

**Review of the final phase of the UNICEF managed WASH Emergency Rehabilitation &
Risk Reduction Programme (ER&RR)
September 2014**

Contents

i. Abbreviations and Acronyms	2
ii. Preface	3
1. Executive Summary	3
2. Introduction.....	7
3. Review Findings.....	8
3.1 Relevance.....	10
3.2 Impact and Effectiveness	12
3.3 Efficiency	18
3.4 Sustainability	21
3.5 Cross Cutting Commitments	23
3.6 Monitoring and Evaluation.....	26
4. Key Lessons Learned & Overall Recommendations	27
5. Conclusion.....	29
Annexes	30
A1: TORs	30
A2: Interview guide	30
A3: List of people/organisations interviewed and field visit itinerary	30
A4: Human Interest story: “Australian Government and UNICEF help to restore access to clean water and sanitation in small towns in Zimbabwe”.....	30
A5: NGO discussion table – opportunities and Challenges	30

Tables

Table 1. Key recommendations by Review findings.	4
Table 2: Summary of rehabilitation works and beneficiaries by town under the last phase of the ER&RR programme.	12
Table 3: Increase in operational capacity of wastewater treatment works in selected towns	13
Table 4 Annual revenue and billing efficiency for five towns.	16

i. Abbreviations and Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund (UN)
CO	Country Office (as in UNICEF CO)
CHC	Community Health Club
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDF	District Development Fund
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia Government)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK aid programme)
DWSSC	District Water and Sanitation Sub-Committee
ECHO	EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department
EMA	Environmental Management Agency
ER&RR	Emergency Rehabilitation and Risk Reduction Programme (UNICEF)
GIZ	German Government Development Assistance
ICT	Information and communications technology
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LEAP	Local Environment Action Plan (EMA recommendation to all local authorities)
MEWC	Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate
MHCC	Ministry of Health and Child Care
MLGPW&NH	Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing
NAC	National Action Committee
NCU	National Coordination Unit
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
ODF	Open defecation free
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PHHE	Participatory Health and Hygiene Education
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PROMUN	A Financial Management Information for the Public Sector
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Programme (Zimbabwe Government)
PWSSC	Provincial Water and Sanitation Sub-Committee
SAP	Systems, Applications, Products (electronic system used by Zimbabwe Government)
SLB	Service Level Benchmarking for Urban Local Authorities
TOR	Terms of Reference
UCAZ	Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSCIF	WASH Sector Coordination and Information Forum
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority
ZIMRA	Zimbabwe Revenue Authority
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe Statistical Department
ZINWA	Zimbabwe National Water Authority

ii. Preface

The Government of Australia has been supporting UNICEF Zimbabwe implement emergency and recovery WASH interventions, mainly in urban areas of Zimbabwe, since 2009. The programme – Emergency Rehabilitation and Risk Reduction (ER&RR) - was principally a response to the unprecedented Cholera epidemic in 2008/9 and the extremely poor state of town councils' water and sewage systems, their capacity to manage these and supply services to residents. The programme has evolved from purely emergency interventions, through early recovery, to more development focused rehabilitation activities. Lessons learned throughout resulted in the final phase of the programme (2012-14) including a “software” component, working with town councils and focusing on hygiene promotion and support to local authorities to improve service delivery.

Considering that previous evaluations of the ER&RR Programme have already satisfied the requirements of Australian government funded programmes for independent evaluations; it was deemed sufficient for UNICEF and the Australian government to conduct a joint internal review of the last phase of the programme. The review was also informed by the lessons learned identified in previous phases and will in turn inform and guide its successor – the Small Towns WASH Programme.

1. Executive Summary

In 2009, the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Emergency Rehabilitation and Risk Reduction (ER&RR) Programme was launched with the objective of reducing the risk of cholera and other waterborne diseases amongst the most vulnerable population groups in Zimbabwe. Since its inception the Programme has received support from the Governments of Australia, United Kingdom, Spain, Belgium and Korea; ECHO and the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF): with the Government of Australia being the sole supporter of the last phases.

