council to pay them a daily allowance, and if they are successful their full pay will have to be paid in arrears. This dispute has serious implications for both the current human resource capacity of the council and for its future financial position.

It is notable that two councillors were acting together, but in isolation from the other 47 councillors. This indicates that the scope for collective action is still constrained. The choice to resign from a councillor position involves a loss of social status, influence and income earning opportunities. Furthermore, the two councillors received threats to their personal security and risked their relationships with family and colleagues, some of whom disapproved of their actions. Their move therefore required a great deal of courage and personal sacrifice. Their social position facilitated this and it is notable that one councillor was highly educated and the other a wealthy businessman. Under normal circumstances the loss of such a position might involve too great a cost.

Although all councillors did not act to directly challenge the ruling party, local and central government authority, a core group acted collectively and applied the training in other ways where their personal position was less likely to be threatened. These challenges also related to the financial oversight of the council and included the approval of the budget and obtaining bank statements.

Councillors had been under pressure to approve the district budget in one day, preventing a full review and discussion of its contents. Through the coaching they discovered that they had a responsibility to consider the budget in detail and to ask questions about where the money went and what it was used for. The councillors subsequently negotiated three days to review the budget, having a direct impact on the financial management of the council. In the 2012/13 draft budget, one item of Tsh400m (approximately £170,000) was found to be a typing error, and the money was subsequently reallocated in line with the district's plans. A further example relates to district bank statements; these were previously typed out and provided to the councillors, however after the training, councillors requested and obtained original statements.

This collective response and challenge by the councillors appears to have had an impact on the council's technical staff. While technical staff previously favoured the requests of some and silenced others, the change to councillors working as a group has reduced their discretionary power. This change in the working style of councillors was a direct result of the coaching which brought them together as a team. Prior to this they only came together once per quarter for formal meetings and so had no basis upon which to form a collective response to

problems. Furthermore, the regulations (kanuni) of council meetings allow a councillor to contribute only once per agenda point. This effectively stops any discussion and sharing opinions, therefore preventing the establishment of any allegiances between councillors. The coaching sessions required that they spend time together as a group to find joint solutions to challenging scenarios.

### 3.3 Implementation approach

Starting with a power-and-change analysis allows the political economy context to shape the programme design and to enhance its relevance and impact. Understanding the power relations and the processes underpinning change has allowed an approach to be taken that recognises when blocks to progress arise, and when new directions should be pursued. Layered upon this contextual understanding, issues are identified ensuring that there is a direct problem focus. The nature of the problems identified were relationship based, such that actors were not effectively working together to solve a development problem. This resulted in a brokering role being undertaken, both through the training and use of local capacity builders, to increase awareness of roles and responsibilities and to bring actors at different levels together to facilitate a collective response.

The approach can be categorised as a learning approach that is iterative and evolutionary. Regular reflections capture changing circumstances and result in direct adjustments to the interventions. This goes beyond the flexibility of a short-term phased design that sits within a longer-term framework. This has been critical in enabling an approach that is both reactive and proactive, allowing the implementation path to change where obstacles are encountered.<sup>12</sup> The power-and-change analyses, undertaken every few years, capture contextual changes that directly feed into the intervention framework, and the subsequent enhanced contextual understanding supports a proactive approach.

The approach functions across various levels of implementation, from government to communities, which encourages coherence and mutually reinforces the capacity that is built. Highlighting the roles of different actors encourages a sense of responsibility.

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<sup>12</sup> This has been crucial to SNV's work in the red meat sector where an unexpected allegiance emerged. An early analysis of the sector can be found at [http://www.tzdp.org.tz/uploads/media/Red\\_Meat\\_value\\_chain\\_for\\_local\\_and\\_export\\_markets\\_-\\_SSA\\_Final\\_Report\\_June\\_2008.pdf](http://www.tzdp.org.tz/uploads/media/Red_Meat_value_chain_for_local_and_export_markets_-_SSA_Final_Report_June_2008.pdf)

An example encompassing both of these elements is the aim of changing the way local governments do business; by outlining their roles and adjusting from being technical experts to becoming service providers, thus engendering a sense of responsibility. The approach is a broad one that also has implications beyond the water sector, although in this case, helping actors understand and execute their roles and responsibilities was specifically applied to the water sector.

