

Fostering WaSH marketing exchange systems in informal Melanesian communities:

Melanesian WaSH policy environments to foster inclusive WaSH marketing exchanges

POLICY BRIEF

Target of this brief: This brief provides guidance to enabling actors (people in civil society, external support agencies, community governance structures, utilities, national and local government, the private sector, and academia) who design and review WaSH policies.

Purpose of this brief: The WaSH policies of Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands were assessed to determine their strengths and weaknesses in fostering and supporting sustainable, effective and inclusive WaSH marketing exchanges of all types (see Figure 1). WaSH enabling actors can use this guidance to improve existing policies and generate new policies that improves WaSH outcomes in urban and peri-urban informal settlements in Melanesia.

Recommendation 1: Policies intending to improve WaSH should not prescribe specific marketing exchanges (such as market-based) or implementation approaches, but should aim to foster all marketing exchanges by prescribing support for functions and assets of marketing exchange systems.

Recommendation 2: Policies that intend to improve WaSH should be country-wide to ensure no populations are overlooked.

Background

WaSH in urban and peri-urban Melanesia

Urban migration for employment and education has substantially increased urban and peri-urban populations in Melanesian countries. The low affordability of urban housing, combined with the complex and often conflict-prone land tenure system in the region, has led to an increase in informal settlements¹.

Informal settlements in Melanesia are often on urban fringes, are not planned by government, are on private, government or custom-owned land so that residents have insecure land tenure, and lack basic infrastructure¹. Residents generally earn little or no income. Some settlements are on the boundaries of city council and provincial administrations, and so, fall between urban and rural policies. Their rapid growth has exacerbated the challenge for WaSH service provision¹. Most settlements lack connections to mains water and sewerage lines, due to the land tenure, and cannot access council solid waste collection programs. Water-related diseases are common, leading to compromised health and wellbeing¹.

Research approach

Research data used in preparing this policy brief was collected from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu through (i) a review of policies and plans relating to WaSH; (ii) eighty-one key informant interviews conducted with government, non-government organisation (NGO), multilateral and academic enabling actors from March 2013 to March 2016, and (iii) several multi-stakeholder workshops.

We used our framework of WaSH marketing exchange systems (Figure 1) to assess whether the existing WaSH policies of Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands are supportive of inclusive WaSH by fostering all types of marketing exchanges for all populations. Vanuatu is not included as it did not have a WaSH policy at the time of this research. The WaSH marketing exchanges system framework specifies the roles of enabling actors in performing particular *functions* according to *formal and informal rules*, which create certain *assets*, or features, that support all types of marketing exchanges. For more information, refer to *Research Brief: Fostering WaSH marketing exchanges in informal Melanesian settlements*².

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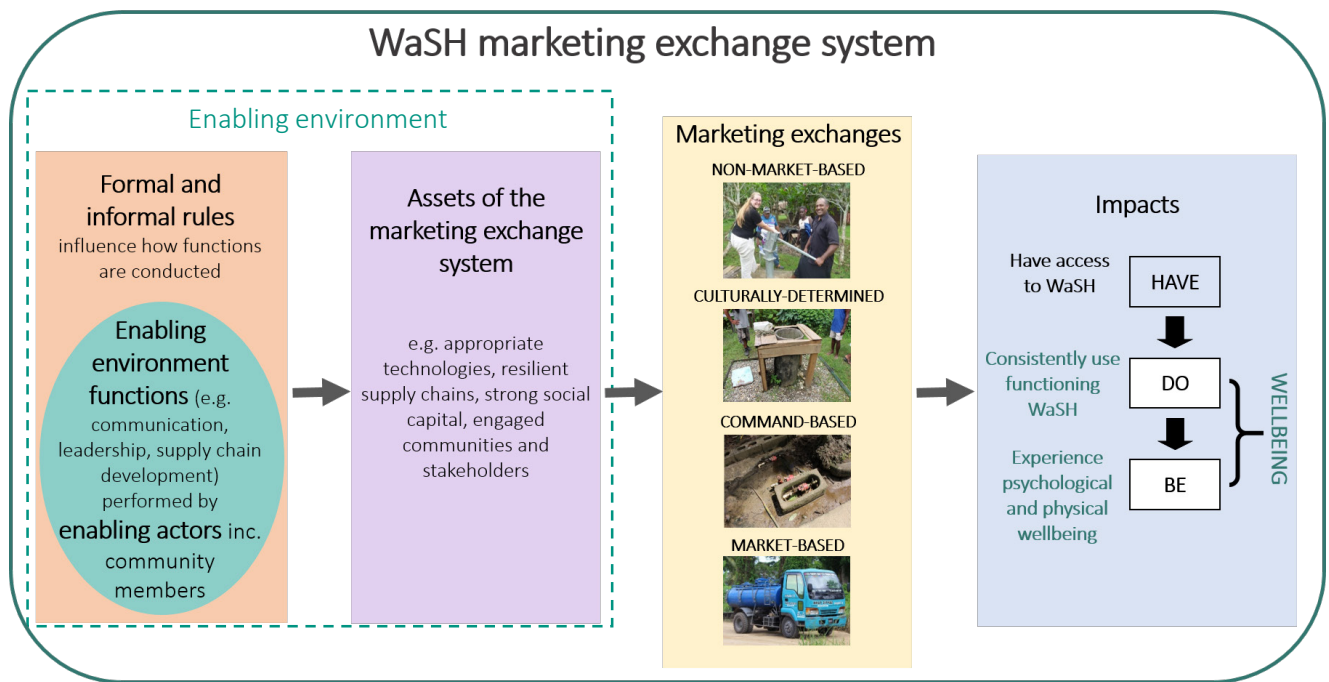


