# Learning Retreat 2011

## Report from External Learning Facilitator

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Institute of Development Studies

May 2011 Version 2

For triple-s International Workstream, IRC

# Learning Retreat Report
# Triple-S International Work Stream
# External Learning Facilitator

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## Contents

## 1    Background

From the Terms of Reference:- "The International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC) is leading a six-year multi-country learning initiative to improve water supply to the rural poor. Sustainable Services at Scale (Triple-S) seeks to move away from project-based, stand-alone implementation of water systems towards indefinitely sustainable rural water services delivered at scale. Working with national and international partners, Triple-S aims to bring about a re-appraisal of how development assistance to the rural water supply sector is designed and planned by both governments and developing partners.

"To achieve the above mentioned change or paradigm shift Triple-S is organised in three work streams: the Uganda work stream, the Ghana work stream and the International Work Stream (IWS) which aims to influence the policies and funding practices of international development partners to enable and support the delivery of sustainable rural water services in countries. The aim of the International work stream's efforts is to influence development partners in three key areas relating to i) their institutional **policies,** ii) **operational practices** and iii) **funding** patterns to support the paradigm shift from infrastructure to service delivery approaches.

"The monitoring and learning in Triple-S will be documented in two narratives:

- Narrative one documents the (factors hindering or enabling) change towards sustainable service delivery at scale i.e. the content or impact of Triple-S.
- Narrative two accounts for the work of Triple-S itself; its specific way of achieving impact and change. From the recognition that there are many ways to achieve the impact of sustainable services at scale, it is important to understand if and how the way Triple-S has chosen is effective. This way has a couple of characteristics which other projects may not have or have only partially e.g. the use of learning alliances, the use of outcomes based management, the networking and working through existing systems and platforms instead of creating new project-based systems and platforms etc. Most importantly the ways of Triple-S are characterised by four values: relevance, responsiveness, creating leverage and leaving legacy (see Annex with reporting template for narrative two). This specific Triple-S way to enable the change could also be called the "theory of change of Triple-S".

"For learning and reflection about narrative two i.e. is Triple-S using the right approaches (theory of change) and is it applying these approaches well, Triple-S will contract external learning facilitators (ELF) who will support the outcomes based work streams to reflect upon and improve the way they work and enable change. These external learning facilitators have a more independent position which is important for good and critical reflection and learning of the work stream teams. The external learning facilitators will provide inputs into the reflection process of the work streams by consulting external stakeholders or clients of the work stream and also by using its own experience and conceptual understanding of change processes; the external learning facilitators have been selected for having this experience and understanding. The reflection will take place in regular learning retreats facilitated by the external learning facilitator, where the work stream teams will be taken out of their daily operations to critically reflect and adapt their ways of working.

## 2    Methodology

"The specific tasks for IDS as the external learning facilitator of the International Work Stream for the planning year that will end on 31 May 2011 are:

- To get a sufficient understanding of the monitoring and learning in Triple-S, in particular the learning that will take place in narrative two to be able to perform the role of external learning facilitator for the International Work Stream effectively and with quality

- To consult with a maximum of ten external stakeholders or clients of the International Work Stream about the way Triple-S is enabling the change towards sustainable service delivery at scale

- To facilitate the learning retreat of the International Work Stream team

- To write a concept note on how IDS plans to articulate the Triple-S theory of change, which outputs will come out of this process and how these outputs will be used

"The specific outputs for this contract, to be delivered before 31 May 2011, are:

- A report with feedback from the consultation with a maximum of ten stakeholders /clients of the International Work Stream

- Facilitation of the Learning Retreat

- A programme and a report of the Learning Retreat

- A concept note on the process to articulate the theory of change, the outputs of this process and the use of these outputs

This report documents our reflections at the Learning Retreat.  It presents the key ideas emerging, rather than being a complete account of all activities.

## 3    Theory of Change

The key element of our day together at the learning retreat (other than narrative 1, and the raw stakeholder feedback)  was the Theory of Change.  Theory of Change (TOC) is important because it allows us to be clear about outcomes and the process chain of results that get us to those outcomes. This is not a linear process, but it is important to rationalise the choices we make.  It is also important for accountability – to donors, partners, beneficiaries, staff.  By describing our theory of change, we can make our assumptions transparent and open to challenge, as well as identify indicators or progress markers for each step along the way.  These exercises are about making choices within limited resources, and framing the project for our stakeholders should they enquire.

