

Partnership for Water and Sanitation in Karachi

Attributable impact

- Water supply and sanitation facilities provided for over 400 teachers and 8,500 school children in 55 schools
- USD 70,000 raised to create and support the Karachi Water Partnership

Summary

A fundamental principle of IWRM is the need for a participatory approach to water development and management, involving users, planners and policy-makers at all levels. In practice, such participation typically ranges from basic consultation to full empowerment of stakeholders within decision-making processes and implementation of actions.

Circumstances dictate the needs and in the case of the megacity of Karachi, Pakistan, in the early 2000s it was clear to citizens and the municipality alike that nothing short of stakeholder empowerment would be sufficient to overcome the numerous urban water management problems facing the city's inhabitants.

The result was the GWP supported Karachi Water Partnership, which has successfully served as a platform for collective action by citizens, government and the private sector to better manage water resources in the city.

Background

With a rapidly expanding population of around 18 million inhabitants, Karachi, Pakistan, is confronted with severe urban water management problems. Recognising that issues such as dysfunctional water services, prevalence of water borne diseases and water scarcity were unlikely to be solved without the active contribution of all concerned, in 2000 a group of citizens came together from various areas of water management to discuss the concept of a neutral, multi-stakeholder group unified by a common aim to foster government-citizen collaboration for improved water resources management in the city.

The Karachi Water Partnership (KWP) was formally launched in April 2007 by the Hisaar Foundation, a local organisation working for water, food and livelihood security in Karachi. It was established that water and sanitation issues in Karachi could not be solved without the government, the private sector and civil society acknowledging their responsibilities, and with them agreeing to be accountable for a sustainable management of the city's water resources.

Once the basic foundations had been laid – the building of partnerships, gaining political support, raising awareness of the cause, etc. – the KWP chose to focus on one of the 18 Town Councils¹ within

¹ The City of Karachi is administratively divided into 18 Town Councils which are further subdivided into Union Councils, the lowest tier of government in Pakistan

the city, to demonstrate what the promoted concept was capable of achieving in practice. To this end, an Area Water Partnership (AWP) was established in Gulshan-e-Iqbal, a Town Council of around 1 million inhabitants in northeast Karachi, where a transparent, universal and neutral platform was established for government and citizen groups to jointly develop action plans to improve water supply and sanitation through the use of each partner's capacities and resources.

The collaboration between Hisaar Foundation and Gulshan-e-Iqbal town municipal administration led to the development of two key concepts which became the cornerstones of Hisaar Foundation's partnership philosophy: Cost Synergy and Mutual Accountability.

Accountability is looked upon in a comprehensive way, not only of public institutions that deliver services, but also of the citizens that use the services. The principle of cost synergy is based on each institutional partner spending its own money to carry out commitments.

GWP contribution

GWP provided the model for the KWP stakeholder dialogues and workshops that focused on building partnerships and raising awareness of water supply and wastewater problems. During 2008, three conferences and six workshops and dialogues were held, and 35 stakeholder meetings.

GWP was active in the launch of the AWP in Gulshan-e-Iqbal, and was instrumental in building citizen ownership of the process, establishing the forum for collective dialogue and decision-making, and promoting behavioural change among citizens in relation to water resources management and conservation. GWP also provided seed funding to organise the dialogues through which financing for the implementation of actions was raised from government, corporate support and local philanthropists.

Results

The formal establishment of the multi-stakeholder partnership is the key result for fostering change in the management of water and sanitation in Karachi. The partnership was mandated to act through the signing of seven Memorandums of Understanding with city-based institutions, including the City District Government of Karachi and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB). Since its launch, more than 300 partners have joined the KWP with each one signing a pledge to conserve and better manage water and sewerage at home, in places of work and study, and in public spaces.

In the demonstration town of Gulshan-e-Iqbal, the town administration set up a water cell to increase understanding of water issues and the government's role in water conservation. This led to the printing of guidelines by the administration which the KWSB agreed to distribute along with monthly water bills to over one million homes, schools, businesses, industries and mosques. Furthermore, the town administration appointed and provided training to 19 water inspectors with the aim of promoting water conservation in local communities and providing a visible link between the government and the people in a unified effort to work on water issues.

KWP also established a local Women and Water Network (WWN) in Gulshan-e-Iqbal which in turn set up 13 sub-WWN's for each of the local Union Councils within Gulshan-e-Iqbal town, which provides an institutional link between the Union Council and Town Council level jurisdictions. The WWN also led a water and sanitation programme for local schools through which school authorities and the KWSB collaborated to enable the construction of water supply and sanitation infrastructure for over 400 teachers and 8,500 school children in 55 public and private schools. The achievements of the

WWNs in Gulshan-e-Iqbal has highlighted the importance of the role of women in catalysing change within communities and as such the establishment of a WWN was recognised as a prerequisite for setting up further town AWP. The success of the GIT AWP led to the establishment of six additional AWP across four towns of Karachi

Much of the success of the KWP has been achieved through the commitment of key stakeholder institutions and individuals who have been willing to invest their own time and resources in working towards a common good. The monetary value of such contribution is difficult to determine although early in the process the KWP successfully raised USD 70,000 directly from public and private sources to fund interventions in Gulshan-e-Iqbal.

The success of the Gulshan-e-Iqbal AWP led to the establishment of an additional six AWP in Karachi. A further twenty WWNs have also been set up around the city and have, amongst others, jointly launched a training initiative on home-based food production that has reached out to thousands of women across Karachi as a whole.

However, there have also been set-backs. In 2011 the elected local government system in Karachi was abrogated which has hampered the momentum of the AWP. Since the premise of the AWP platform was based on government-citizen collaboration the rollback of the elected local government system in the city greatly affected the spirit of partnership as well as local government funding and enthusiasm to continue the work on water security. Whereas this development increases the challenge of achieving the KWP aims, it also serves to demonstrate the importance of having such a multi-stakeholder partnership in place to mobilise available resources and seek alternative means of ensuring improved water services for the inhabitants of Karachi in the absence of strong local government support.

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