Strengthening the Health System for Sustainable WASH Improvements: Adopting a health systems approach at all levels of WASH in healthcare facilities programs

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Why a health systems strengthening approach?
Improving WASH in healthcare facilities contributes towards:

• Improved response to health emergencies
• Improved patient satisfaction
• Improved working conditions for health professionals

• Reduced risk of neonatal and maternal mortality
• Reduced development and spread of AMR
• Reduced risk of healthcare-associated infections
Roles unclear?

Budget?

Leadership/political will?

Skills/human resources?

Accountability?

Social norms?

Supply chains?

Guidelines/standards?

Training?
Determinants – what is driving inadequate WASH services?
The SoapBox Collaborative’s Conceptual Framework

What constitutes health system?
The WHO Health Systems Framework

System building blocks:
- Leadership / governance
- Health care financing
- Health workforce
- Medical products, technologies
- Information and research
- Service delivery

Goals/outcomes:
- Improved health (level and equity)
- Responsiveness
- Financial risk protection
- Improved efficiency
WHO/UNICEF Global Program of Work

Figure - Proposed roadmap for change: defining a national WASH in HCF package
Fig. 1. WHO framework for the quality of maternal and newborn health care

Health system

Quality of Care

PROVISION OF CARE ← EXPERIENCE OF CARE

1. Evidence based practices for routine care and management of complications
2. Actionable information systems
3. Functional referral systems
4. Effective communication
5. Respect and preservation of dignity
6. Emotional support

7. Competent, motivated human resources
8. Essential physical resources available

Individual and facility-level outcomes

Coverage of key practices
People-centred outcomes
Health outcomes
What does a systems strengthening approach include?

- Systems-level approaches require **working across the elements a health system**
  - Leadership and governance
    - Healthcare financing
    - Health workforce
  - Medical products and technologies
  - Information and research
  - Service delivery

- This can **drive broader progress** in health outcomes, supporting the achievement of universal health coverage.
What does a HSS approach involve?
WHO/UNICEF Global Program of Work

Figure - Proposed roadmap for change: defining a national WASH in HCF package
Health overall
- Service delivery model
- Priorities and policy environment
- Policy milestones
- Key actors and their roles
- Health priorities
- Political economy

WASH in HCF
- Representation in policy, strategy and guidelines (and health priorities)
- Roles and responsibilities in government
- Existing assessments and monitoring mechanisms
- Existing and potential actors and their roles
- Health priorities and framing
- Bottlenecks and opportunities
- Political economy

MoH led coordination
- Build stakeholder group
- Secretariat and regular meetings
- Linked across other relevant groups

Adapted from: CROSS, Suzanne et al. ‘Hygiene on maternity units: lessons from a needs assessment in Bangladesh and India’. Global Health Action, [S.I.], v. 9, dec. 2016
Lessons from WaterAid’s experience
Transforming health systems:
the vital role of water, sanitation and hygiene

WaterAid Report
May 2018
What key lessons have we learned?

1. Building **strong relationships** and coordinating processes across sectors are crucial

**Cambodia: working in partnership to influence health policy and leadership**

An informal working group including WaterAid Cambodia, WHO Cambodia, UNICEF and Emory University supported the Cambodian Ministry of Health with tackling lack of data on WASH conditions and contributed to creation of a comprehensive set of health policy documents that include and relate to WASH in healthcare facilities.
What key lessons have we learned?

Embedding WASH within existing health priorities is essential to ensuring the sustainability of improvements and avoid sectors operating in silos.

Myanmar: positioning WASH as an issue of maternal and newborn quality of care

Through joining multi-sector and cross-departmental working groups, WaterAid, in partnership with WHO and UNICEF, were able to tailor WASH assessments and resulting activities to support achievement of government goals on improving maternal and newborn care through quality of care mechanisms that are under development.
What key lessons have we learned?

We need to **strengthen the monitoring of WASH** within existing health monitoring mechanisms.

**Uganda: effective monitoring for planning and investment**

Through developing a small task team with government and external partners, a standardised list of HMIS indicators has been nationally recommended, helping break down a major barrier to improvement of WASH – good-quality data and monitoring.
What key lessons have we learned?

We must prioritise community engagement and empowerment in order to **create citizen-led accountability**.

**Malawi: coordinating bottom-up and top-down pressure for change**

Through working with patients and communities to strengthen their understanding of their rights, WaterAid has helped improved citizens’ capacity to hold duty-bearers accountable for WASH access. This ‘bottom-up’ community-led approach has influenced ‘top-down’ change.
The challenges: areas for action
Key areas for urgent action include:

Leadership and political will
• Political leaders and policy-makers must prioritise WASH in healthcare facilities

Governance and regulation/accreditation
• Both public and private providers need to be included in accreditation and regulation systems
Key areas for urgent action include:

Financing
• Increased and improved use of domestic finances
• Greater donor financing

Monitoring and targets
• Routine monitoring of facilities, widespread and used
Key areas for urgent action include:

Research and learning
• Focus on taking evidence-based interventions to scale

Technical solutions and building designs
• The right, affordable technology for the context, no new healthcare facility should be built without adequate WASH
The way forward: actions for a step change in WASH in healthcare facilities
What works?

- Government as the lead
- Community engagement to hold duty bearers to account
- New collaboration
- Combining advocacy and technical support efforts
- Trade off (speed vs support/strengthen)
- Flexible funding
- Develop and expand local initiatives

Challenges

- Maintain and strengthen coordination
- Distil knowledge and embed learning
- Costing and resource allocation
- Private sector engagement, regulation and accountability
- Continuing to influence other actors and their engagement
- WASH – Health joint system strengthening