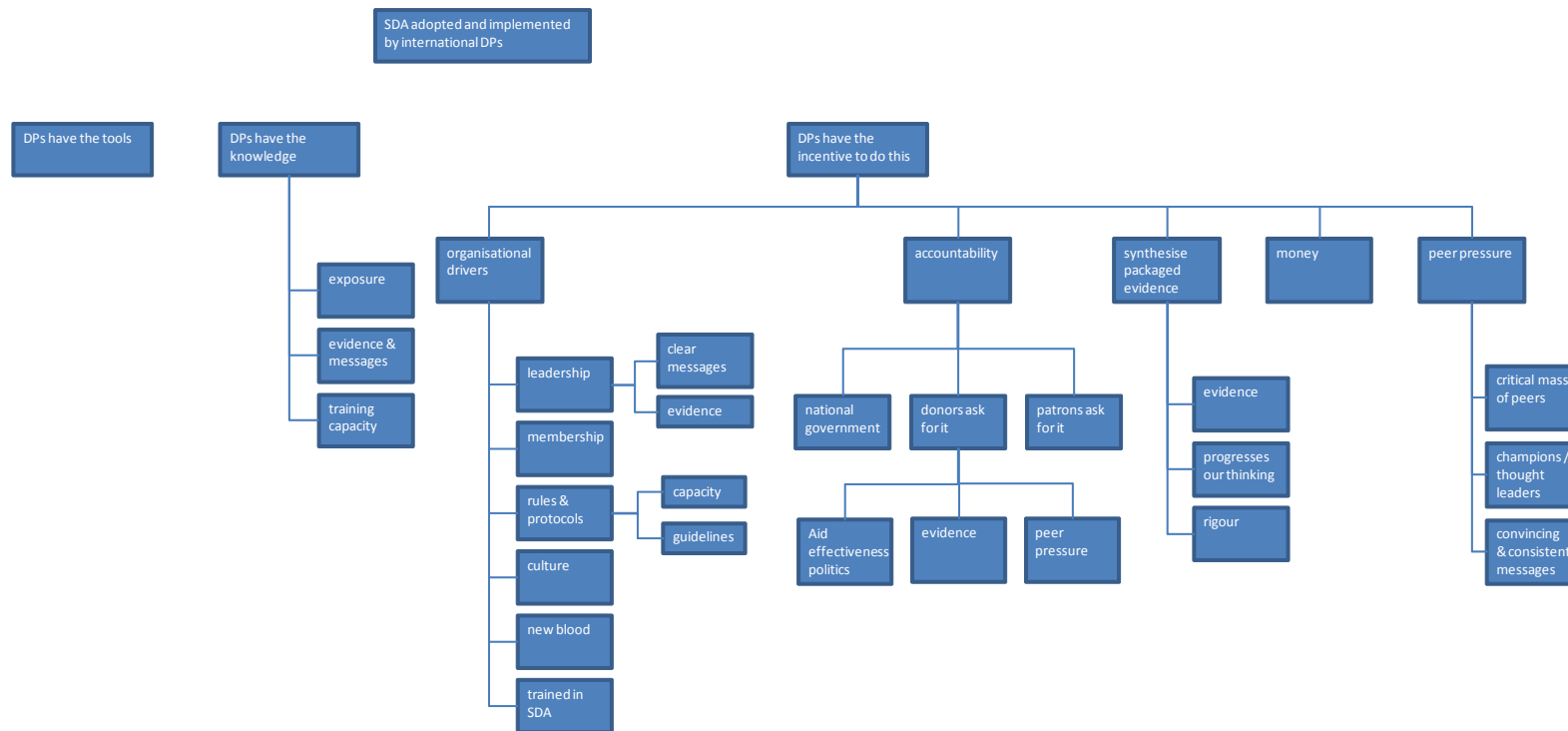After a brief introduction the theory of change principles, two groups attempted to create draft flow charts.

*Figure - Theory of Change – Group 1*

LONG TERM GOAL:
Sector shift from
infrastructure to
sustainable long
term service

(1) DPs adopt SDA
(bilaterals, banks,
multinationals)

(2) NGOs adopt SDA
in planning &
implementation)

(3) Increase share in
financing for full LCC

Relationship led

value led

champions are
mobilising change in
their organisation

coalition for
change created

work with
them

examples / awareness
of good SDA practice

identified
potential
champions

examples /
awareness of
orgnisational change

people convinced of
the need for change

partial
understanding

conceptual
building blocks

evidence based

make visible

evidence building

full understanding of
how sector operates

clear understanding
of problems to org.
change (political
economy)

?WASH COST?