During its implementation, the ER&RR Programme approach has been evolving and progressively moved from emergency interventions (focused on water treatment and rehabilitation of critical components of water and sewerage systems) towards a greater emphasis on institutional capacity building for management of water and sanitation services (financial viability and sustainability, customer care management, strengthening engagement with residents and participatory health and hygiene promotion) in order to prevent regression to emergency and to empower local authorities for improved and sustained service delivery.

While previous evaluations have been undertaken on earlier phases of the ER&RR programme, there is still need to review the results and lessons learned from its last phase, especially in relation to the software related interventions which were implemented through Non-Governmental Organisations to complement the physical rehabilitation works.

This was a joint review by the Australian Aid programme and UNICEF to assess progress made in achieving the objectives of the ER&RR and provide recommendations on areas for improvement in the other urban WASH programmes being undertaken by UNICEF as well as for other Australian Aid funded programmes.

In summary, the review considered the following two components:

- **Component A:** Review of the achievements during the last phase of the programme in relation to the objectives and expected results.
- **Component B:** Lessons learned from the last phase of the ER&RR to inform urban WASH interventions in Zimbabwe, UNICEF and Australian Aid urban WASH

programming. This component also includes the contribution of UNICEF in the urban WASH sub-sector coordination and cross learning.

The findings that follow are based on the DAC principals of evaluation. These criteria include i) Relevance; ii) Impact; iii) Efficiency; iv) Effectiveness; and v) Sustainability. To these have been added the overarching issues of vi) Cross cutting commitments and vii) Monitoring and Evaluation.

Following each principal section the report highlights two or three key recommendations to emphasise the general findings – These are summarised in Table 1 below.

Overall the last phase of the ER&RR programme can be stated as having indeed met its objectives achieving results beyond emergency interventions but with some caveats in relation to other complementary achievements, which were also expected but not fully accomplished. These include cross cutting issues such as gender, environment, protection, social inclusion, DRM and M&E.

The review team felt that in general the ER&RR programme has served as a great resource of learning for urban WASH programming, not only for UNICEF Zimbabwe but also for other implementing agencies in Zimbabwe and other UNICEF Country Offices (COs) in the region and beyond. This is demonstrated by the Australian Government’s commitment to continue funding the successor Small Towns WASH Programme as well as UNICEF Zimbabwe’s determination to continue contributing significantly to improving the wellbeing of urban residents in the country.

Strengthening systems (financial and managerial) demands a long-term process and also willingness to change from the involved institutions (i.e. town councils). While the ER&RR has started the process there is still more work to be done, including the political willingness to continue with the changes (both from central and local governments).

Table 1. Key recommendations by Review findings.

Note: Given the overlap between the ER&RR programme and its successor, the Small Towns WASH Programme, some of the recommendations below are already being implemented, particularly in relation to strengthening incorporation of cross cutting issues.

<p>3.1 Relevance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNICEF to strengthen engagement with Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe (UCAZ) and use its platforms for peer review or cross learning for supported towns. 2. UNICEF to further strengthen involvement and integration of the two key ministries (Local Government and Environment, Water & Climate) in monitoring of works in the STWP and support the National Coordination Unit with enough human resource capacity for fulfilling their role in urban coordination. 3. Given the number of towns in the successor programme that have significant mining and industrial connections UNICEF to consider supporting analytical studies to obtain more insights on the nexus between WASH and mining so as to inform interventions and synergies that can be explored in line with Australia’s national interests in the extractive sector in Africa. 4. “Reaching the unreached” - Nevertheless while working in a particular town some attempt by should be made by UNICEF and its implementing partners to analyse and assess the situation of the unreached areas and what might (or should) be done to address these needs. Opportunities for alternative funding, Private Public Partnerships (facilitating structured MOUs where feasible) and other innovative solutions should be explored.
<p>3.2: Impact and Effectiveness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. UNICEF and partners to ensure that the curriculum and activities of Community Health

Clubs are fully adapted to the urban context, and to further strengthen the adaptation of the CHC approach to urban programming in view of the lessons learnt under the ER&RR. Additionally the opportunity for communication of other critical programme components to residents through the CHCs (billing and payment issues, reporting faults, cross cutting issues, etc.) needs to be further explored.

