

The Global Water and Sanitation Crisis – A Canadian Response

Landscape Report

Harbinger Foundation

“The importance of sanitation is indisputable. It is a crucial stepping-stone to better health: sanitation offers us the opportunity to save the lives of 1.5 million children a year who would otherwise succumb to diarrhoeal diseases, and to protect the health of many more. It is fundamental to gender equity as it protects women’s dignity. And it is key to economic development: investments in sanitation protect investments made in other sectors, such as education and health, and bring measurable economic returns.”

WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program 2008

Opening Letter

Safe drinking water, sanitation and good hygiene are fundamental to health, survival and development yet they are often taken for granted in the western world. In developing countries over 1.1 billion people do not have access to clean water and 2.5 billion people lack basic sanitation.

In 2005 the Harbinger Foundation decided to make clean water and hygiene a priority for its philanthropic focus. Since then, the Toronto-based family foundation has supported various programs and initiatives with an aim to increase the size and impact of Canada's response to the international water and sanitation crisis.

This report began as a desire to better educate ourselves about water and sanitation. We contacted non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government and the private sector to capture current information about the international water and sanitation sector in Canada.

This report is a work in progress and we hope it will serve as a guide to the broad range of stakeholders who are committed to tackling a persistent and preventable scourge in the developing world.

In particular, the information in this report could be used to encourage leadership in both the NGO sector and government. It is also our goal to collaborate and form partnerships with the international community and ultimately to show that Canadians are interested in developing a unified strategy that will address water and sanitation.

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The Need for Action – An Overview of Challenges

Canadian Policies and Resources

Lasting progress in the area of water and sanitation will take increased global action yet in Canada we do not even have an official water and sanitation policy. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) annually allocates about \$70 million to water and sanitation. This represents only 2.5% of its \$3 billion yearly budget. Additionally there is no breakdown of this data to indicate how much money is allocated to water versus sanitation programs. Current estimates are 90% for water and 10% for sanitation.

CIDA's bilateral aid plan, which focuses aid efforts and resources in certain countries, eliminates seven of 14 African countries (including Rwanda, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi and Cameroon) that are significantly neglected in the area of water and sanitation.

A 2008 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report showed that Canada's share of the total global water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) initiative is only 1%.

The Canadian government has also refused to recognize the right to water (opposed at UN Commission on Human Rights 2002-2003, opposed at UN Human Rights Council 2008 and abstained at UN General Assembly 2010) and has offered weak rationales for its position.

NGO Collaboration

Perhaps because of Canada's limited profile in the water and sanitation sector we lack a presence in many international networks and campaigns such as End Water Poverty, Sanitation and Water for All and WASH Advocates Initiative. Moreover, there has been very little work to advocate for sustained funding and improved policies at the government level. This is perhaps due to the reluctance of NGOs to voice criticism and risk offending CIDA, the agency responsible for providing much of their funding.

In Canada there are only a few organizations that are dedicated to international WASH issues and they are working, for the most part, in isolation. Networks that do exist have not reached out to health, education and faith-based or French-Canadian networks. In general there is also a lack of information in Canada about innovative approaches to low-cost or market-based sanitation.

Public Education

Lastly, our overarching challenge is that the Canadian public is not sufficiently informed about WASH issues and how critical they are to reduce the burden of water-borne diseases. Canadians are more focused on other health priorities such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Strengths to Build On – An Overview

Canadian Policies and Resources

As the host of the 2010 G8 summit, Canada championed a major initiative to improve maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) in developing countries and \$1.1 billion of new funding has been announced.

Since the G8, water and sanitation initiatives have enjoyed a higher profile. For example, Canada is providing \$36 million over three years (2009-2012) to the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative to extend coverage of safe water and basic sanitation to 80% of African rural populations for 2015. However critics point out that this funding is targeted to large system development, that the effort has been hastily put together to meet the Millennium Development Goals and that it is not sustainable.

Nonetheless CIDA has shown leadership and success in its \$16.4 million investment in Ghana over the past 10 years. Canada is also on track to meet its commitment to double aid to Africa and has made substantial progress so far to meet the \$2.1 billion target. Key initiatives such as Save a Million Lives, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria along with increased investment in untied food aid are essential components of this assistance to Africa. Water and sanitation services could provide support to these existing programs.