hire organisational
change professional

collating equivalent
examples

study several
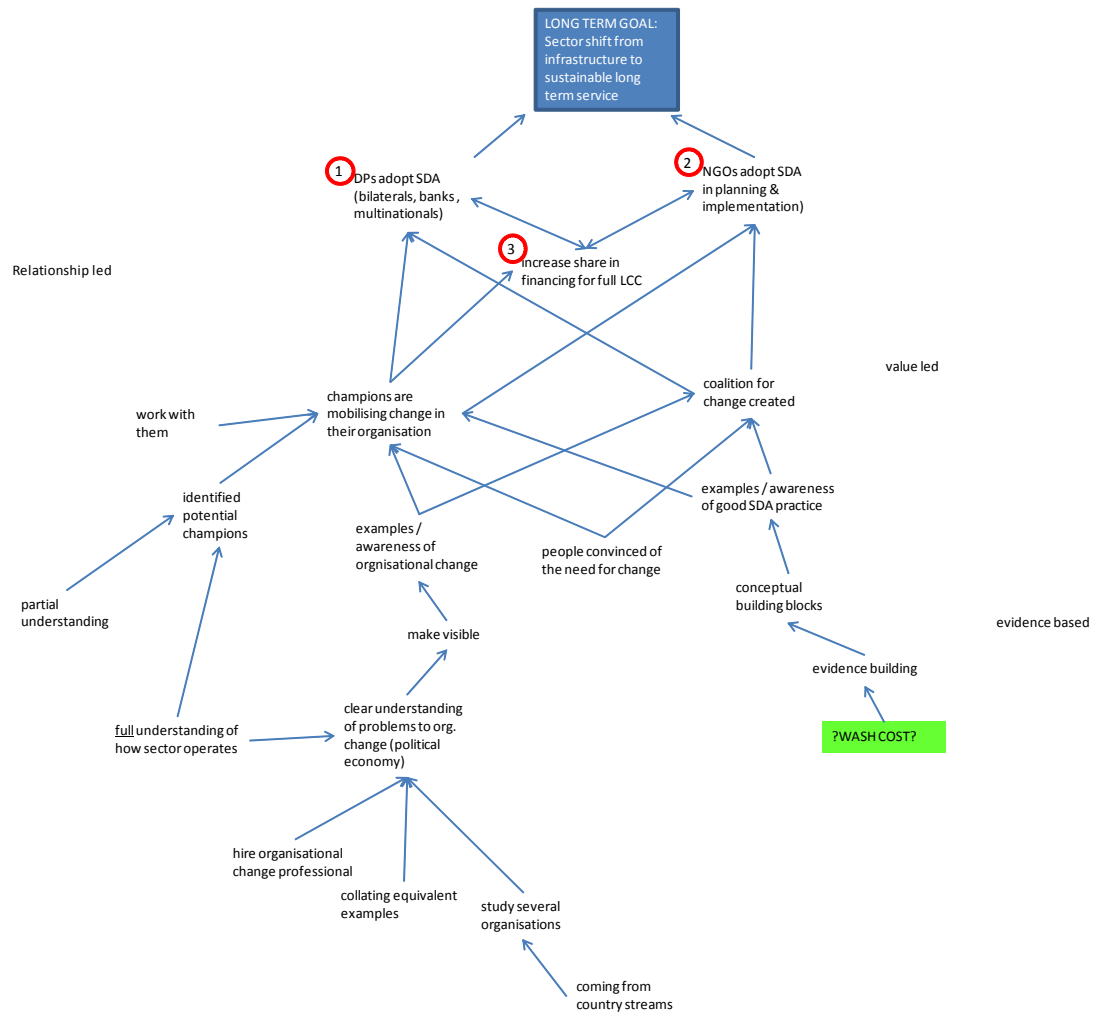organisations

coming from
country streams

*Figure -Theory of Change – Group 2*

### 3.1    Theory of Change – Group 2

The focus of the discussion was on the Group 2 diagram – both groups had similar elements, and the focus of the discussion was arbitrary.  There were a number of features that came out of this diagram that are worth documenting.

### 3.2    TripleS influencing strategies

What is clear from the diagram is that the process TripleS is engaged with can be framed as a social transformation.  It is the specific championing of an idea (a meme), in order to create a social change.  It was therefore not surprising that the group had implicitly articulated various course of action, that were based on three distinct approaches.  These are marked on the edge of the diagram as value led approach, relationship led, and evidence led.

Research by IDS (Sumner & Perkins 'Making a science of policy influencing' IDS 2010) explore these ideas. They had a fourth approach which they called the 'Information Approach' In this approach it is the quantity of knowledge that counts; influence is about getting your research in front of the decision-maker and the more places it is available the more likely it is to make a difference. This is an approach which seems to be explicitly rejected in the TripleS strategy – it states that rather than attend every event, and publish hundreds of documents, the strategy is about focusing in on specific relationships. This is the Relational Approach. In this approach it is 'not the knowledge that counts but the dialogue; influence is not just about changing minds but being open to changing your own mind in the process. The notion is that politics can be neutralised with conscious attempts at equality.' We can see this in the diagram – words such as 'work with them', 'partial understanding' acknowledge that it is not the quantity or quality of the knowledge but the relationships. These are clearly articulated in the strategy, particularly in the invocacy approach and the associated mini strategies.

