

COALITIONS

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM
THE DIORANO-WASH COALITION
MADAGASCAR**

Paper by

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1. COUNTRY SITUATION

1.1 Introduction

Only ten years remain before the year 2015, by which time the aim is to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and thus achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for water and sanitation. According to the most recent WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Report (JMP, 2004) sub-Saharan Africa is already lagging behind and there is 'stalled action on sanitation in most developing countries'. Certain process oriented reforms in the areas of finance, coalitions, local government and policy are therefore imperative if rapid progress is to be made in the remaining ten years.

This paper aims to give insights into the issues and lessons learned in Madagascar related to coalitions, with the particular example of the Diorano-WASH coalition. The term 'coalition' is taken to mean different groups with differing and varying ideological perspectives who agree to work together around a common issue. Coalitions normally form in response to a need and can vary in purpose, intensity and duration of involvement depending on the context and need.

As can be seen from Table 1, Madagascar has particularly low coverage rates in water compared with many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa and has ambitious targets to meet if the MDGs are to be achieved. Data related to access to sanitation varies widely. Below is the officially recognised data for 2001, although studies carried out since have indicated that real figures related to 'access to adequate sanitation' are, in fact, considerably lower. National goals were set even higher than the MDGs, aiming to achieve 80% access to water supply in rural areas and 100% in urban areas and 70% access to sanitation in rural areas and 100% in urban areas.

Table 1: Madagascar facts and figures related to achievement of the MDGs in water and sanitation

Population in 2001	15,701,850
Rural Population in 2001	11 615 375
Urban Population in 2001	4 086 475
Population predicted for 2015	23 705 696
Rural Population predicted for 2015	18 179 440
Urban Population predicted for 2015	5 526 256
Access to safe water in 2001 (rural)	11.73%
Access to safe water in 2001 (urban)	66.87%
Access to basic sanitation in 2000 (rural) ¹	52.2%
Access to basic sanitation in 2000 (urban) ²	87.3%
Productive days lost annually to diarrhoeal disease	5 million
Annual work opportunities lost	US \$40 million
Monthly Households target for water MDG	
Rural	2,627,450
Urban	1,470,588
Monthly Households target for sanitation MDG	
Rural	2,041,435
Urban	1,860,155
Water sector annual finance need for MDGs	\$101m

If Madagascar is to improve access to water and sanitation and achieve progress towards the ambitious MDG targets, efforts must be maximised through a number of process oriented reforms. Lessons must be drawn from experiences within the country and from other countries.

While attempts have been made to develop safe rural water supplies and access to adequate sanitation, these have been limited in scope and effectiveness. There had been little coherent effort, prior to the establishment of

¹ We recognize that this data is likely to be inaccurate

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the Diorano-WASH coalition, to address the problems of poor sanitation and hygiene in relation to drinking water and the transmission of diarrhoeal diseases.

The Diorano-WASH coalition is united around the common goal of improving access to potable water and adequate sanitation in order to reduce diseases linked with poor water and sanitation and includes representatives from Government, United Nations Organisations, World Bank, USAID, local and international NGOs and the private sector.

1.2 The situation in the past

Different organisations have come together to share information and pool their efforts in Madagascar over the years, most often in the shape of NGO platforms. Some of these have quickly fizzled out for various reasons whereas others have been more successful, particularly where common goals are clear from the outset. A successful example of a long-standing platform from the water and sanitation sector is a network of four likeminded NGOs (Caritas, SAF/FJKM, Fikrifama and Taratra) called the 'Réseau Eau', existing largely for information exchange and advocacy. This is not a 'coalition' in the strictest sense that it does not consist of *disparate groups* united around a common issue or goal, the members being extremely similar in nature, vision, and function.

An informal platform of diverse actors exists in the water and sanitation sector in Madagascar working together around specific sectoral issues particularly in policy and advocacy. It includes representatives from Government, United Nations Organisations, World Bank, USAID, local and international NGOs and the private sector who meet around specific live issues. Examples of issues addressed in the committee are the formulation of the national sanitation policy, national indicators for sanitation and advocating for a higher profile for the sector in Madagascar's PRSP.

