



WASH, WATER RESOURCES & WASTE

CAPACITY STATEMENT 2025



Solar-powered water utility in Baringo, Kenya

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Self Help Africa's vision is healthy lives and sustainable livelihoods for all in a changing climate, and to achieve this, works across several sectors of core expertise, including agriculture and food systems, enterprise, environment and natural resources management, sustainable energy, WASH, Water Resources Management (WRM) and Waste Management. Systems strengthening, social accountability, nutrition, gender and localisation cut across our workstreams. SHA supported Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH), Water Resource Management (WRM) and/or Waste Management activities in

25 projects in 12 countries, last year. This document sets out Self Help Africa's key experience in this sector and provides examples of our approach.

[Self Help Africa's global WASH strategy](#) seeks to achieve three primary impacts: health, wealth, and resilience. We do this by working at different levels of the sectoral 'system', with an adaptive set of approaches, and through both stand-alone WASH/ WRM/ waste interventions, and integrated programming across SHA's core sectors.

VISION:

- Resilient WASH for all, for sustainable livelihoods and healthy lives in a changing climate.

OBJECTIVES:

- Sustainable, resilient WASH services at scale.
- Healthy, resilient communities and a healthy environment
- Creating job opportunities and agricultural inputs from WASH value chains

APPROACHES:

- Governance, systems strengthening and social accountability
- Market-based approaches
- Community-led approaches
- Innovative service delivery and financing models
- Longer-term programmatic approach, with humanitarian-development connectedness

FOCUS AREAS:



EXPERIENCE & CAPACITY

SHA's country programmes have specialist project officers who are experienced in community-led development and have applicable WASH, WRM and Waste technical knowledge. Our local teams are supported by SHA's Global Technical and Advisory Team, led by a WASH, Water Resources & Waste specialist, with 18 years' experience spanning 25 countries. They are supported by a WASH specialist with 18 years' experience in 12 countries, and also through ad-hoc / topic-based inputs of global specialist consultants and academics.

Most of SHA's country programmes have had a country presence for 25 years or more, building strong relationships with government and local organisations, and a deep understanding of the sector and its systemic challenges and opportunities. There is extensive in-house WASH capacity in countries where we have a significant WASH portfolio. For example, the Malawi country programme has a WASH team of 40 staff, headed by a 3-person WASH management team with combined 40 years' sector experience.

Country teams are supported by monthly mentoring and follow-up calls with the Global WASH team and periodic country visits. There is an organisation-wide WASH, WRM and Waste Community of Practice called WASH-UP Net, with c. 80 members on the mailing list, which shares learning across SHA countries and from outside the organisation, and provides online training on topics related to our programming strategy.

PARTNERSHIPS & NETWORKS

SHA believes in the strong value of actively engaging in global and country level networks and forums – not only to share learning from our programmes and from others, but because coordination and collective action are key elements of a strong WASH system.

At global level, SHA is an active member of the [Rural Water Supply Network \(RWSN\)](#) and its water quality action group, a full global member of [WASH Agenda for Change](#), and is also an active member of A4C country collaborations in Malawi, Nigeria and Mozambique. We were instrumental in the creation of the Nigeria (and less formal Mozambique) A4C collaborations. Thanks to our ongoing pilot on professionalised water services in Malawi, SHA is also part of a strategic [Uptime](#) network of organisations.

SHA is a co-chair of the [UK WASH Network](#), which brings UK-based organisations and FCDO together with sector professionals to share learning, make connections and collaborate on joint sector advocacy. Additionally, SHA is represented at global WASH, WRM and Waste events, conferences and webinars to ensure learnings are shared and up to date. We seek to be an active member of development WASH sector forums and WASH Clusters at national and district levels, actively supporting / collaborating with national CSO networks, such as NEWSAN in Nigeria and WESNET in Malawi and the related national SUN structures, and reinforcing district/state-level coordination processes.

