

This evaluation brief describes the **Summative Evaluation of UNICEF's Interventions to Create an Enabling Environment (EE) for Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) in Pakistan**, conducted from January to December 2023. Commissioned by the UNICEF Pakistan Country Office and conducted by APEX Consulting Pakistan, the evaluation assessed WASH EE i.e., "Output 1" of WASH Outcome 5 in the UNICEF Country Programme Document (CPD) 2018-2022. This evaluation delved into the progress and achievements made during the intervention time period and the ways in which Output 1 supported Outputs 2 and 3 of the WASH Programme. Geographically, the scope of evaluation covered the federal and provincial levels; and the two regions Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

The **purpose of this evaluation was to independently assess outcomes using Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria i.e., relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability**. Also, the evaluation emphasized the key cross-cutting themes, namely **gender equality, Human Rights-based Approaches (HRBA), and equity and environmental sustainability**. Stakeholder accountability among UNICEF, government ministries, local authorities, NGOs, and WASH sector stakeholders was also a focus area for it. The evaluation aimed to provide impartial insights, informing future strategies and decision-making processes, with the intention of contributing to strategic planning, enhance accountability, and the sustainability of initiatives fostering an enabling environment for WASH in Pakistan.

Context

The WASH sector in Pakistan is beset by inefficiencies and disparities among provinces, government entities, and stakeholders. UNICEF Pakistan WASH interventions aimed to address these challenges by creating an enabling environment conducive to the provision of sustainable WASH services. These efforts were aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly targets 6.1 and 6.2, as well as the national development objectives related to WASH.



WASH Landscape in Pakistan (Context of WASH EE)

-  Ongoing drinking-water policy development in all provinces.
-  Considerable reduction in open defecation, but 25 million people still practice it.
-  Urban areas showed 30% higher access to improved sanitation than rural areas.
-  18 million people lack improved water sources, 37 million people lack on-premises water.
-  68% households drink bacterially contaminated water.
-  Key Bottlenecks: Perception of free water, limited soap access and poverty correlation.
-  Institutional action needed: Accountability for water inefficiencies and maintenance.

Source: UNICEF Pakistan CPD 2018-2022

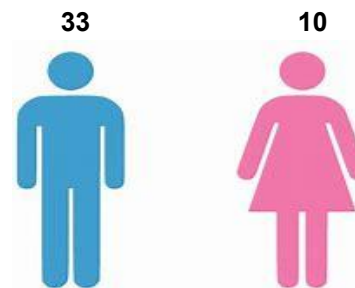
What is Being Evaluated?

Output 1 (WASH EE): By 2022, national and provincial government mechanisms are strengthened to legislate, plan, coordinate, and budget for gender-responsive, resilient, and safely managed or at least Basic+ water and sanitation facilities in development and humanitarian situations.

- UNICEF offered technical guidance to national and provincial government ministries and departments for strategic policy formulation, reinforced government institutional structures, and supported Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC) WASH Unit in capacity building, coordination, and reporting progress on SDG-6.
- Additionally, UNICEF collaborated with NGOs and government agencies to expand the Pakistan Approach to Total Sanitation (PATS).
- UNICEF leveraged resources to improve sector financing by advocating for increased funding and conducting regular Public Expenditure Reviews and budget analysis since 2019-2020.
- Also, UNICEF promoted mutual accountability by establishing monitoring mechanisms and data sharing agreements among the stakeholders.
- Promoted South-South (SS) collaboration by fostering knowledge sharing and creating opportunities for South-South learning.
- Institutionalized WASH Joint Sectors Reviews (JSRs) by actively supporting the systematic annual implementation of provincial JSRs at both national and provincial/regional levels. These reviews facilitated the identification of priority bottlenecks and played a key role in informing planning, budgets, and national commitments.
- Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), climate, stunting, urbanization, and gender equality considerations into WASH policies and strategies, Developed tailored SDG strategies for provinces, as well as facilitated partners in adopting climate-resilient services and accessing financial resources.
- Generated evidence, executed provincial advocacy plans, influenced WASH sector budget allocations, and contributed to shaping societal norms to promote equitable and sustainable WASH services.