However, to the right of the diagram we see the call for a coalition and examples of good practice. Examples are not evidence per say, they are about creating a movement or feel within the water sector that the 'best people' are doing SDA, and creating a peer pressure that 'we should too'. A value-Based Approach depends on who owns the knowledge rather than what that knowledge is . Influence is about making research credible or 'brand' building. Yet in the theory of change in the bottom right corner there is an acknowledgement of the role of evidence. An Evidence-Based Approach assumes that it is 'the quality of knowledge is what counts; influence is about producing high-quality, contextually relevant research.' It is also worth noting that it is an issue, a strategic aspiration, for the BMGF and some of the DPs identified in Outcome 1.

It is important to note that these approaches are not mutually exclusive and TripleS can follow more than one in the same timeframe. The theory of change as drawn illustrates how differing elements of each contribute. However as a 'Four month' report quoted below discloses, the value led and even the relational approaches might in some cases be undermined by lack of evidence –and this needs to be kept in mind. Likewise, evidence may be useless if one cannot feed it into a key relationship.

"*The delays in getting the major content research products out (synthesis document and country studies), has meant we have come somewhat empty handed to high-level meetings and fora during 2010 and early 2011, thereby undermining our credibility. We need to make sure that the scale of the work load and diversity of opportunities does not overwhelm us and cause us to lose focus. We must keep striving to communicate and make linkages with the country workstreams to ensure that our efforts do not become de-linked from the action research*."

We note that the multi country study is about to be launched and the tie up with Washcost will lead to an ongoing production of evidence based literature.

## 3.3    Broader Policy influence

The purpose of this section is to provide some context to TripleS Staff about policy influencing. Policy making is said to be a messy process.  Case studies and research on the influence of development research on public policy and action by Carden (2009) concluded:

"There are no universal 'best practices' for influencing policy with research. Every circumstance is different. Every situation presents its own complications of need and choice, danger and advantage for researchers and for policymakers. For researchers, influencing policy begins by forming some understanding of these complications, and understanding of how they interact. (Carden 2009)

Malcolm Gladwell (2000), argued that ideas spread like epidemics. The question is then, 'why is it that some ideas … start epidemics and others don't? And what can we do to deliberately start and control positive epidemics of our own?' (2000: 14). For Gladwell, ideas reach a 'tipping point'. This is 'the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point' (2000: 12). Gladwell argues ideas or 'social epidemics' are like a virus in the sense that they are contagious; geometric (little causes can have big effects) and sudden (change is not gradual but at one dramatic moment or a boiling point). He argues there are four stages – each with different kinds of people involved at different stages (he calls these innovators, early adopters, the early majority and the late majority from Business Studies theory). Gladwell identifies three rules that social epidemics follow:

The 'stickiness factor' – this is the infection agent or *the message*. As Gladwell (2000: 25) notes 'the hard part of communication is how to make sure a message doesn't go in one ear and out the other. Stickiness means that a message makes an impact'.

The 'law of the few' – these are *the connectors*. Some people matter more than others for spreading ideas. There are those who spread the message, there are 'mavens' (information traders), and salesmen (or persuaders), the last being critical to any 'tipping point'.

The 'power of context' – this is the notion that human beings are more sensitive to *the context* or the environment than they seem.

These words are echoed by Sumner and Perkins in @Making a science of policy influencing' the publication of a study of 100 cases:-

There is no single recipe for assessing impact/influence but there are some common ingredients which can help us to think through our impact/influence (or otherwise).

Factors that seem to support greater research impact and influence include:

'Sticky messages' or 'rallying ideas' in the content and processes of knowledge generation and translation that play a role in whether research is acted upon.
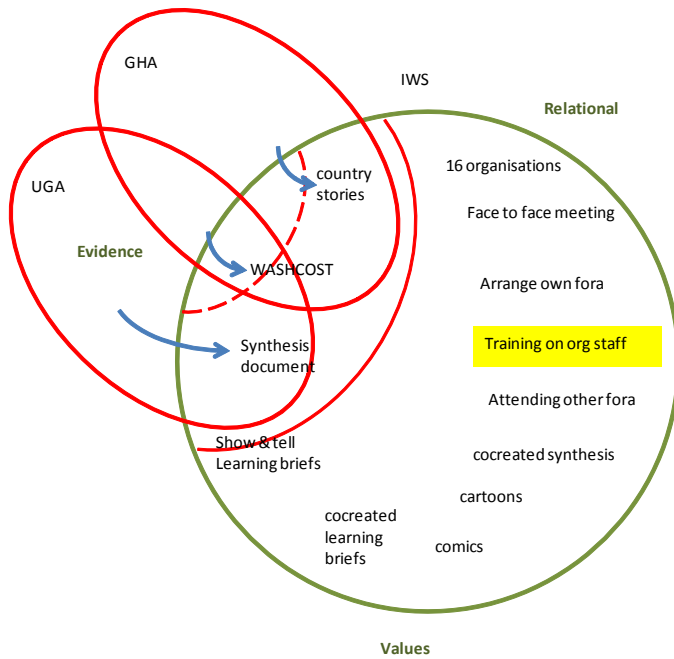
'Knit-working' or the building of coalitions of connectors and champions around ideas that lead to change.

'Strategic opportunism' or the role of mapping contexts to identify windows of opportunity for impact/influence (not forgetting the role of serendipity!)

Each of these has a political dimension. 'Sticky messages' are often a reflection of whose knowledge counts (i.e. power as discourse). 'Knit-working' and 'strategic opportunism' are products of political interests, incentives and capacities (i.e. power as material political economy and power as institutions, norms, conventions and behaviours).

So, in TripleS, according to the exercise, your programme design has taken into account this messy process and a number of approaches are a part of your theory of change. Relationship led approaches are at the core of your invocacy. At the same time you instinctively believe there is value in evidence, and your thinking about coalitions can be seen as value led. In the Washcost merger document you state "While Triple-S provides the big picture for WASHCost (e.g. the principles framework), the research findings and methodologies developed in WASHCost provide Triple-S with a solid evidence base and applicable methods for the promotion of service delivery approach."

These ideas were picked up in another of our white board sketches at the learning retreat

GHA

IWS

Relational

UGA

16 organisations

Face to face meeting

Evidence

country stories

Arrange own fora

WASHCOST

Training on org staff

Synthesis document

Attending other fora

cocreated synthesis

Show & tell
Learning briefs

cartoons

cocreated
learning
briefs

comics

Values

*Figure – Sketch of differing approaches to influencing*

How will this evidence be used in policy making?  Carden 2009 commented on the mix of communication methods that are required.  He recommended that:

Information needs to flow both ways. Researchers and policymakers need to engage in dialogue and to listen to each others choice of words and perspectives and then to craft research-based answers in similar terms which will speed communication and influence

Communication needs to be continuous with overlapping channels and communication media. Individual briefs or workshops will have little lasting impact, especially where turnover in government offices runs high.

Communication needs to be economical. Short papers, going straight to the policy issue, are more likely to be read and remembered than long papers in academic language.


To this Sumner and Perkins would add

At times communication needs to be experiential, that policy makers need to see the outcomes of research for themselves – a site visit to the lab, the village, the farm, etc

Communication needs to take into account culture and socioeconomic factors.  What are the accepted norms of learning in that culture?  What are the protocols for who can teach?

## 3.4 Theory of Change- the other group

At the learning retreat we did not find time to discuss Group 1's TOC. Their alternative approach was similar enough that only one discussion was needed. However they did bring up a couple of factors that need considering.
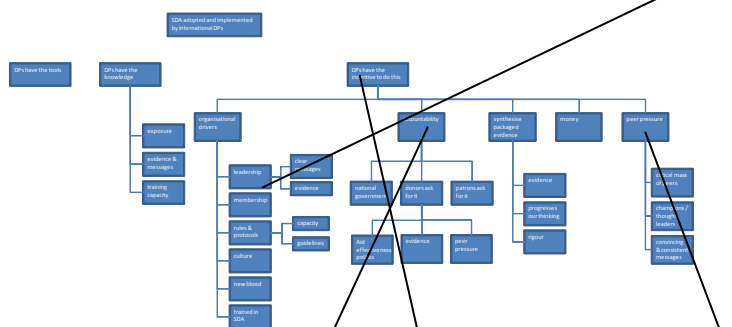


This section notes the importance of organisational drivers. It suggests that younger blood needs to be engaged as well as senior management. It raised the question of whether the SDA approach should be taught in 'schools'?

Accountability. The group noted the emerging political emphasis on aid effectiveness – which may create opportunities to get donors to ask for SDA calculations.

The group only found the time to expand this box on incentives. However there are interesting insights in the unpacking....

This section discussed the role of peer pressure. Naming and Shaming bad organisations may not be an option, but assisting the publication of good stories might lead to positive peer pressure.