SHA has a strong and extensive network of technical and local partners we work with on our programs, with a strong focus on mutually beneficial partnerships, and evolving approaches to localisation with our local CSO government and strategic private sector partners. Example collaborations include with:

- Global academic experts and research/knowledge groups on studies and capacity building efforts, such as: Eawag (water quality); [University of Bristol \(Climate Resilience\)](#); [Institute of Development Studies](#) and [WASHPaLS](#) (rural sanitation); [IRC-WASH](#), [University of Leeds](#) and [LSHTM](#) (systems strengthening)
- Key national-level stakeholders such as UNICEF, National Ministries and Development Partners like World Bank, CSO networks and A4C partners on national-level influencing and systems strengthening;
- Technical experts and topic-based collaborations, such as: [Baseflow](#) (groundwater management, Malawi); sector financing and economic modelling experts ([Social Finance](#), [Blue Impact](#) and [Innate Values](#)); carbon developer partners ([CO2 Balance](#), South Pole); [ACF](#) (humanitarian-development nexus, Nigeria, Bangladesh); [Tandem Circular](#) (waste and circular economy, Zambia); PSI (market based sanitation – Nigeria and Mozambique); [SNV](#) (decentralised WASH governance, Mozambique).
- Local governments and enterprises: Long-term partnerships with many local governments and the private sector; [GAM Solar](#) (local enterprise for sustainable water services in Gambia); [Kuyatsa](#) (social enterprise on electricity and potentially water services, Malawi).

FUNDING BASE:

SHA's WASH, WRM and Waste activities benefits from funding from a diverse range of funders, often with long-term partnerships and repeat funding, demonstrating our credibility as a strategic partner, that delivers. Recent / ongoing funders include: institutional funders (FCDO, Irish Aid, SDC, EU, ECHO), UN agencies (UNICEF, IOM, WFP, OCHA), philanthropic and corporate foundations (Medicor, Waterloo Foundation, One Foundation, Vitol Foundation, ElectricAid, CFI; Charity:Water; Aqua4All); public fundraising; climate finance (CBF); and carbon finance.

We work with donors in different ways to achieve aligned objectives, focused on measurable and sustainable outcomes for communities.

THEMATIC EXPERTISE & PROJECT EXAMPLES:



Self Help Africa has improved safe water access to over 5.5 million people since 2011. We have a strong core expertise and a growing profile on its work on strengthening and evolving arrangements for sustaining rural water services, and raising levels of service

from basic towards safely managed. Examples include: our Uptime and Charity Water 'Pipeline' programmes,

professionalising handpump maintenance services in Malawi; our water program in Gambia testing approaches to sustain solar powered water schemes and developing models to raise service levels with chlorination and smart-metered household connections; and our SURWIN and WASH Systems for Health program in Nigeria that seeks to strengthen national level learning and policy evolution on rural water sustainability, and demonstrate scalable models to the sector. Our sustainability approach increasingly incorporates a focus on ensuring water quality via chlorination. We have long-term experience in carbon finance for safe water access, and use our insights to demonstrate innovative approaches to financing in the sustainability and quality of water services.

We increasingly take a broader integrated water resources management, and climate resilience focus to our water work – a key learning from our recent study with [Bristol University on climate vulnerability of WASH services in Malawi](#). Our natural resources management interventions start at the catchment / sub-catchment level to maximise recharge of groundwater and surface water sources, providing year-round flows and protecting sources from contamination. Activities include soil and water conservation, reforestation and promotes the [Functional Landscape Approach](#), with participatory catchment assessments and community and government action to improve degraded catchments, and monitor its improvements on water yields and quality, for drinking, agriculture and other productive uses. We increasingly apply IPCC projections and long-term yield data in our planning and implementation work. Example projects include the Lake Bunyonyi project in Uganda, which supported the production of the catchment water resources management strategic plan, worked with communities and the tourism industry to reduce erosion, improve soil health, and reduce pollution in the beautiful lake, whilst reinforcing sustainable livelihoods in the process. Our [Baringo Resilience Initiative](#) in Kenya is another excellent example of our approach.