There have been increasingly specific demands from NGOs to government over the past few years. For example, the government was asked to support the International Year of Sanitation (IYS) in 2008 by contributing to the Global Fund for Sanitation. The sector has also requested that CIDA increase its annual allocation to WASH to \$200 million or approximately 4% of its development budget.

NGO Collaboration

There has been progress in forming networks. Sanitation and Water Action Network – Canada (SWAN), which includes most of the NGOs working in water and sanitation, has joined together to unify messages and exchange information. Additionally, a few Canadian NGOs are joining international campaigns such as End Water Poverty, which is hosted by WaterAid UK and has the support of more than 85 NGOs worldwide.

Public Education

More than 20 Canadian-based organizations include international water and sanitation services in their programming and many of these NGOs include public education programs. These are crucial to explain to the public—particularly students—the scale and implications of the water and sanitation crisis.

Global Sanitation Efforts and the Road Ahead

In recent years, water and sanitation has made some inroads to receive the attention it deserves. In 2000, the world community renewed its efforts to provide universal access to water by adopting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The eight MDGs—which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS—form a blueprint agreed to by all the world’s countries and leading development institutions to meet the needs of the world’s poorest by 2015.

- ⇒ *The world has pledged to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.*
- ⇒ *Sub-Saharan Africa remains an area of great concern. Over the period from 1990-2004 the number of people without access to drinking water increased by 23% and without sanitation increased by over 30% (WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Report).*

In recognition of the slow progress on these goals the United Nations designated 2008 as International Year of Sanitation. The response by members of the OECD has been remarkable:

- The Netherlands has committed to reach 50 million people with water and sanitation by 2015.
- The United Kingdom has doubled its WASH allocation to Sub-Saharan Africa between 2005 and 2008.
- Japan remains the single largest donor to the WASH sector allocating 8% of its total development assistance program. However Japan’s efforts have also been criticized as tied aid (using Japanese companies and focusing on non-poor urban communities).

There also has been tremendous momentum in the United States:

- The Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act was signed into law in 2005. It makes access to safe water and sanitation for developing countries a specific policy objective of U.S. foreign assistance programs.
- The reintroduction of the Water for the World Act aims to provide one hundred million people with first-time access to safe drinking water and sanitation on a sustainable basis by 2015.
- To mark World Water Day in 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton joined World Bank President Robert Zoellick in signing a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance efforts between the groups to improve water and sanitation conditions for the world’s poor.

- A coalition of water, sanitation, hygiene and health organizations came together for World Water Day in 2011 to create an online viral campaign. They attracted over two million participants.

The Role of Canadian NGOs

From our survey, the Harbinger Foundation has identified ten NGOs that direct the majority of their funding to international water projects. Many others include water and sanitation as a component of their international water and sanitation projects. This allocation is significant as most of the multi-national organizations in this category such as CARE, World Vision and Save the Children work with multi-million dollar budgets.

Almost all of the Canadian NGOs working in the sector include health and hygiene promotion as part of their development model and some also include education, agriculture and housing. Most have significant international networks in the form of national staff, local offices, advisors and partners such as in-country NGOs, churches, governments, foundations, research institutes and boards.

In terms of geography, Canadian NGOs have worked in almost every developing country. The most prevalent of these include Nicaragua, Haiti, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the countries of East Africa. Most of these programs have focused on rural areas and use simple water technologies such as hand dug wells, protected springs, gravity flow pipe distribution and some drilled shallow wells.

Similarly for sanitation, programs promote technologies such as pit latrines (both traditional and improved), the Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) and in some cases ecological models that encourage the use of human waste for agriculture.

Estimated Annual Expenditure by Canadian NGOs (based on 2006 data).