6. Given that responsibility for water and sewage service provision has not as yet been handed over to many of the targeted Local Authorities, and is unlikely to be so during the STWP intervention period, UNICEF should strengthen linkages with ZINWA not only for hardware interventions but also customer care and strengthening relationships with its customers – the urban residents.

3.3: Efficiency

7. Document and formalise the organisational arrangement UNICEF put in place for streamlining their procurement processes and ensure these are in place throughout the implementation of the STWP. This will also benefit internal institutional learning.
8. UNICEF be aware of potential political risks and regularly update risk management strategies. Improved dialogue with local stakeholders will increase UNICEF's ability to deal with emerging political challenges.
9. Strengthen information exchange with NGOs on the hardware components (and vice versa on software) to improve fit between software and hardware. Use of steering committees to strengthen information exchange
10. Communication and Visibility – Develop a specific Communication strategy - which will include communication to beneficiaries on the partnership between UNICEF and Australia and a bi-annual newsletter/bulletin.

3.4: Sustainability

11. UNICEF to explore possibilities for BURCO (the PROMUN service provider) to partner with other local ICT companies to provide technical backstopping to councils. Include rolling out a trainer of trainers of programme and set up user groups for ICT experts drawn from supported towns. UNICEF to continue exchanging ICT upgrade note with GIZ for cross learning and encouraging supported towns to engage in structured exchange initiatives and peer reviews.
12. Tariff setting and bulk water metering, reduction of water losses, investment planning, customer care, citizen engagement and programme exit strategies require strengthening. More training is required to support operations and maintenance.
13. To strengthen PHHE and group sustainability measurement the STWP to embed the use of PHHE and Group Maturity Indexes in implementation partner (IP) and council planning. Encourage IPs to explore innovative ways of increasing male participation in hygiene promotion and strengthening club sustainability through WASH related income generation activities.

3.5: Cross Cutting Commitments

14. A robust and concrete strategy for implementation of mainstreaming and reporting on Cross Cutting issues should be developed (together with the implementing partners) for the successor programme.
15. UNICEF should consider how it could strengthen its own support to implementing partners so they in turn can support the towns and populations with which they are working.
16. Cross cutting plans (Gender, social inclusion, Environment (LEAP) etc.) developed as part of the software strategy in the STWP to be incorporated (together with the business plan) into town councils "Master Plan".

3.6: Monitoring and Evaluation

17. UNICEF WASH section to strengthen and provide additional resources to M&E (specifically in the Urban WASH programme) to develop better systems to improve outcome monitoring and supporting councils and NGOs to provide high quality data. The PHHE index, group maturity index are useful measures of behaviour change impacts and other soft components.

18. UNICEF to further support town councils develop their own capacity for M&E and work towards institutionalising this in a sustainable way. Strengthening their capacity to feed quality data into SLB and UNICEF core indicators will be critical. Councils to be encouraged to use generated data to inform key management decisions.

General.

Internally to UNICEF, the ER&RR programme has served as a reference for urban WASH programming in the region and globally, with UNICEF Zimbabwe providing a showcase for UNICEF's institutional move into urban WASH in other countries. At country level, the programme has also served to position WASH at a very high level in the Zimbabwe Country Programme, which has also supported development of the urban WASH programme.

As the programme migrated from emergency to recovery, the internal institutional arrangements for its implementation have also evolved to be able to deal with the additional risk management measures involved in the high value contracts involved in the programme. The internal coordination model put in place by UNICEF Zimbabwe is helping to streamline contracting processes and is gaining internal recognition. It is therefore recommended that UNICEF Zimbabwe document and formalise such arrangements so these remain active during the implementation of the STWP.

2. Introduction

Background: In 2009, the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Emergency Rehabilitation and Risk Reduction (ER&RR) Programme was launched with the objective of reducing the risk of cholera amongst the most vulnerable population groups. Since its inception the Programme has received support from the Governments of Australia, United Kingdom, Spain, Belgium and Korea; ECHO and the UN Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF): with the Government of Australia being the sole supporter of the last phases. Under this final phase (January 2012- June 2014¹) the programme has included the rehabilitation of water supply (in one town)² and sewerage systems, hygiene promotion, community mobilisation and support for improved billing systems³ and customer care in seven towns (Bindura, Chipinge, Chiredzi, Karoi, Plumtree, Rusape and Shurugwi).