To date, we've helped 1.2 million households (around 5-6 million people) improve their household sanitation access. We have a strong track record in Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), eliminating open defecation across communities and entire districts. For example, our Rural

Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion (RUSHPIN) programme in Nigeria achieved the first open defecation free (ODF) local government area in the entire country, and reached 1.7 million people, and we have done CLTS at scale in Guinea and Mozambique and Malawi, and we've helped the Government of Malawi achieve 25% of the country's ODF achievement to date. Our systems strengthening work seeks to strengthen arrangements for post-ODF follow-up, and our work on Market Based Sanitation (MBS) is a fast growing area of our work. For example, SHA is in discussions with LIXL for a strategic supply arrangement for their Satopan products in Malawi, and our WASH Systems for Health programme in Nigeria is partnering with global experts PSI and IDS to take area-wide sanitation and

MBS to scale in Kano and Cross Rivers states (with a combined population 24 million people).

Our hygiene behaviour change communication (BCC) work is integrated across all WASH and also most multi-sectoral programs, and uses proven approaches to improve behaviours. Our current Charity:Water D-WASH programme in Malawi is undertaking formative research on handwashing to refine our promotion approach, and our DROPP program in rural Zambia is showing strong results via a community health club type approach. Our [Resilient Food Systems](#) programme in Ethiopia is integrating WASH and nutrition messaging within our gender-focussed [Family Life Model](#), with encouraging results.

Our hygiene and sanitation approach increasingly links promotion of WASH behaviours, with promotion of products, creating livelihood opportunities in the WASH value chains. The [Aqua4All](#) funded programme in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh demonstrated the potential of rural women enterprises in last mile promotion and sales of household water filters, while in Brazil our [Menstrual Poverty](#) programme enabled local production and sale of reusable menstrual pads.



We have improved WASH in over 2,500 schools worldwide. Our work seeks to improve the infrastructural WASH facilities of the school, and ensuring they are disability and gender friendly, promoting WASH and menstrual health understanding and behaviours, and strengthening arrangements and the

wider system for sustainability and scale of impact. For example, our WASH in Schools program in Lichinga, Mozambique has so far improved WASH facilities for 10,000 students and teachers, and introduced innovative facilities such as female urinals and group handwashing facilities that have proved highly effective. It also supports the district and provincial authorities to assess systemic barriers to WASH services and develop long-term investment plans. Other examples include our [PRESERVE Kafue II](#) program in Zambia that promotes WASH together with agriculture and environmental protection issues in rural schools, our [Fit for Schools](#) programme in Guinea, and our Girls Inspired program, that developed an innovative Sports for Development approach to communicate WASH and gender issues in Malawi.



The intersection between sanitation and waste management, and agriculture livelihoods and enterprise, has been a rapidly growing area of our work. Example projects include: our €22m [GreenTech4CE](#) programme in Zambia, which helps grow Micro Small & Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs)

in waste and wider circular economy value chains; our EU funded [S-Organic](#) programme in The Gambia, targeting 55,000 direct beneficiaries and aiming to influence national policy, which seeks to introduce and upscale the production and use of organic fertilisers and compost, with SHA partnering with Wasteaid in its waste-to-agri-inputs component, our F3S program in Lichinga city, northern Mozambique, which is partnering with the

municipal council and local associations and enterprises, for organic waste segregation, and introducing new waste conversion approaches such as briquette making and black soldier fly processing.



SHA has a strong track record in responding to humanitarian crises in countries where we have a long-term presence – see here for our organisational [humanitarian capacity statement](#). Specific to WASH, in Malawi, SHA is UNICEF's go-to humanitarian

WASH partner of choice, with long-term standby agreements, and SHA's large-scale recent responses to Cholera outbreaks and Cyclones Idia & Ana and COVID-19, have reached over 3 million people over the last 4 years. Our cross-border Ebola response in West Africa was praised by the President of Guinea, and in Ethiopia, our OCHA-funded [WASH humanitarian response programme in Amhara](#), targeting 60,000 IDPs was praised for its ability to deliver results in a highly unstable context. In [Burkina Faso](#), programming focuses on working with Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and host communities, to provide not only immediate response to urgent needs, but also seek to create livelihood opportunities in the process of meeting these needs, such as our enterprise and market based approach to IDP-led liquid soap production.