		Estimated Annual Funding	
NGOs – Water and Sanitation as Primary Focus	Estimated Total Annual Budget	%	\$
Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technologies	2,130,000	84%	1,789,200
International Secretariat de Water	1,795,000	90%	1,615,500
WaterCan (total expenditure vs total international programs)	1,557,395	65%	1,018,080
IDE	1,000,000	76%	760,000

Living Water Canada	800,000	80%	640,000
Ryan's Well	600,000	68%	408,000
Water for People, Canada	250,000	85%	212,000
Total			7,095,780
NGOs - Watsan as a Component of Development Strategy			
AMREF Canada	2,000,000	25%	500,000
CARE	127,000,000	5%	6,350,000
CPAR	6,000,000	5%	300,000
DMGF	n/a	40%	0
EWB	2,500,000	10%	250,000
IDRF	2,500,000	12%	300,000
Oxfam Canada	15,000,000	12%	1,800,000
Oxfam Quebec	n/a		
SCF Canada	16,000,000	5%	800,000
World Vision, Canada	375,000,000	17%	63,750,000 ?
WUSC	29,600,000	<1%	170,000
Total			74,050,000
TOTAL			81,145,780

Moving Forward – A Five-Point Agenda for Canadian NGOs

1. Increased Advocacy and Funding

In Canada our first task is to mobilize more resources. Many Canadian NGOs devote energy and imagination to explaining the prevalence of water and sanitation issues and its importance to the daily lives of billions of people. They reach out to schools, universities, service clubs, places of worship and workplaces. We need to expand this outreach and mobilize more support from the public until we have a critical mass of Canadians that support CIDA's funding in this area.

2. Marshalling the Evidence

We must continue to make our case with CIDA that water and sanitation is an effective anti-poverty investment. There is persuasive evidence from the World Bank that outlines the cost effectiveness of hygiene and sanitation promotion in terms of preventing illness and premature death. Policy makers at CIDA should have access to this type of information. We also need to put water and sanitation within the framework of the Better Aid Bill (formally named Bill C-293).

3. Increased Effectiveness

The international architecture of aid is changing and therefore our third task is to understand and apply agreed upon principles to improve the effectiveness of aid. These principles have been articulated in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness ” (OECD 2005) and require aid transfers to follow the principles of ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability. For Canadian NGOs some of these principles are already familiar—notably those that have originated from CIDA's long-standing requirement for Results Based Management. Others, such as host country ownership and harmonization may require NGOs to change some of their traditional approaches.

4. Working in Partnership With National Agencies

National approaches to water and sanitation have also been reformed with the use of Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs). When they work well, SWAPs result in bringing together governments, donors and other stakeholders in a common set of policies.

Canadian NGOs should be informed about the national WASH policies and plans of each country in which they work. This provides an opportunity for communities, NGOs and civil society to engage with the water and sanitation sector and play a greater role in its expansion.

5. Global Engagement

Decisions about resource allocation and best practices are influenced by global debate and discussion. In response to an early call by SWAN approximately a dozen NGOs signed on to the End Water Poverty network. Canadian NGOs also highlighted the International Year of Sanitation in 2008 and lobbied to support a new Global Support Fund. Some NGOs attended the bi-annual Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC) International Conference for water and sanitation practitioners and presented

papers on their experiences. This participation suggests that we are making an effort to work together here in Canada and with our NGO counterparts in other countries.

Of course there is much more that we could do. For example, currently there is an active debate about water and sanitation as human rights.

There are other important networks addressing issues of gender (Gender & Water Alliance) and corruption in the water sector (Water Integrity Network). The issues these groups tackle and the work that they do provide models for effective networks.

Conclusion

While our fundamental task of improving water and sanitation to the world’s poor has remained constant, the context and approaches through which this work is done are changing.

The Canadian sector is fragmented and many NGOs are caught up with their own programs and partners. We can continue to work in this manner and deliver a marginal contribution to the global targets. Or, we can begin to think in terms of a more global perspective and use our programs as an opportunity to learn and innovate. We can also use the credibility of these programs to form a strong voice to address the larger, more strategic issues. We believe that this method will bring about a larger return.

Where We Are	Future Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale • Rural • Community projects • Some schools, some clinics • Simple technologies • High focus on water • Subsidies provided for latrines, usually low take-up • Working with local NGO/CBO partners or establishing a base camp • Minimal reference to District Councils • Vertical delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit compliance with national WASH policies and institutional arrangements • Seat at the table with national/local governments/ESAs to help prepare national policies, plans, budgets and reports for NGO and or local partners • Coordination with all other water and sanitation agencies in each district to ensure equitable and efficient allocation • More mobilization of civil society • More contracting of local private sector to deliver water schemes and market latrines • Reciprocal disclosures of water and sanitation budgets