During its implementation, the ER&RR Programme approach has been evolving and progressively moved from emergency interventions (focused on water treatment and rehabilitation of critical components of water and sewerage systems) towards a greater emphasis on institutional capacity building for management of water and sanitation services (financial viability and sustainability, customer care management, strengthening engagement with residents and participatory health and hygiene promotion) in order to prevent regression to emergency and to empower local authorities for improved and sustained service delivery.

While previous evaluations have been undertaken on earlier phases of the ER&RR programme, there is still need to review the results and lessons learned from its last phase, especially in relation to the software related interventions which were implemented through Non-Governmental Organisations to complement the physical rehabilitation works.

Purpose of the review: This was a joint review by the Australian Aid programme and UNICEF to assess progress made in achieving the objectives of the ER&RR programme (funded by Australian Government), especially the implementation of the software components under the last phase, and provide recommendations on areas for improvement in the other urban WASH programmes being undertaken by UNICEF as well as for other Australian Aid funded programmes. Recommendations from this review may also be taken up by the urban WASH sub-sector in Zimbabwe.

Considering that previous evaluations of the ER&RR Programme have already satisfied the requirements of Australian government funded programmes for independent evaluations; this review focused only on the last phase of the programme and its interventions between January 2013 and its conclusion by June 2014⁴. This meant it was deemed acceptable for the review to be carried out internally (UNICEF and Australia) post project and thereby complying with Australia's performance and quality requirements to close the programme. The review was also informed by the lessons learned identified in previous phases.

In summary, the review considered the following two components:

- **Component A:** Review of the achievements during the last phase of the programme in relation to the objectives and expected results. This component includes interventions related to the rehabilitation of water⁵ and sanitation systems in the target towns, hygiene

¹ The initial duration of the ER&RR final phase was to December 2013, but was subsequently extended for a further six months in November 2013.

² Chiredzi town. The previous phase had rehabilitated water in the other six towns.

³ Support for improved ICT and billing systems was only provided to six towns (Bindura, Chipinge, Chiredzi, Karoi, Rusape and Shurugwi).

⁴ A no cost extension was agreed between the two parties to June 2014 with final project termination on 31st August 2014 in order to properly wrap up the programme and assist proper transition to its successor.

⁵ Only for Chiredzi Town

promotion and support to local authorities to improve institutional capacities for service delivery.

- **Component B:** Lessons learned from the last phase of the ER&RR to inform urban WASH interventions in Zimbabwe, UNICEF and Australian Aid urban WASH programming. This component also includes the contribution of UNICEF in the urban WASH sub-sector coordination and cross-learning and alignment with other urban WASH partners operating in the country as well as the UNICEF/Australia successor programme.

The main activities for the review were undertaken between the 1st and 5th of September 2014; including field/site visits, interviews and consultation meetings with UNICEF staff, Government (national and local) implementing partners and other key informants, together with a desk review of relevant documents produced during programme implementation.

The full Terms of Reference, methodology, detailed schedule and meetings programme are annexed to this report, together with interview guidelines, key questions and programme for field visits.

Deliverables: A summary report on the findings of the review prepared on the basis of the above-indicated activities. This report is a joint effort by Australian Aid and UNICEF.

Dissemination of lessons learnt to wider urban WASH sector: Outside of the scope of this review, UNICEF is undertaking a more comprehensive documentation of lessons learnt under the ER&RR programme (expected by mid-December 2014) to which this review is expected to contribute. In view of this, dissemination of the lessons learnt (including this review) to the wider urban WASH audience will be carried out at a later stage through the Urban WASH Rehabilitation Technical Working Group.

Limitations: The Review programme envisaged field visits to two of the towns receiving support during the programme – Bindura and Karoi. Due to the last minute unavailability of almost all officials and relevant contacts in Karoi on the day selected, this field visit had to be cancelled. Nevertheless the one day spent in Bindura provided a wealth of useful and relevant information for the review. While this was a limitation during the actual review all the supported towns had been visited during routine M&E visits.