Evaluation Design and Methodology

- The evaluation design was participatory, theory based, and utilization focused.
- Throughout the evaluation, key stakeholders were actively involved.
- A mixed-methods approach combined primary with secondary qualitative and quantitative data.
- Methodologically, the evaluation employed a purposeful sampling and conducted 43 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders, supplemented by a desk review.



Evaluation Key Findings

Relevance

- While sectorial policies aligned with national/provincial priorities and SDGs (6.1 and 6.2) objectives, implementation faced hurdles, particularly delays in policy approvals
- Progress was evident in the UNICEF-supported reduction of open defecation, complemented by water safety and sanitation plans, along with UNICEF advocacy efforts.
- The absence of a functional provincial regulatory framework in Punjab and Sindh, particularly in tariff setting, regulation enforcement, and performance monitoring, posed a significant challenge to effective governance and optimization of water-related services.
- The WASH EE initiative has exhibited adaptability in tackling dynamic challenges, including urbanization, climate change, and COVID-19.
- UNICEF commitment to international obligations and strategic plans demonstrated its leadership in the WASH sector.

Coherence

- The evaluation emphasized the strong alignment of WASH EE interventions with other WASH initiatives and related sectors, notably with the health and education ministries/departments.
- Collaborations with the MoCC and the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives resulted in the implementation of measures to mitigate disaster risks.
- The water and sanitation (WatSan) cell played a significant role in influencing the development of sanitation, Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), and Clean Green Pakistan initiatives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).
- Water, sanitation, and Behavior Change Communication strategies were synchronized with the nation's development agenda and the SDGs.
- Inclusive stakeholder engagement, involving local organizations, government bodies,

community representatives, and sector partners, proved beneficial.

- Multi-tiered coordination mechanisms at the national, provincial, district/local, and village levels were critical to the success of WASH EE initiatives.
- Some of the stakeholders pointed out that challenges emerged due to diverse stakeholder interests and the devolution of power under the 18th Amendment. The absence of centralized authority posed difficulties in harmonizing efforts across provinces, each with its own priorities and bottlenecks.

Efficiency

- UNICEF's WASH EE intervention demonstrated commendable efficiency through the use of long-term contracts with national consultants, and good resource management practices.
- Implementation of solar energy systems' reduced operational expenses, ensuring sustainability, and adherence to climate resilience and risk management strategies.
- Advancements were impeded by obstacles in government financing, specifically in the allocation of budgetary resources for sanitation.
- District and provincial reporting processes and budget codes for water and sanitation requires reevaluation or redefined.

Effectiveness

- WASH EE (Output 1) successfully met most of its targets, aligning with government priorities and addressing climate-resilient infrastructure needs. However, natural disasters, such as floods, disrupted the execution of some of the planned activities.
- In addition to school-based WASH facilities and MHM initiatives, UNICEF's advocacy efforts increased political participation and financial support for the WASH sector.
- Media outlets highlighted the hand hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic.



- Scoping studies on WASH in health facilities were undertaken post COVID-19 to incorporate WASH indicators into health information systems.
- The M&E framework and processes for measuring the response, outcome, and impact of WASH initiatives were credible, dependable, and precise. Mechanisms such as year-end reviews, periodic JSRs, and annual assessments of rolling work plans were efficacious.
- Positive and negative unintended consequences were identified during the evaluation, influencing policy, practice, capacity, funding, and implementation dimensions.