Figure 1: The WaSH marketing exchange system. WaSH marketing exchange systems are comprised of functions, performed by actors using rules, which creates assets that enable all types of WaSH marketing exchanges, which should generate not only access to WaSH, but also wellbeing impacts. Note, Command-based and Culturally-determined exchanges are also non-market-based exchanges; for the purposes of this communication 'non-market' refers to other types of non-market exchanges, such as donations and charitable exchanges.

Key findings

Key finding 1: WaSH policies that specify particular types of WaSH implementation approaches or marketing exchanges may hinder inclusive WaSH

The specific physical, social and economic situation of residents in informal settlements influenced the types and ways that they accessed and used WaSH services and products. There are four main types of WaSH marketing exchanges (refer Figure 1 and related Programming Brief³ for more details), and all of these were in existence in informal settlements, which offered flexibility to residents in how they accessed and used WaSH products and services. For example, people within one settlement acquired drinking water from the same source, a water utility, in different ways, such as directly purchasing from the utility with a connection at their household, or obtaining the same water from their neighbours' water connection (on-selling of water). These represent different types of marketing exchanges (utility connection: command-based exchange; water via neighbour's connection: culturally-determined and market-based exchange). Sanitation and hygiene products and services are similarly exchanged by residents of informal settlements in ways that do not involve the exchange of money (i.e. non-market-based exchanges such as donations or subsidies from civil society organisations, and culturally-determined exchanges with other residents).

Policies which require a particular type of WaSH marketing exchange do not allow for consumer-flexibility in how they access the WaSH service or product, and therefore may exclude some populations on geographic or financial reasons. For example, if water from the utility

is only available to an account-holder – the household that has the water connection – meaning that on-selling of that water is not allowed, or inhibited by high water uses charges, then other households that cannot afford their own connection will be prevented from using water from the utility. Similarly, if a sanitation policy combines minimum standards for toilet construction and requires the purchase of building materials with a strict non-subsidy market-based approach, some residents of informal settlements may be excluded from improving their sanitation because they cannot afford the specified building materials.

An alternative approach is for policies to specify the conduct of *functions* that support a range of WaSH marketing exchanges. We have identified 22 functions that should be performed by enabling actors, including community members; if these functions are conducted well, the enabling environment will be strengthened through creation of *assets*, or features, that will support all types of marketing exchanges (Figure 1). Refer to *Policy Brief: Enabling environments that foster sustainable and inclusive WaSH marketing exchanges*⁴.

Key finding 2: WaSH policies that only address certain populations may leave some populations overlooked by the policy environment.

Similarly, WaSH policies that specify a particular implementation approach, or require a specific type of marketing exchange, such as non-subsidised community sanitation or command-based water utility connections, tend to benefit the population unevenly.

The response to this problem has been for policies to focus on subpopulations, for example, rural or urban

populations, where it is hoped the specified WaSH approach will be mostly effective. However, these subpopulations of consumers are very diverse and need flexibility in how they access WaSH services and products, and such policies inevitably exclude some of the population they intend to benefit.

In addition, the use of multiple policies to attempt to cover all of the population, such as complementing a rural WaSH policy with an urban WaSH policy, creates a risk that some populations will not be addressed by any policy. In particular, there is no clear divide between urban and rural populations; some people, especially in informal settlements, live on the boundary of towns, and fall under neither urban nor rural policies, and are therefore overlooked and unsupported by policies.