The use of local capacity building organisations allows a multi-year mentoring relationship to be developed. The style of training for councillors is worthy of note, and councillors contrasted it with the Government's training programme. The difference between the two was described as the Government training teaching councillors how to follow the regulations, whereas SNV's training taught councillors how they can use the regulations to find solutions to problems and achieve their goals. The Government's training was conducted in a formal lecturing style, where the regulations were read out with little discussion or explanation. In contrast, SNV's training brought the councillors together as a group which enabled them to get to know each other and facilitated a collective way of working. They were presented with problems and asked to work together to find solutions which resulted in an increased understanding of the regulations, as well as their responsibilities as councillors. A problem-solving mentality was developed and the feeling of achievement in reaching a solution appears to have had a legacy in establishing a team spirit.

### 3.4 Challenges

It should not be assumed that these changes have taken place without some challenges either reducing their impact or having to be navigated around. These include the complex and overlapping networks which make it difficult to enforce sanctions, and have reduced actions that demonstrate increases in local ownership. While some consensus has been built among sub-groups, for example of councillors, the divide between the councillors who resigned and the incumbent group illustrates the persistence of more personal incentives; a result of the pervasiveness of socio-economic factors that limit the risks that individuals will take in pursuit of collective goals. It highlights how the intervention interacted with incentives where wider environmental or personal factors are in confluence, but such an interaction is

constrained where a synergy is absent. Furthermore, the sustainability of the coaching intervention remains to be tested.

Sustainability is a question that also remains to be tested with regard to COWSOs. One positive institutional change is that village government officials are not allowed to be part of the management of the COWSO. However it remains to be seen whether the negative performance incentives of the old village water committees become adopted by COWSO officials. If the environmental factors, such as improved performance disciplines or enhanced policy coherence driving the changed incentives are not sufficiently strong, once the intervention finishes there may be a return to business as usual.

A positive and mutually reinforcing increased capacity was achieved by working with communities, technical council staff and councillors – effectively three different social strata. Despite the progress achieved through water point mapping, there remains the challenge of achieving a coherent vision at the local government level. There is a lack of direction from central government, along with a lack of organisation and capacity in communities.<sup>13</sup> Communities are generally not involved in planning. Involving the central level of government has also been challenging. SNV is attempting to increase its engagement with the Ministry of Water to encourage it to work more directly with the district to enhance COWSO registration. While the Ministry has contracted to continue the process of water point mapping for the whole of Tanzania, they have resisted recognising some of the positive experiences emerging from the coaching work. This may reflect technical and/or political constraints. The technical constraint may be that they do not have the capacity to respond to the direct challenges likely to result from the increasing voice and challenges to conventional practices. The likely political constraint is that, operating in a deeply hierarchical bureaucratic structure, the directive to pursue such an innovative intervention would have to come from the Ministerial level.

This leads to the question of whether SNV's approach has caused any problems, as the aim is to change the way things are done and to challenge the status quo. It did not directly cause problems due to the hands-

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<sup>13</sup> Tanzania Water and Sanitation Network (TAWASANET) (2011). The Opportunities and Obstacles to Development (O&OD) planning process involves village-level discussion of priorities that are compiled, analysed, costed, and put into budgets. However this is not reflected in the budget allocations for villages, see Box 1 for example, and therefore can be argued to exist on paper only.

off approach of capacity builders, and as people were encouraged to take responsibility themselves for making changes. Passive resistance is the most common translation of resistance in Tanzania. This was apparent in tension between the councillors who resigned and those who stayed in office, and also in the Ministry of Water's reluctance to pick up issues; this might be evidence of evolutionary problems.