1.3 Description of coalitions

The initial members of the Diorano-WASH coalition worked together in the informal platform in the water and sanitation sector. Being very aware of the low levels of access to water and sanitation and the impact of this on poverty levels as well the fact that diarrhoea is one of the three main causes of infant mortality, they agreed to unite around the common goal of improving access to potable water and adequate sanitation and to raise the profile of sanitation and hygiene at the launch of the Madagascar Diorano-WASH campaign on 10 September 2002. The objectives laid out clearly in the national Diorano-WASH strategy to achieve the agreed goal are mentioned in Figure 1.

The main tasks of the coalition include to:

- Coordinate efforts
- Advocate
- Share information
- Raise awareness and mobilise
- Communicate information and educate
- Build capacity
- Establish effective partnerships

Figure 1: OBJECTIVES OF DIORANO-WASH STRATEGY

1. To improve three key hygiene practices which play an important role in preventing the spread of diarrhoeal disease: Hand washing with soap, safe disposal of excreta, safe water chain (transport and storage of water)
2. To mobilise political will and donor interest so that the water and sanitation sector is considered as a priority in the national poverty reduction strategy, by:
 - Putting in place a national sanitation policy which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the different actors and which outlines the main direction of development in the sector.
 - Respecting the commitments contained in the 20/20 initiative which stipulates that the water and sanitation sector must receive 6% of public expenditure 6% of external aid
 - Ensuring an enabling environment for improved coordination and monitoring at national, provincial, regional and commune levels
3. To raise awareness of the importance of potable water, sanitation and hygiene and their links to disease and poverty and to identify key development agents at decentralised levels (teachers, health workers, religious leaders etc.) to raise awareness, mobilise and advocate for the adoption of an integrated approach regarding water, sanitation and hygiene.
4. To integrate sanitation and hygiene promotion into all existing water projects
5. To ensure that from now until 2015 that all primary school children adopt the three key hygiene behaviours and that all schools are equipped with water, facilities for hand washing and latrines for boys and girls.
6. Support the government to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for access to potable water and adequate sanitation.

Key activities achieved and planned related to each of the key areas above areas are illustrated in Table 2.

While the Diorano-WASH coalition is extremely active, it does not have any legal status as yet. This has not proved problematic to date. The campaign is clearly mentioned in the PRSP and the presidency is held by the Directorate of Water and Sanitation in the Ministry of Energy and Mines which has the legal authority required and is mandated to work towards achieving the MDGs in water and sanitation. Each entity within the coalition has its own legal status.

The current membership includes those traditionally involved with the water and sanitation sector; different Ministries (Ministry of Energy and Mines, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health), United Nations organisations (UNICEF,...), multi-lateral and bilateral development aid agencies (WB,USAID...), national and international NGOs (WaterAid, CARE international, Voary Salama, Miarintsoa..) and private sector (soap manufacturers). There are also a number of actors indirectly involved with the sector who have assisted including artists, journalists, designers etc. The presidency is held by the Ministry of Energy and Mines and the secretariat is assured by WaterAid. In future there are plans to work more with other strategic actors including the Ministry of Population, members of the media etc.

Table 1: Key activities achieved and planned in the national Diorano-WASH strategy:

	Activities to date (Sept 2002-Aug 2004)	Activities planned – short term	Activities planned – long term
Coordination and Monitoring	Setting up of steering committee, IEC committee and 4 regional Diorano-WASH committees	Setting up of 2 further regional Diorano WASH committees in Antananarivo province and strengthening of existing regional committees. Setting up monitoring and evaluation committee.	Setting up Diorano WASH regional and communal committees throughout the six provinces of Madagascar
Advocacy	Presentation of campaign to President and Prime Minister at launch of campaign; advocacy to raise profile of water and sanitation in PRSP; 'Sanitation the challenge – advocacy document as foundation to campaign; linked with development of national sanitation strategy; advocate for inclusion of sanitation and hygiene in all potable water interventions; Impact study; regional conferences to present the campaign and advocate for it to be taken up;	Inclusion of water and sanitation in MTF for Education and Health; monitoring of the place of water and sanitation in the implementation of the PRSP and initiative 20/20. advocate for inclusion of sanitation and hygiene in all potable water interventions. Advocate for the importance of water and sanitation as a key to reducing poverty at international levels through experiences from Madagascar. Advocacy document to come out of impact study;	advocate for inclusion of sanitation and hygiene in all potable water interventions. Advocate for the importance of water and sanitation as a key to reducing poverty at national and international levels.
Mobilisation and awareness raising	Awareness raising and mobilisation in communities and schools (through projects) on three key hygiene behaviours and management of water points and latrines and of the general public (through events, media) on three key hygiene behaviours. Mobilisation of regional committees;	Further work with communities, schools and general public through development projects, regional committees, key development actors, mass media, key events etc. Awareness raising and implementation of national sanitation strategy; encourage communes to include WASH in their commune development plans (PCD)	Further work with communities, schools and general public through development projects, regional committees, key development actors, mass media, key events etc..