We note that:- "Triple-S and WASHCost are jointly developing a training module which will contribute to dissemination of best practice; the first roll out and testing of the training should be ready by mid-2011" which may address the 'younger blood training'.

## 4 Reflections on Narrative 2

In the TripleS learning Framework, the role of narrative 2 is described. Narrative two seeks to illustrate the way in which Triple-S has approached and enabled changes in narrative one (i.e. changes in discourse, policies and practice). Have the Triple-S approaches and processes to enable change been effective?

This section specifically reflects on the questions posed in the Learning Framework document and seeks to comment based on the findings:-

Specific to the Triple-S way of enabling change are its values:

*Relevance: Triple-S is nationally led; it is demand-based; it is embedded in localcontext; it has a thorough understanding of sector development and is a well respected partner for sector change towards sustainable service delivery.*

Comment – In the IWS, national lead and demand basis is not at the forefront of the stream. However the stream is based on a thorough understanding of the sector, and its targeted invocacy is ensuring a relevance within its relational approach.  The respondents spoke highly both of IRC, TripleS and in particular the leads of TripleS, fulfilling the 'well respected' clause.

*Responsiveness: Triple-S is able to recognise and respond to strategic opportunities for sector change; it is flexible and able to operate effectively in a very uncertain and complex sector environment.*

Comment:- The strategy for IWS obviously picks up on strategic opportunities.  Writing vision statements for the RWSN, using events to profile the work are evidence of a flexible response.

*Leaving a legacy: Triple-S is able to learn the lessons jointly with sector actors, and it enables the uptake of the lessons learned in sector systems (policies, capacities, manuals, institutions, etc.); it empowers sector stakeholders and strengthens their capacities to analyse, learn and work towards sector improvements; it commits to sector change for the full duration of the initiative and aims to find ways for sector stakeholders to pursue that commitment beyond the scope of Triple-S.*

Comment:- It is early days for expecting visible responses to the TripleS message, and yet there are evidences that it has made a contribution.  TripleS reports that USAID  is drafting a $24million programme design for West Africa (WA-WASH), which includes innovative approaches, including 'Triple-S sustainable models', capacity building and learning and improved service delivery mechanisms.  Respondents were less able to point to specific changes, but talked of emerging change towards SDA.  We have spoken of accelerating a wave rather than initiating one, and in that sense there will be a legacy as the wave will not stop once ripples stops.

*Creating leverage: Triple-S works through and with existing initiatives and platforms e.g. through sector coordination mechanisms and sector learning initiatives; it uses existing systems and organisations for sharing lessons e.g. sector websites,publications and networks.*

Comment:- TripleS is working with levers.  Drafting RWSN vision statements for RWSN will be one way for increasing leverage.  The upcoming publication of the multi country study will profile many across the water sector.

Specific to the Triple-S way of enabling change are also the methods it applies. The most important ones are:

Local hosting of the country work streams to ensure local sector ownership and embedding in the local context.

Not relevant to IWS

Outcomes-based management in which the principles framework is translated into context-specific outcomes to ensure relevant interventions.

      This is being done at an organizational level.

Learning alliances which bring together sector stakeholders such as NGOs, CBOs, government, research institutions and international organisations in a collaborative process of action learning on how to achieve sustainable services at scale.

      Comment :- There seems to be room to engage with more learning alliances within the IWS.

## 5   Recommendations

Your strategy is very focused on relationships.  You talk about choosing 16 targets out of a list of hundreds.  We have seen a mini strategy for the World Bank, and it would seem prudent to create the mini-strategies for each of those 16 organisations.  You have reported early gains in WB and USAID.  We would recommend a focus on UNICEF and AFDB as these seem to have key influence on the sector.  For each of these it would be good to focus on units within organisations, finding ways in through individuals but not investing too much in any one individual.  Where a Champion changes job either within an organisation or to another oragnisation consider building on your investment in that individual in the new organisation.  We also see that an issue for you is how to spread that social capital investment across the implementation team.

We feel there needs to be investment in analysis of the problems of the sector.  This is not the problems of rural water supplies – we have said above that these are becoming well known.  But more on the problems of organizational change and in particular how those organizations in the sector might be resistant to change.  This will likely include an analysis of political economy that keeps barriers in place and inhibit change.  For instance the complex and large scale Banks – how can they implement change.

Ongoing and updated mapping of the sector is necessary as players will change over time.  The existing strategy of focusing in targets that provide most leverage is good, but the players may change over time.  It will also be important to avoid being drawn into providing technical support to individual programmes.

Reconcile your research and advocacy roles by talking about knowledge brokering.  As a knowledge brokering project you are action orientated – gaining, synthesizing, creating new knowledge for the sector – that's the action.