WASH EE Key Achievements: Examples

- Inclusion of WASH in Pakistan's National Determined Contributions
- Hosted South Asian Conference on Sanitation-7
- Successful participation in Sanitation and Water for All Sector Minister's Meeting
- Revised National Climate Change Policy
- Developed Hand Hygiene for All roadmap
- Regular SDG-6 reporting
- Leveraged US\$205 million for CGP
- UNICEF's contributions to WASH policies and financing strategies, along with enhanced national capacity for policy implementation, led to increased public expenditure (FY 2021-2022: 82% to 85%)
- UNICEF collaborated effectively with government ministries during COVID-19, cholera outbreaks, and flood emergencies
- Developed the Resilient Recovery, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation Framework (4RF) for flood-affected WASH needs
- Mapped the urban water quality in a complex city like Peshawar
- Introduced and reported of safety-managed data for sanitation
- Reduction in open defecation
- Enhanced access to WASH services in schools and healthcare facilities, along with increased integration of specific indicators
- Successfully promoted community-based handwashing practices through diverse media channels and impactful campaigns, including the observance of Global Handwashing Day
- Aligned Sector Tools and processes i.e., UNICEF-WHO Joint Monitoring Programme, Global Analysis and Assessment of Global Sanitation and Drinking Water Report and WASH bottleneck Analysis Tool
- Development of WASH Strategic Unit Cell at MoCC

Impact

Sector Financing

- Consistent high utilization rates of WASH Budget (94%+ for the last four years). This was coupled with investments made under enabling environment by different development partners along MoCC and as a result of JSRs, policy papers, WASH Sector Development Plans, etc.
- An increase of more than 253% in WASH expenditures in Fiscal Year 2022 compared with Fiscal Year 2019.

Capacity Building

- UNICEF focused on capacity building of human resources via training for emergency preparedness, a WASH capacity assessment, and the development of training courses.

Advocacy and Behavior Change

- Advocacy resulted in 2.7 million individuals residing in open defecation free environments.
- Sensitization efforts motivated communities to take ownership of WASH initiatives, resulting in the construction of latrines and improved access to water sources.

Gender and Inclusion

- Focused on marginalized and vulnerable populations, including the poorest households, children, children with disabilities, women, and disaster-prone communities.
- Initiatives like subsidies for sanitation services and engaging various community groups were designed to address their specific needs. Such subsidies reduced the financial barriers for marginalized populations in accessing clean water and sanitation facilities.

Institutionalizing JSRs: UNICEF's Impact

- UNICEF's efforts played a key role in institutionalizing government led JSRs. Advocacy is necessary for ensuring the regularity and institutionalization of JSRs, particularly amid challenges such as those posed by COVID-19.
- JSRs, integral to the annual economic survey, signified the sustainability and importance of WASH EE interventions.

Sustainability

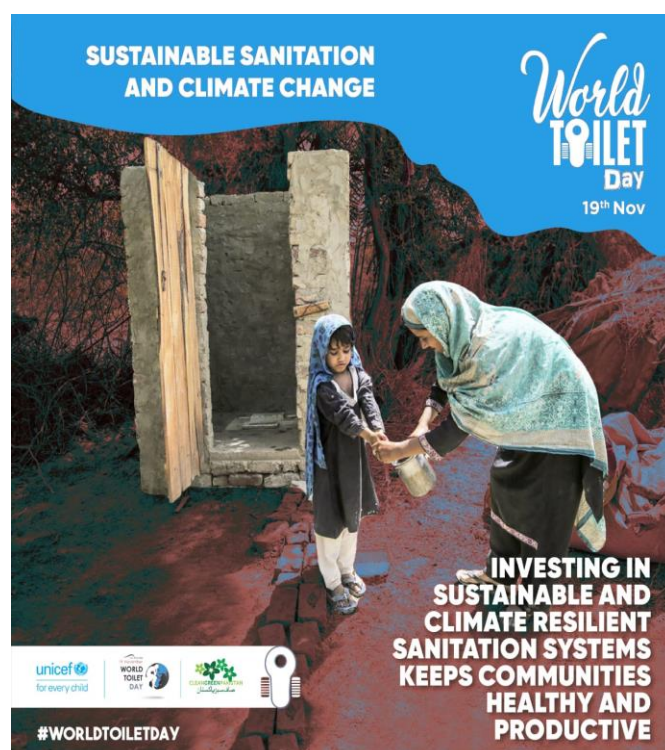
- UNICEF's exit strategy for WASH EE initiatives aimed to bolster institutional resilience and local capacities so that partner organizations and departments could function independently after the end of UNICEF's support.
- Prioritizing capacity building and institution strengthening, the exit strategy underscored and promoted sustainability.
- Challenges persisted in maintaining the

momentum of sustainable practices and achieving financial as well as technical autonomy.