Information Education and Communication (IEC)	Inventory of hygiene initiatives on-going in Madagascar; World Health Day hand washing demonstrations; Hygiene tools fair; World Water Day televised debate on diarrhoeal diseases; PHAST tools developed and distributed; posters for health centres and schools and banners for market places developed and distributed; KAP study	World Water Day children's photographic exhibition and competition; advocacy document from children's voices; Sanitation booklet/cards on latrine choices; media, events etc. Dissemination of KAP study findings;	Hygiene and sanitation events and materials; opportunities for exchange; media, events etc;
Partnership	Networking with major donors as their interest and role in the national campaign. Collaboration with Ministry of Education in schools initiative	Networking with other NGOs, major donors, private sector etc as their interest and role in the national campaign. Collaboration with Ministry of Health in health centres initiatives. Support to regional committees;	Networking with other ministries (e.g. Ministry of Population) NGOs, major donors, private sector etc to draw new members into the national campaign.
Capacity Building	Practical Sanplat workshop. 'Latrines in Madagascar' workshop, PHAST training for development actors in 4 regions, HAMS evaluation and training materials, participation in international WASH meetings.	Strengthening of regional capacities in existing committees; further training on low cost latrine technologies; further strengthening of capacities of key development actors;	Strengthening of capacities in new Diorano-WASH committees; spreading of knowledge on low cost latrine technologies;

Funding to carry out the activities has been raised from UNICEF, WaterAid, WSSCC, USAID and the British Embassy in Madagascar. Most of the specific proposals have been drawn up by the Secretariat with the agreement of the steering committee.

A number of committees exist within the Diorano-WASH campaign including the steering committee and the IEC committee at national level and four regional committees. In future there are plans to establish a monitoring and evaluation committee at national level, new regional and commune level committees and school committees. The details of the roles and responsibilities of each committee taken from the strategy document are found in annex 1.

The pilot project period for the national Diorano-WASH campaign is two years, after which a review is planned. Short-term and longer-term plans for future years appear in Table 1 above. The coalition will increase in size as the regional initiatives grow and other Ministries and development organisations come on board.

1.4 The outcomes: progression in water and sanitation?

Following the creation and development of the Diorano-WASH coalition in Madagascar a number of outcomes are apparent which are different to the situation before the coalition was formed. Through working together in the coalition, resources are pooled more and members are better informed and have a wider range of contacts than any single organisation. This has particularly facilitated the advocacy work. The process has been particularly empowering for the smaller organisations that have an equal voice at the table in decision making.

By increasing visibility of the problems of sanitation through the Diorano-WASH campaign, the public awareness and widespread public support that has been achieved reaches beyond what any single member could have achieved alone. Not only does combining efforts mean that the profile of the sector remains high and political will is strengthened but also coordination is improved, leading to a more coordinated effort to secure increased access to water and sanitation for the Malagasy people.

There are a number of beneficiaries of the creation of the Diorano-WASH coalition. The ultimate beneficiaries are the people of Madagascar as is clear from the commonly agreed goal that unites the coalition. In this pilot phase six regional committees also benefit from the coalition as they are being strengthened to work together towards increasing access. The member organisations must all also benefit to some degree in that the goals and objectives must serve their organisational agendas, making the coalition work an integral part of their own. This is important if the success and growth of the coalition is to be assured.