Other than the main limitation (above) and despite a very full schedule of meetings and appointments all the planned interviews and discussions were possible save one key ministerial department the Department of Water in the Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate and included a combined interview/debriefing session with Australian Aid and UNICEF management at the end of the period. In general the review team felt it had been a successful week and the necessary information had been gathered to generate the report that follows.

3. Review Findings

The findings that follow are based on the principals of evaluation developed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). These criteria include i) Relevance; ii) Impact; iii) Efficiency; iv) Effectiveness; and v) Sustainability. To these have been added the overarching issues of vi) Cross cutting commitments and vii) Monitoring and Evaluation. To reduce the potential for duplication, Impact and Effectiveness have been combined into one sub-section. However there inevitably remains an element of duplication as key findings are essential to effectively articulate more than one of the five criteria (above).

Following each component/criteria section the report highlights two or three key recommendations to emphasise the general findings.

Main Assumptions and Design elements influencing the ER&RR programme and Review

From the start and in consultation with authorities, the programme worked on the assumption that the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) would eventually hand back management of water and sanitation systems to town councils following a decision by Government in 2009 reversing a 2005 directive that ZINWA would take over responsibility in 30 urban centres in the country. The programme was being implemented at a time when the service provider role and responsibility over the systems was expected to be handed back to local authorities in some of the target towns; therefore support was deliberately focused on improving councils' capacity. In fact this hand over was only carried out in one town - Plumtree.

Previous phases of the ER&RR programme were initiated in the middle of an emergency. To maximize results in such a complex environment, UNICEF systems and processes were streamlined as a way to speed up the implementation of its programmes. This flexibility however, was no longer in place during the last phase.

The implementation model segregated hardware from software with the former being implemented by commercial entities and the software (i.e. hygiene promotion, customer care and capacity building) by NGOs. This division was made after an assessment of value for money and also to bring an additional layer of liability in relation to technical designs and warranties for rehabilitation works.

The programme aimed to restore functionality of the water and sanitation systems by addressing the most urgent works in the central water production and wastewater systems and main water distribution and sewage collection lines, the rationale being rehabilitation of critical infrastructure to restore access and save lives. The programme did not specifically cover individual household connections (unless these were affected by the rehabilitation of the above indicated lines).

While the ER&RR programme's successor, the Small Towns WASH programme working in 14 small towns in Zimbabwe (seven of which correspond to those included in the last phase of the ER&RR⁶) is already in its implementation phase and there has been a considerable overlap, one of the key objectives of this review is to inform that programme. To this extent the review has been successful and a number of lessons are being taken forward to improve implementation of the STWP.

Overall the last phase of the ER&RR programme can be stated as having indeed met its objectives achieving results beyond emergency interventions but with some caveats in relation to other complementary achievements which were also expected but not fully accomplished. These include Cross cutting issues such as gender, environment, protection, social inclusion, DRM and M&E.

“water supplies have improved and sewage is no longer flowing at our doorsteps!”⁷

⁶ Zvishavane now included in the STWP, was part of ER&RR but an earlier phase.

⁷ Chipadze, Bindura resident.

3.1 Relevance

Support to UNICEF Emergency Rehabilitation and Risk Reduction Programme (ER&RR) was consistent with Australia's national interests in a number of ways. The ER&RR aligned with Australia's broader objective of reducing poverty through economic growth, as enunciated by its Minister of Foreign Affairs [in address to ACFID, 30 October 2013]. This was done though focusing on increasing access to good sanitation and safe water which are essential for a productive workforce. While there was no independent review of the last phase, a previous independent review of Zimbabwe WASH program in October 2012, found the ER&RR to be relevant as it 'addresses critical service delivery gaps in water and sanitation, subsequently improving health and saving lives'. Noting Zimbabwe still faced waterborne disease risks in high population centres, this was the right thing for Australian AID to have funded at the time to respond to Australia's strategic goals.

At the time of design, there was strong evidence to demonstrate the relevance of the initiative to the context and Zimbabwe's development needs. The last phase of the ER&RR's focus on sanitation was a response to the 2012 Water policy which identified a deterioration in access to urban sanitation decreasing from 99% in 1990 to 40% in 2008. In addition, donor funded town based rapid assessments of water and sewerage infrastructure had concluded that "*urban water and sanitation infrastructure in Zimbabwe was in serious disrepair and requiring urgent rehabilitation*".