Key finding 3: WaSH policies in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea are challenged in achieving inclusive WaSH because they focus on some

subpopulations and don't allow sufficient flexibility in how people access and use WaSH services and products.

Table 1 summarises the scope, marketing exchange system assets, functions and rules outlined in the WaSH policies for Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Vanuatu is not included as it does not currently have a WaSH policy. The Fiji WaSH policy is currently being reviewed.

In the Pacific, WaSH policies have historically applied to a segment of the population only, for example, rural, or urban. As identified above, the consequence of this approach to policy-making is that certain populations remain unserved. In addition, the policies do not fully support all components of the enabling environment (functions, rules, and marketing exchange assets (see related Policy Brief⁴ for a detailed description of functions, rules and assets).

Table 1: Analysis of current WaSH policies in Melanesia. Vanuatu is not included as it currently does not have a WaSH policy.

	Fiji	Papua New Guinea	Solomon Islands
Geographic scope	Rural	Rural, peri-urban, urban	Rural
WaSH scope	<p><i>Water:</i> focus of policy.</p> <p><i>Sanitation:</i> seems to be an afterthought. The policy states that all Water Supply Management Plans (WSMP) must include appropriate sanitation, but the focus is on water as the name implies</p> <p><i>Hygiene:</i> only mentioned as part of the definition of safe water, which states that safe water must be suitable for personal hygiene in addition to consumption.</p>	<p><i>Water:</i> focus on adequate quantity and quality meeting national standards.</p> <p><i>Sanitation:</i> focused on definitions of safe, convenient, open defecation free and total sanitation.</p> <p><i>Hygiene:</i> broad goals for handwashing with soap</p>	<p><i>Water:</i> focus is on technologies with some mention of community management.</p> <p><i>Sanitation:</i> focus is on technologies and approaches to sanitation behavior change.</p> <p><i>Hygiene:</i> focus is on approaches to hygiene behavior change</p>
Marketing system assets: strengths	Only policy to specifically address accountability	Evidence-based decision making, transparent decisions and activities. Only policy to include resilient supply chains	Investment in innovation (O&M only). Only policy to consider socially inclusive products and services
	Appropriate technologies, competent workforce, engaged communities and stakeholders		
Marketing system assets: gaps	Appropriate consumer financing, efficient budgeting and disbursement, evidence-based decision making, investment in innovation, transparent decisions and activities, socially inclusive products and services, resilient supply chains	Socially inclusive products and services, accountable organisations and individuals	Resilient supply chains, accountable organisations and individuals
	Consumer protection, strong social capital		
Rules	Prescribe a specific approach - WSMP	Focused on setting definitions and targets. Rules to be more defined in strategic plans	Prescribe a specific approach - CLTS or PHAST

	Fiji	Papua New Guinea	Solomon Islands
Functions: strengths	Assessment	Collaboration, communication, coordination, providing technical support, strategic planning.	Collaboration, communication, coordination, develop and maintain data repositories, human resources planning, leadership, policy development, providing technical support, strategic planning
	Monitoring, education and capacity building, financing, management, regulation, service delivery		
Functions: gaps	Human resources planning and provision of technical support not included. Very limited inclusion of collaboration, communication, coordination, developing and maintaining data repositories, leadership, and policy development	Granting permissions/approvals. Focus is on financing and service delivery	Develop and maintain data repositories, leadership, strategic planning. Focus is on financing and service delivery
	Enforcement, bridging function, risk management		
Summary	Focus on rural areas, water, and a specific approach means that this policy is very limited.	Comprehensive both in terms of geography and WaSH. Policy includes most functions and marketing system assets. The bridging function does not appear in the policy, but is critical for allowing feedback between enabling actors and from enabling actors to community.	Comprehensive in terms of WaSH but limited to rural geography. Functions and marketing system assets are generally included, but the focus on specific approaches can limit the effective exercise of all necessary functions in practice.

References

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3. Barrington, D.J., Sridharan, S., Souter, R.T., Saunders, S.G., Shields, K.F., Meo, S., Bartram, J. (2017). Programmers' Brief: Building on existing marketing exchanges in Melanesian informal settlements to improve WaSH. International WaterCentre, Brisbane, Australia.
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Research project and reports

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This research received ethics approval from Monash University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of the South Pacific, Divine Word University and the relevant authorities in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

Want to know more?

For more information, please contact Project Manager, Dr Regina Souter, at r.souter@watercentre.org or visit www.watercentre.org/portfolio/pacific-wash-marketing

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