The Diorano-WASH coalition has made progress to date, having undertaken many activities and moved forward together in the 2-year pilot phase which started in 2003. However it is too early to measure how the coalition has created or contributed to greater outputs on the Millennium water and sanitation targets. The monitoring and evaluation committee is to be established in 2004, as the coalition is very conscious that this in the plans has been lacking to date. A review is also planned at the end of the pilot phase which should assist in the planning of the next phase and in laying down clear benchmarks as to the achievements of the coalition in progress towards the MDGs. No negative impacts of the coalition are felt to date. Some of the initial teething problems are described under 2.2 Functioning of coalitions below.

2. The way change came about

2.1 Mechanisms of change

The catalyst or critical decision point to launch the national Diorano-WASH campaign and establish the coalition in September 2002 was the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, where the President of Madagascar made commitments to achieving the water and sanitation MDGs. The founding members of the coalition were aware of the enormous needs in the sector and, having already worked together on a number of issues, were well aware that by coordinating their efforts, much more could be achieved together than by any single member alone.

2.2 Functioning of coalitions

One of the initial tasks of the steering committee was to draw together the Diorano-WASH strategy through a participative process with the wider general assembly. Having a written strategy which is genuinely owned by all has proved to be extremely important in the functioning of the coalition. It has not only laid out the agreed goal and objectives and assisted in transferring the objectives into activities, but has also helped active members to explain the campaign within their organisations, to new strategic partners joining the group as well as to regional committees starting up.

The steering committee meetings are participative in nature, being at the same time focused and dynamic with clear decision making processes. Meetings are therefore lively, enjoyable and interesting for all, maintaining enthusiasm for the campaign. It is seen in some coalitions that holding weekly meetings with a standard agenda can lead to a feeling of routine and boredom among members, rather than meeting when there are specific issues on the table that need everyone's attention and input.

As has been mentioned, founding members had worked in the informal sectoral platform. The advantages were that trust was already built, as was an understanding of how the different organisations function and make decisions as well as their constraints. A group identity was thus quickly built and the common purpose easily agreed. The fact that the coalition is diverse in membership is a strength, bringing together many different capacities and experiences, making it possible to work in a complimentary way. This promotes innovation, and encourages the organisations as well as the individuals in them to think more creatively.

The coalition is open to all. New members who have joined since the inception have either approached the coalition as its work is in line with their organisational goals or have been strategically targeted as their contribution is seen as important to future actions. An example of a targeted partner is the Ministry of Education which is vital to the success of the Diorano-WASH initiatives in schools. Sustainability and dynamism of the coalition is ensured not only by the genuine commitment of members and enjoyment gained from working in a motivated group, but also by bringing in new members and fresh ideas.

In this pilot phase of the campaign several basic studies have been completed including an inventory of organisations involved in hygiene promotion and a KAP (Knowledge, attitude, practice) study. A number of short term activities or 'quick wins' have also been achieved (hygiene tools fair, PHAST training and posters), which have served to build confidence and commitment both in the coalition and in the public to prepare the way for greater tasks ahead. The regional committees are currently being strengthened to unite efforts at decentralised levels in potable water and sanitation access.

While short term or 'quick win' activities have been reviewed and lessons learned, the overall progress is planned to be reviewed in December 2004 when performance will be measured against the strategy. In order to improve accountability and measure performance in a more systematic way, a monitoring and evaluation committee has to be put in place which will draw up indicators and assist the different committees to monitor their performance against an annual plan drawn up from the strategy. More attention needs to be given to establishing a baseline and setting up an evaluation system in future to measure impacts of the campaign. This is a weakness of the campaign to date.

The Diorano-WASH coalition has come through some initial teething problems, which fortunately have not had a major negative impact on the functioning of the coalition. These included some members trying to impose ways of working, their organisational logo etc on the campaign. If only the donor logos are on the materials, such as the campaign posters, this can be disempowering in terms of distributing credit fairly to people from other organisations that have put experience, time and energy into the end result. Fortunately with open discussion it was agreed that each organisation has something different to offer and all must be respected. Individual organisations that always desire to maintain their own identity and are not able to negotiate this can be problematic.

A further obstacle to the effective functioning of the coalition was the lack of initial commitment of some members who attended sporadically, or organisations who sent either different representatives to meetings without adequate briefing or individuals who do not have the authority to make a commitment or decision on behalf of their organisation. These were time-wasting and frustrating for others in the group.

