WASH Advocacy Challenge
Six Month Interim Report

The world is healthier and more prosperous than ever, yet there remain 768 million people without access to safe drinking water, and 2.5 billion people without a safe place to go to the bathroom. The global water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) challenge continues to exist primarily because of a lack of political will.

WASH Advocates, Fundación Avina, and the Freshwater Action Network are pleased to offer this six-month report on the WASH Advocacy Challenge, an effort that provided nine small grants directly to self-empowered civil society organizations and networks focused on improving access to WASH by creating and strengthening political will in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Politics can be challenging, yet if there are to be sustainable and scaled solutions to the world’s most pressing development challenges, political leaders in developing and developed countries must engage, commit, and deliver.

WASH Advocacy Challenge grants a) support local and national networks to influence decision makers who create policies, laws, regulations and budgets, and b) catalyze change by strengthening political will – country by country, community by community – for safe, affordable, and sustainable access to WASH. Grantees’ efforts focus specifically on advocacy activities for WASH, including:

- train communities, community leaders, networks, and local water boards and associations on their rights and responsibilities regarding WASH laws, budgets, and policies;
- educate national and local political leaders on WASH;
- strengthen policy dialogues between communities, civil society groups and decision makers;
- urge increased funding for government-funded WASH programs; and
- support high-quality WASH messaging in local news media.

The nine WASH Advocacy Challenge grantees had notable, early successes in the first six months of the Challenge. The two successful efforts highlighted below demonstrate how Challenge funds strengthened interactions between civil society and governments for positive WASH outcomes at national and local levels.

For more information about the WASH Advocacy Challenge, please contact John Oldfield at joldfield@WASHadvocates.org.
Success stories from the field: Ghana and Nepal

Community Action Improves Water Delivery near Accra, Ghana

**Challenges:**
Teshie is a low income community located in southwest Accra, Ghana. It is one of four communities in which our grantee, the Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS) is working with WASH Advocacy Challenge funds. A population density of more than 2,000 people per square kilometer and a lack of infrastructure make Teshie both a challenge and an opportunity for safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene services. Teshie's water, supplied by Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL), is intermittent and unpredictable, and in order to meet its water needs, the community often accesses services from secondary providers – tanker and cart services. Despite this, consumers are billed for unconsumed piped water.

**Approach:**
To address these problems, CONIWAS trained Teshie’s community WASH Committee in management and advocacy. The local WASH Committee then arranged a meeting with GWCL to address key barriers to its service delivery including community mapping and accurate water billing. The representative of GWCL concluded the meeting by thanking the community and the WASH Committee for creating space for the discussion to take place, and expressed GWCL’s readiness for continuous collaboration with the community.

**Outcomes:**
The WASH Committee, community members, and GWCL agreed on the following:

- A water delivery timetable for different segments of the community - the WASH Committee will monitor and provide feedback to the service provider;
- Consumers will return any incorrect water bills for appropriate corrections;
- The WASH Committee and the community will monitor illegal connections and siphoning, and report cases to GWCL/Police; and
- GWCL is now integrating its service map and the community’s map to enhance service delivery.

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**Water Utility Persuaded to Bring Piped Water to Community in Ratnanagar, Nepal**

**Challenges:**
Women are under-recognized stakeholders in the WASH sector in Nepal, and community utility officials have traditionally been reluctant to address drinking water challenges in informal settlements.

**Approach:**
WASH Advocacy Challenge funds helped launch the newly-formed Women’s Alliance for WASH Advocacy – **Maitree** – which started in June 2013 with a capacity-building program on management and WASH advocacy. The training brought women together from different parts of Nepal, giving them a platform through which to share their experiences and build confidence to raise their voices for change in the WASH sector.

**Outcomes:**
After the training, one of the participants – Urmila Paswan – returned to her community in Ratnanagar (about 150km from Kathmandu) to gather women to discuss their WASH needs and encourage them to unite their voices. Urmila also brought back important knowledge from the Maitree training that has encouraged community members to practice better hygiene and grey water disposal near water points.

Following the community’s subsequent meeting with the water utility to express its demands, the chief of the utility informed them he would supply water when the community paid for connection charges and tariffs. The community agreed and the utility provided a water point for every three to five households.

"As soon as I reached home I gathered women of my community and discussed about WASH issue that I learnt. Since we did not have access to drinking water I tried to motivate them to raise their voice for water in the community. We gathered to raise our voice for water at the water supply utility of the area."

Urmila Paswan, Maitree

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Women in Sanitation video produced by Maitree