There needs to be, and this may be in the pipeline, more links between the evidence and the conceptual building blocks. The framework needs to show key stakeholders what is actionable.

Some practical recommendations are:-

- Create a briefing note on why SDA differs from Community engagement (particularly in the 'language' of NGO sector). Pick up on this intermediate level as a focus.
- Create a briefing note on why rural water supplies are important for agencies to focus on whilst acknowledging the role of sanitation.
- Create a mini strategy for the African Development Bank and focus significant resources on them for the coming year
- Ask yourself the question – how do we clone Harold and Ton?
- Ensure that mini-strategies have a range of entry points to the organisation that include both senior and junior stakeholders.

## 6   Next steps

It would be good to prove the Theory of Change and that it can deliver results. To do this we will need to:-

- Flesh out the skeleton that was created during the learning workshop
- Evaluate existing indicators of the contribution of each precondition
- Find examples from other projects/research that suggest relational approach can lead to the desired outcome.

We will submit a concept note for these next steps.

# 7    Annex – Documents consulted

1971s-IRC-TripleS-Synthesis-V0-SS_SCC

20012011_Communications_General_Kampala_meeting

2010.11.08.IWS.PartnershipMetrics.V03

20100330_TripleS_Revised_Toolkit_Documentation

20100331_TripleS_Revised_StrategicPlanning_ToolKit

20100331_TripleS_Revised_ToolKit_ProgrammeImplementationPlan

20100331_TripleS_Revised_VisionPrinciplesV 01 (5) (2)

20100915_Summary Plan_IWS

20101108_Triple_S_4MReportingIWS 01 (2)

20101214_Amendment_Grant_Agreement_Milestones v05

20101222_AppendixA_Final

20101407 IWSAnnualPlan V04

20110105-6Triple-S Learning Retreat Jan 11

20110222  WASHCost Triple-S Joint IWS Concept Note.final

20110223 WorldBank MiniStrategy 01

20110301_AppendixAA.IWS.final

20110302_Triple_S_Reporting_IWS.final

20110304.IWSJointEventList

20110304.IWSPriorityTargets

20110309.CommsTargetAudiences v01 (5).hl

20110331_Triple-S Communications Strategy v01H

20110331_Triple-S Communications Strategy v01H

20110331_TripleS_LearningFramework_V2.0_FINAL_DRAFT

20110331_TripleS_LearningFramework_V2.0_FINAL_DRAFT

20110403.Generic.MiniStrategy

20110506_TR_Triple_S_IWS_learning_retreat_Brighton_April_2011

20110520 IWSPriorityTargets.Updated

20110610 IWSJointEventList Updated

Brighton summary of SenseMaker IWS discussions1_ALG

IWS Learning Retreat_ToC_session

IWS OUTCOMES

IWS WorkPlan v 06. 02 12 10

Key questions, collated

Professionals Framework Overview

Triple S IWS learning retreat Brighton_notes_Petra

Triple-S Briefing spot fold v10

TripleS.Briefing.August.2010

Users Framework Overview

WASH as a Service Tools  Training - Project Concept (DRAFT)-04-27-11

## 8    Annex Objectives of the IWS

Through its range of activities the IWS strives towards the following stated outcomes:

1. A significant number of Development Partners – including development banks and large funding agencies – adopt Service Delivery Approach principles in their policy dialogue and strategic guidelines, including greater emphasis on capacity-building, post-construction support and life-cycle costing.

2. A significant number of operational Development Partners - including I-NGOs, UN-agencies, charities and foundations - adopt aspects of the Service Delivery Approach in their planning and implementation procedures and coordinate more closely with national priorities.

3. A significant increase in the share of sector financing for full life-cycle costs which are currently under-funded by both national governments and international DPs (i.e. for capital maintenance costs and, direct and indirect costs for capacity building, monitoring and learning, post-construction support).


## 9    Annex Some 'Push Back' thoughts

During the learning retreat and in the build up to it, we talked of an initiative called the 'Big Push Back'.  This initiative is seeking to create a forward looking flow of work that works alongside the requirements of donors for reporting indicators of achievement that bear little relation to the manner and possibilities development activities have for supporting social transformation.  TripleS is a good example of exploring these counter narratives of development.  As such we draw attention to the various themes of the Big Push Forward.