Communication between members of the coalition is not always easy. Not everyone has easy access to a telephone or to e-mails within their organisation. The e-mail system occasionally also malfunctions leading to miscommunication and frustration.

As the coalition grows, a potential problem is possible internal conflicts, particularly if different members don't have a clear understanding of each others agendas, approaches and constraints or if new members come with a sense of self-importance rather than a team approach. This can easily lead to misunderstandings and a drop in enthusiasm by existing members. A further potential difficulty, particularly in bringing new Ministries into the coalition, is understanding their complex agendas and structures in order to communicate with them in the most effective way.

3. Why did the change occur?

3.1 The reasons for change

As mentioned earlier, the Diorano-WASH coalition was created on the launch of the Diorano-WASH campaign in Madagascar in 10 September 2004, five days after the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The President of Madagascar, Mr Marc Ravalomanana, made his first official overseas visit since coming to power to participate in the Summit. There he made a commitment to working towards the Millennium water and sanitation targets along with many other world leaders.

Sir Richard Jolly, the WSSCC chair, visited Madagascar directly after the Johannesburg summit to launch the campaign with the Prime Minister of Madagascar, Jacques Sylla, with the backing of the President. Politically, the timing of the launch was optimal, with the PRSP being finalised, the new government keen to show results and public interest in the recent presidential visit overseas.

In the build up to the Johannesburg Summit, a growing recognition of the importance of improved sanitation, both internationally and within Madagascar meant that various members of the coalition were becoming increasingly interested in the question of access to adequate sanitation and therefore this had already become part of their organisational agendas. The forming of the coalition was therefore driven primarily by the need to increase access to water and sanitation in Madagascar.

At the time of forming the Diorano-WASH coalition discussions had already started regarding the national sanitation strategy, the document 'Sanitation-The Challenge' had already been drawn up and the PRSP was being developed. Opportunities were there to advocate. The timing was optimal politically and the membership was ready unite around commonly agreed issues in the water and sanitation sector.

One of the internal drivers of the coalition is the role of individuals within the coalition. The presidency is dynamic and members are active, showing genuine commitment and enthusiasm to achieve the strategy. It must be noted that the establishment of the coalition was not linked to the availability of funding, which has probably been a positive aspect of its sustainability in the longer term.

3.2 Why did the coalition operate the way it did

Extremely important in the credibility and success of the coalition was the very public launch by the Prime Minister with the backing of the President of the Republic. The firm commitment and backing of the lead Ministry, the Direction of Water and Sanitation in the Ministry of Energy and Mines, has also been instrumental in taking the campaign from strength to strength. It is accepted as a national initiative and is clearly mentioned by name in the PRSP.

The members of the coalition had already worked together and were highly committed. If starting a coalition with a complete role-call of all possible stakeholders, there is a risk that commitment will not be high from the start, trust will have to be built and significant number of these will be members in name only. Absence and lack of commitment of such members only demotivates others. In the Madagascar experience it was not necessary to have every possible entity on board from the beginning. Strategic partners can be brought in later in the process.

A clear strategy document was drawn up in order to establish the framework of the campaign from very early on. This gave the coalition a clear identity and assisted in advocating for new strategic members to join. It has also been helpful in fundraising efforts.

Through starting with activities which were of short duration with clear results or 'quick wins', the coalition was able to present some concrete evidence of its ability to work effectively. This gave further credibility in the campaign in the eyes of the public, the government, the donor community and to new strategic partners. This has strengthened the coalition to prepare it for more difficult tasks ahead.

3.3 Why did the coalition lead to results

The coalition led to results due to a clear strategy serving as the source of planning easily accepted by all, firm commitment of the membership who are willing to put time, effort and resources into making the coalition work and a conducive political environment

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Lessons on what happened

From the experience of establishing and working through the Diorano-WASH coalition in Madagascar a number of key recommendations regarding 'what happened' can be drawn.

1. *Trust:*

It was important for coalition members to have a good understanding of and respect for how the different organisations work, how they make decisions, what their constraints are etc. This is vital if open discussion, real commitment and close collaboration are to be achieved.