Primarily the programme was designed to respond to a cholera epidemic which claimed the lives of more than 4000 people and over 98 000 recorded cases according to WHO and Ministry of Health Epidemiology Bulletin (2009). This approach taken to repair critical assets and provide water treatment chemicals to urban local authorities was relevant in responding to immediate challenges at that time. In 2012, with a final contribution to ER&RR from Australia, UNICEF expanded its initial focus from just rehabilitation of water infrastructure to include support for low cost waste water treatment technology in seven towns. Because of the a huge funding gap in cities and towns to respond to water, sanitation and hygiene challenges the ER&RR became particularly relevant to deal with the WASH challenges faced by the target towns. Non-removal of waste water from residential areas, no longer possible due to ageing infrastructure and system overload in almost all towns resulted in free sewage flow in residential areas and was thus linked to the increasing cholera cases in the towns and cities.

In line with UNICEF's country programme strategy and cooperating framework with government, the programme was instrumental in assisting UNICEF to deliver key basic social services to disadvantaged groups such as women, girls, elderly, those living with HIV and AIDS, the disabled, promoting social inclusion and equity. Post ER&RR, UNICEF's programmes will be informed by the 2014 UNICEF situation analysis with initial thinking on inclusion of peri-urban and un-serviced areas in its WASH programme.

The government of Zimbabwe considered the ER&RR as an important investment. The investment aligned with Government's priorities of improving technical and operational efficiencies, and financial performances of the water and sanitation service providers for poverty alleviation and economic growth. The Zimbabwe water Sector Investment Analysis (2013) found underinvestment in water holding back growth despite the fact that physical infrastructure of Zimbabwean towns and cities was basically sound and worth rehabilitating. Water and sanitation services are a priority of the Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim ASSET 2013- 2018). Because of increasing urbanisation in most of the towns, the ER&RR could have been even more relevant by reaching out to the unreached. However, neither the ER&RR nor its successor (STWP) has the budget or capacity to extend

services to those under or unserved housing areas or informal peri-urban settlements, public/communal toilets and public institutions (schools, clinics).

While there were many different elements constituting the ER&RR programme “**Relevance**” can be summarised as:

1. Rehabilitation of sewage collection and treatment works (in towns where little collection and no treatment was happening).
2. Billing systems and customer care (where town councils had to use manual accounting systems and therefore being inefficient) and
3. Hygiene promotion (in a high risk environment with sewage overflowing and a cholera outbreak ‘around the corner’)

ER&RR’s relevance in coordinating the sector was also highlighted by the Ministry of Local government. However, the Ministry felt that there could have been more interaction between the Ministry and ER&RR to enhance programme relevance and Government involvement. The ER&RR programme was not felt to be as “interactive” as its successor (STWP) in engaging government entities but also highlighted the need for additional support in terms of equipment and mobility for Government in order to be able to fulfil their mandate in supporting and monitoring the programme.

In spite of the decision by Australia to move out of WASH in the Africa Programme towards productive sectors of the economy (extractives and agricultural productivity) the programme remained relevant to the Australian government objective aimed at improving the resilience, health and productive capacity of target communities through improved health services (in particular for women and children), innovative social support and increased access to safe water and sanitation. While not a specific objective of the ER&RR, the programme did contribute to economic benefits and revival of industries through improved water production for industrial use, making the investment relevant to the Australian government’s objectives. While the final ER&RR report does not explicitly mention the nexus between industry /economic activity and improved water supply, UNICEF attempted mapping of the potential benefits, and noted that the beverage industry in particular Delta company benefiting from improved water supply i.e. in Rusape, Chipinge and also in Karoi to some extent (though the plant later closed due to other viability issues). In Bindura, Ashanti Gold mine is one of the biggest water consumers hence their interest in supporting the installation of a dedicated power supply line. The opportunities for developing and strengthening high-end Private/Public Partnerships (PPPs) were identified, however facilitation of private sector engagement is more pronounced in the successor programme. Potential also exists for improved productivity through use of treated waste water effluent to agricultural irrigation, for example in Bindura and Plumtree with the former having entered into an agreement with a commercial farmer and also seeking land to use for their own productive purposes.