- Key components of the exit strategy included enhancing stakeholder strategic capacity, integrating UNICEF initiatives into government policies, and ensuring the sustainability of outcomes.
- Despite these efforts, obstacles such as legislative hurdles and prolonged policy approval processes, persist.
- Advocating for increased budget allocations, appropriate legislation, active community engagement, robust M&E systems, and the identification and expansion of successful practices remained crucial for sustainability.

Cross-Cutting Themes

- The evaluation assessed the extent to which the WASH EE interventions incorporated the cross-cutting-themes, specifically gender equality, HRBA, equity and environmental sustainability.
- Regarding gender equality, there was an emphasis on ensuring equal participation in WASH policies, strategies, plans and related initiatives.
- HRBA principles were also intricately woven into WASH policies, recognizing water and sanitation as basic human rights.
- The gains made in WASH EE were notable for reaching vulnerable groups, reducing equity gaps, and supporting the poorest households.
- Environmental sustainability was prioritized by the WASH EE interventions, as demonstrated through methodical climate risk assessments and inclusion in policies and strategies.



Key Lessons Learned

- **Comprehensive Strategy Collaboration**

Achieving effective WASH outcomes necessitates a comprehensive strategy that goes beyond mere policy alignment. Active collaboration with diverse stakeholders is vital to address the multifaceted challenges in the WASH sector.

- **Efficient Resource Use**

Optimizing WASH investments relies on transparent public sector budget coding and efficient resource allocation. A streamlined approach ensures that resources are utilized effectively, maximizing the impact of WASH initiatives.

- **Local Capacity for Sustainability**

Building the capacity of local organizations and institutions is paramount for self-reliance and long-term success in WASH endeavors. This investment in local capacity enhances the sustainability of interventions, fostering resilience within communities.

- **Integration into Broader Development**

To achieve sustained impact, it is imperative to align WASH initiatives with broader development goals. Integration ensures that WASH becomes an integral part of the overall development agenda, contributing to comprehensive and enduring progress.

- **Equity and Inclusivity**

Prioritizing equal access for marginalized groups is fundamental in WASH initiatives. This principle of equity and inclusivity must be universally applied to ensure that the benefits of WASH interventions reach all segments of the population, leaving no one behind.

Key Recommendations for UNICEF and the Government

- **Prioritize and expedite the approval process for pending WASH policies** to ensure timely implementation.
- **Address the absence of a functional provincial regulatory framework** in Punjab and Sindh, with a specific focus on tariff setting, enforcement of regulations, and performance monitoring in the water sector.
- **Strengthen the role of the WatSan cell** in KP as a vital hub for WASH information by providing additional resources and support, emphasizing resource-efficient utilization, and updating its website.
- **Advocate for revamping the financial codes and reporting processes for drinking water and sanitation** at provincial and district levels to enhance transparency.
- **Tackle coordination challenges**, particularly conflicting roles among different government departments and stakeholders, to facilitate smooth implementation of WASH initiatives.
- **Foster strategic partnerships among key stakeholders** to enhance collaboration and coordination in the water and sanitation sector.
- **Ensure implementation of the UNICEF Gender Strategy for WASH.**

Disclaimer: This evaluation brief is based on the **Summative Evaluation of UNICEF's Interventions to Create an Enabling Environment (EE) for Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) in Pakistan** which can be downloaded from the following link: <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/reports/detail/19045/summative-evaluation-of-unicef-interventions-to-create-an-enabling-environment-for-wash-output-1-in-pakistan-2018-2022>. The purpose of this brief is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between UNICEF and its partners. The contents of the evaluation reports, and consequently this brief, do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF. For more information, please contact the UNICEF Pakistan Country Office (islamabad@unicef.org)

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