2. *Clear strategy:*

The clear comprehensive strategy was drawn up by the coalition in a participative way, spelling out purpose, goals and direction, giving the campaign rootedness within the membership and the coalition a clear identity. The strategy is broad and the basis of the campaign is simple so that a wide range of actors can identify with and adopt it.

3. *An integral part of organisational work:*

The goals and objectives of the strategy are integral to the work of the diverse members and meet their different interests or agendas. This is important if they are to remain committed to the common goal and active in the coalition.

4. *Good monitoring system*

A good monitoring system is very important if results are to be measured, corrective action taken and future lessons learned. This is an area that needs strengthening in the Diorano-WASH coalition.

4.2 Lessons on how things happened

From the experience of establishing and working through the Diorano-WASH coalition in Madagascar a number of key recommendations regarding 'how things happened' can be drawn.

1. *Good communication and wide consultation is vital to ensure ownership.*

In establishing the strategy, the consultations were initially very wide with the General Assembly to capture many ideas and experiences. This resulted in genuine ownership of the document among coalition members.

2. *Efficient and effective meetings*

By having focused, dynamic and lively meetings with clear leadership and clear decision making, they are often most productive and can even be fun! It is important to have an enthusiastic, dynamic membership.

3. *Strategic growth of coalitions*

Strategically targeting new members to join the coalition is important. They bring much needed expertise and experience, but also add dynamism and keep the coalition moving forward.

4. *Communications*

Even if some members are not on the e-mail or telephone, remember to contact everyone – not just those who are easy to contact!

5. *'Quick wins'*

From the Diorano-WASH coalition experience, it is recommended to include in the activities some short term activities with concrete results or 'quick wins'. These early successes allow the different coalition members to get used to working together and 'gel' as a group. They boost confidence and morale as results are seen. Examples of quick wins included a hygiene tools fair, PHAST training and production of posters for schools and health centres.

4.3 Lessons on why things happened

From the experience of establishing and working through the Diorano-WASH coalition in Madagascar a number of key recommendations regarding 'why things happened' can be drawn.

1. *The importance of the goal*

Access to both clean water and sanitation is extremely low in Madagascar, therefore different actors in the coalition were able to agree quickly on the importance of the common goal uniting them all.

2. *The external environment:*

External factors played an important role in the success of the campaign, particularly at its inception. The issue of sanitation was becoming more visible in international fora. The launch of the Diorano-WASH campaign took place with the approval of the President and the Prime Minister directly after Madagascar made a commitment at the World Summit in Johannesburg to work towards improved access to potable water and sanitation as stated in the MDGs. The PRSP was also being finalised in the country. The time was optimal in Madagascar to gain political will for initiatives to work towards achieving the MDGs in water and sanitation.

3. *Clear leadership*

The Direction of Water and Sanitation in the Ministry of Energy and Mines was willing immediately to take up the leadership and has played a dynamic role in the success of the coalition.

4. *Not necessary to have all stakeholders on board at the start*

Commitment, energy, good communication, time and resources are needed from all members from the beginning to maintain strong coalition. If all potential actors are not convinced from

the start, it is better that they join later than are just members on paper, potentially demotivating others.

5. *Strengthen throughout the process*

Build credibility through actions and strengthen coalition through strategic growth and capacity building to ensure that it works effectively.

Although the Diorano-WASH coalition in Madagascar is relatively young and is still in its pilot phase, the experience of uniting efforts through the coalitions has been a positive experience for all concerned to date. Coalitions have an important role to play in achieving access to potable water and adequate sanitation as no single entity will achieve major progress alone.

Capacity to deliver clean water and adequate sanitation in a sustainable way at the rate required to approach the Millennium development targets needs both combining of efforts and building of capacity, particularly at decentralised levels. In the Diorano-WASH campaign, the decentralised committees are very much part of the coalition.

Given the remaining 10 years towards the MDG targets on water and sanitation, coalitions need to be formed that not only reach further in terms of providing access to water and sanitation at district and regional level, but also that can provide a powerful, united voice for the sector to keep it high on the national and international agenda. Although the enormous need for access to water and sanitation is indisputable in Madagascar, the Diorano-WASH coalition has to constantly advocate to the government and to the donor community to keep the profile of the sector high on their agendas. In a country with many pressing development needs, it is easy for their attention to shift elsewhere.