Strategies identified for collective follow-up action by interested participants were:

- Build *counter-narratives* of development and change that stress the significance of history, challenge the primacy of numbers and emphasize accountability to those who international aid exists for.
- *Communicate* in more innovative ways the complex nature of development to the general public by collaborating with and drawing on the expertise of development communication agencies in facilitating debates and expanding spaces for voices from the South, while building knowledge of how the public in the North understands development.
- Develop *different methods of reporting*, so that the requirement for aggregated numbers at Northern policy level does not influence the character of programming in complex development contexts; building on already available methods for assessing impact and continuing to develop and test new approaches..
- *Collaborate* with people inside donor agencies who are equally dissatisfied with the prevailing 'audit culture' and are seeking to promote sustainable change.
- *Re-claim 'value for money'* by communicating with donors and the public that some aspects of development work are valuable while irreducible to numbers; improve development organisations' own internal practices in terms of value for money, e.g. in procurement; and work together to develop more self-critical standards.
- *Enhance organisational learning* and reflective practice, using professional training and education to nurture out-of-the-box thinking and approaches.
- *Scrutinize the role of big business* in development aid and its impact on discourse, quality and accountability; who will watch *them* if they assume the quality control function?

These ideas resonate a lot with the processes enshrined in TripleS, particularly where one interprets TripleS as 'social transformation' within the rural water sector.

## 10 Annex Realistic internal self assessment?

The following is from a report by TripleS and illustrates that there is a fairly realistic assessment of their progress.

*"What works, what does not work" for Triple-S in general, or for the three strategic areas of Triple-S (SDA, harmonisation, learning sector) or for the selected outcomes of the work stream.*

For the IWS there are many aspects of Triple-S that work, these include:

  i.    **The SDA as a core concept:** for almost all audiences this is the key to un-locking the doorway to sustainability. For those already 'converted' it is a nice, succinct way of describing what they already know or suspect. For those organisations that are still focussed on a more infrastructure-driven and projectised way of working it is an eye-opener and convinces through its simplicity, and yet powerful logic. It works every time.
  ii.   **Personal networks and 'invocacy':** big events or big publications can only get you so far. What really convinces are personal contacts, personalised messages and working through and with networks of key individuals whom we know are very important within organisations or as thought-leaders more generally. This is an effective way of learning and sharing.
  iii.  **Credibility:** people listen to us and come to us because we are credible. This is in part linked to personal networks, but it is also built on long associations and coming up with convincing concepts and messages. As long as we can keep 'one step ahead' of the pack and show conceptual leadership we will always have credibility and therefore the potential to influence
  iv.   **Content examples:** our messages and efforts to influence are always made stronger and more convincing by bringing good (or bad) examples to the table. Our advocacy work internationally and the very real challenges and opportunities in Ghana, Uganda and elsewhere are therefore linked and mutually reinforcing. We need to keep 'harvesting' new evidence to keep momentum; the synthesis documents and building block briefing series will be important in this respect.
  v.    **Flexibility to respond:** having some spare capacity and not having completely rigid planning means we can respond to requests and opportunities as they arise (for example, the AusAID conference); this also extends to financial/budgetary flexibility to support events or inputs on an *ad hoc* basis (i.e. our financing of the design for the WDC January meeting report). The judicious use of relatively small amounts of money brings a big return in good will.
  vi.   **Partnerships:** doing things together strengthens our ultimate impact and should not be seen as a threat (as in '*they are taking over our ideas*'), but rather opportunities. Our work with EWB Canada, WfP, GWC and to an extent USAID and the World Bank all show that collaboration will bring us further towards our goal of influencing DPs.

What does not work so well for the IWS, or what is still weak or missing includes:

i. **Principles Framework:** although we refer to this and disseminate it, there is less focus and less demand for this from our target audience. One reason we may not be pushing the PF more is because it is not really a 100% robust product – we have doubts about it. We know it is complex. We know it has things missing (i.e. the comment from an ODI staff member that environmental issues and water source sustainability is not addressed). We know that the wording is not right, indeed maybe too wordy. It may be that the PF needs to be overhauled and simplified and improved, with examples, before we really push it hard in the public domain. But equally we should not forget it or drop it as it has the power to convince also.

ii. **A global platform for learning and dissemination:** so far we have not managed to establish the equivalent of a country LA. This may never be appropriate because of the complexity of the IWS constituency and geographic and institutional diversity. It may also not be desirable because it would again establish a new/redundant platform. We have RWSN, we have the SWA, we have other regional platforms. Do the time and effort (and potential risk of failure) that we would need to invest in setting up a specific LA for Triple-S outweigh the benefits? This question is still not an easy one to answer.

iii. **Quantifiable evidence:** this is the flip side of the concrete examples point above. We have these examples, but all too often they are the soft ones, the anecdotal ones. What really convinces people is the hard stuff, the numbers, the cost-benefit analysis. Until we have more of this, there will always be members of our target group that will simply say we are a bunch of wishy-washy social scientists, without the hard evidence to back up our theories. The link with WASHCost will obviously help with this, but we still have some way to go to bring this quantifiable evidence to the table.