As a primarily development focused organisation, SHA is well-placed to strengthen the [WASH 'Humanitarian-Development Nexus'](#), applying longer-term thinking to disaster preparedness, response and recovery. The recent study on [Climate Vulnerability of WASH services](#) in Malawi strengthened our thinking on resilience building of WASH infrastructure and services, and how water quality monitoring and chlorine access can help in prevention and rapid response to emerging epidemics. Our Beyond Boreholes Phase 5 program has started implementing the study recommendations, such as floodproofing at-risk water points, and strengthening district coordination structures, that have been pivotal in humanitarian response.



SHA is recognised globally as a key player in WASH systems strengthening, demonstrated by its recent win of the highly competitive [FCDO WASH Systems for Health](#) programme funding for West Africa. In this programme, SHA leads the consortia covering Nigeria and Sierra

Leone, leading implementation in Nigeria and delegating to and supporting GOAL to lead in Sierra Leone. In Nigeria, this 4-year program works with Kano and Cross River states (combined population 24 million), to appraise and strengthen the system at local government and state level, to ensure sustainable and inclusive progress in rural WASH. In addition to strengthening the planning budgeting and fund mobilisation processes, it will demonstrate effective and inclusive service delivery models for rural water and sanitation, and strengthen systems to enable these to be taken to scale. In Malawi, we've helped map over 60,000 water points, generating invaluable data for decision making, and our [Beyond Boreholes and DI-WASH programmes](#)

have supported the Thyolo and Dowa district governments, to develop lifecycle costed strategic WASH investment plans, and operationalise these through stakeholder alignment and joint sector reviews. Social accountability is also a strong competency. For example, our long-term SDC-funded [GOTAS programme](#) in Mozambique seeks to benefit 870,000 inhabitants of Niassa Province, strengthening decentralised capacities of government in planning and budgeting, and creating citizen observatories and other forums to ensure transparency and accountability – helping drive trust and credibility in these public institutions.

CROSS-CUTTING AREAS OF OUR WORK

The Global WASH Strategy outlines the above thematic areas, and also the cross-cutting elements of our work, with a brief summary of elements that cut across, below:

GENDER: Across most of Africa women are responsible for the provision of water for their households, providing care for family members suffering from water borne diseases, and are exposed to physical risks when collecting water, collecting firewood to boil water or resorting to open defecation. It is therefore critical that women can exercise voice, choice and control over community water resources, and family workloads are shared equitably. SHA uses the Family Life Model to encourage dialog within families to share work and responsibilities, and uses an overarching guide to integrate gender into our work across sectors. SHA is working to ensure that women are trained and supported to take up leadership roles in managing water supply schemes, and provides opportunities for women to produce and provide WASH and waste products and services. In Nigeria, we're taking a more systems approach to gender in the WASH sector, partnering up with FEMINWASH, to undertake a systemic assessment of gender barriers in the WASH sector in two states, undertaking

gender awareness training of key sector stakeholders, and seeking in future to support their work in state-wide female professional networks and mentoring in the WASH sector. SHA's strong track record in WASH in schools, and numerous interventions on MHH, is another demonstration to it's gender focus.

NUTRITION: SHA is committed to addressing chronic malnutrition in children and adults through the provision of nutritious, safe and affordable food for all, and behaviour change to address the environmental and cultural drivers of chronic malnutrition - as shown in our nutrition position paper. All SHAs projects aim to provide nutritional benefits, with the WASH sector being critical to addressing the underlying causes of chronic malnutrition. The production, processing and consumption of safe food requires access to safe water and the benefits of nutritious food will be lost when consumers suffer from water borne diseases. Wherever possible, SHA WASH projects integrate the provision of water for irrigation, households and enterprises, and provide behaviour change training to promote good hygiene, sanitation and nutrition practices at the household level.

INCLUSION: SHA is aware that most water and sanitation hardware has been designed for people without physical impairments and often requires physical strength and dexterity to use (hand pumps, squatting latrines and raised flood-proof latrines, etc). SHA aims to work with disabled people to co-design WASH infrastructure that is accessible to all, and follows it's internal guide to integrating disability-inclusion across our programs, with excellent examples in our WASH in schools portfolio. Our flagship WASH Systems for Health program in Nigeria is partnering with global GESI experts from the Sanitation Learning Hub of IDS, to assess and appraise the arrangements for GESI in the area-wide approaches to rural sanitation, to ensure noone is left behind.

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