Frequently, the legal and institutional context prevents service-delivery blockages being overcome, with overlapping mandates resulting in a confusion of roles and responsibilities. Institutional changes in the sector are frequent, and some successfully address incoherence, whereas other changes have the opposite and unintended effect of further complicating the delivery of services.

# 4

# Lessons and conclusions

Having understood the interventions and analysed some cases which have resulted in changes, we can ask what the specific features of the interventions that had positive results were. Seven lessons can be suggested from the approach applied by SNV that may be relevant for the design and implementation of future interventions:

1. Starting with a power-and-change analysis allows an understanding of the political economy context to shape the programme design and to enhance its relevance and impact. This initiative was driven by country staff, rather than headquarters, and they determined the design and implementation of the power-and-change analysis.
2. Based on this analysis, identified problems have formed the foundation for the intervention framework, providing a direct problem focus.
3. The flexibility enabled in an iterative and evolutionary approach that responds to changing circumstances has been critical. Regular reflections capture changing circumstances and result in direct adjustments to the interventions. The programme is both reactive and proactive, with the implementation path often changing due to particular obstacles.
4. A feedback loop is present in the power-and-change analysis and the relationship between local capacity builders and SNV staff. Understanding the power relations and the processes underpinning change, combined with close on-the-ground feedback, has allowed an approach to be taken that recognises when blocks to progress arise and when new directions should be pursued.
5. Strong local knowledge is embedded in SNV through high quality national and international

staff. The international staff have been able to avoid country rotation schedules and have therefore been able to develop and apply a full understanding of the context to their work. This country 'embeddedness' of SNV staff is combined with the use of local capacity building organisations to produce locally relevant solutions.<sup>14</sup> Allowing a multi-year and longer-term mentoring relationship to be developed with those receiving the coaching resulted in trust being developed and continual support being offered.

6. A multi-level approach, where capacity and institutional development is built from government to communities, encourages coherence and mutually reinforces lessons that are learnt.
7. Through the accountability component of the intervention, highlighting the roles of different actors encourages a sense of responsibility to develop. While the intervention is focused on the water sector, the accountability focus has the potential to support developments in other sectors.

The intervention framework draws on a considered analysis of the country context which is updated frequently to capture changes in power relations. In practice, the coaching and counselling responds well to the theory of change outlined in the intervention framework, particularly as the implementation procedure for the activities has been applied in a thoughtful manner that is highly appropriate to achieving the desired results. The multi-level, multi-dimensional and multi-year nature of the approach has been central to this. The process facilitation

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<sup>14</sup> SNV staff find Booth's (2011) best fit analogy to be highly relevant to their approach.

approach, in practice, has been facilitated by a flexibility that has not been too constrained by the need to adhere to a short-term and rigid framework.

There appears to have been a shift in incentives achieved through the coaching programme. A substantive change in approach has resulted from the increased awareness of roles and responsibilities, and these have engendered a team approach among councillors. This is thought to have resulted from a combination of the highly relevant design and application of the intervention, alongside a window of opportunity for increasing accountability in Tanzania, at a moment when the wider socio-political context has provided a positive environment for change. The increasingly open and critical discussion at the political level, in the media (newspapers, community radio), and the emergence of young and dynamic councillors and vocal youth groups who are willing to pursue change, are all important for encouraging discussion around performance and challenging existing norms.

It is notable that both of the cases discussed above involved collective problem solving or collective pressure to challenge an existing practice. Where wider environmental or personal factors are not in confluence, the intervention has not been as successful. This can be seen at the community level where there are more obstacles to local problem solving, and installing performance discipline is more challenging due to the complexity of village relations, norms being more entrenched, and the wider contextual changes not having permeated. This highlights the importance of a multi-layered approach where capacity increases at each level are mutually reinforcing.

The intervention has been most successful in changing incentives where wider environmental or personal factors are in confluence, as socio-economic factors that limit the risks that individuals will take in pursuit of collective goals are pervasive. The question therefore becomes whether the changed contextual incentives are sufficiently strong to sustain the changes once the intervention finishes.

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