The modality of implementing the initiative through UNICEF was appropriate and relevant. UNICEF was able to respond rapidly, and was uniquely placed to influence Government policy in key social sectors. The review team concluded that UNICEF’s acceptability to the Government of Zimbabwe, local councils, stakeholders and other like-minded partners also made it an appropriate delivery agency for programme management.

Recommendations:

1. UNICEF to strengthen engagement with Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe (UCAZ) and use its platforms for peer review or cross learning for supported towns.
2. UNICEF to further strengthen involvement and integration of the two ministries (Local Government and Environment, Water & Climate) in monitoring of works in the STWP and support the National Coordination Unit with enough human resource capacity for fulfilling their role in urban coordination.

3. Given the number of towns in the successor programme that have significant mining and industrial connections UNICEF to consider supporting analytical studies to obtain more insights on the nexus between WASH and mining so as to inform interventions and synergies that can be explored in line with Australia’s national interests in the extractive sector in Africa.
4. “Reaching the unreached” - Nevertheless while working in a particular town some attempt by should be made by UNICEF and its implementing partners to analyse and assess the situation of the unreached areas and what might (or should) be done to address these needs. Opportunities for alternative funding, Private Public Partnerships (facilitating structured MOUs where feasible) and other innovative solutions should be explored.

3.2 Impact and Effectiveness

The impact stated in the logframe for the last phase of the ER&RR was given as “**Reduced morbidity and mortality to WASH related diseases**”. While the anticipated reduction has indeed occurred, it is difficult to determine the actual contribution of the programme by itself. Nevertheless, when considering the expected **outcomes** of increased access to improved water supply and improved sanitation services, based on the evidence collected during the review and the earlier preparation of the final report, the programme has significantly improved access to these services in the target towns and hence reduced the risk of water borne disease.

Water & Sanitation

For water supply, the programme has resulted in an increase not only in the availability of water but in the proportion of the population accessing this service in a reliable manner (i.e. increased quantity and continuity), as shown in Chiredzi, (the town included in the last phase for water supply rehabilitation) where water production has more than doubled through the interventions of the ER&RR. UNICEF’s final report showed over 24,000 residents in Chiredzi, and 155,000 residents in all towns under the last phase of ER&RR, as continuing to benefit from improved water services⁸ and over 102,000 people benefited from improved levels of sanitation services (i.e. better sewage collection and treatment)⁹.

Table 2: Summary of rehabilitation works and beneficiaries by town under the last phase of the ER&RR programme.

Town	W/S⁽ⁱ⁾	Brief description of rehabilitation works	Estimated beneficiaries⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ (thousands)
Bindura	S	Rehabilitation of critical sections in the sewerage network and wastewater treatment plant	21.0
Chipinge	S	Rehabilitation of critical sections in the sewerage network and wastewater treatment plant	18.0
Chiredzi	W	Rehabilitation of raw water abstraction, water treatment plant, pumping stations, storage reservoirs and critical sections in the distribution network	24.1
	S	Rehabilitation of critical sections in the sewerage network and wastewater treatment plant	18.8
Karoi	S	Rehabilitation of critical sections in the sewerage network and wastewater treatment plant	17.8

⁸ The last contribution from the Australian Government only covered water interventions for Chiredzi. Nevertheless all seven towns covered in the last phase improved the water supply service level through the previous phases of the ER&RR programme.

⁹ Final Report to the Government of Australia. Support to the Emergency Rehabilitation and Risk Reduction Programme (SM/2011/0720). UNICE, July 2014.

Town	W/S ⁽ⁱ⁾	Brief description of rehabilitation works	Estimated beneficiaries ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ (thousands)
Plumtree	S	Rehabilitation of critical sections in the sewerage network, sewage pump stations and wastewater treatment plant	7.4
Rusape	S	Rehabilitation of sewage pump stations and wastewater treatment plant	13.3
Shurugwi	S	Rehabilitation of sewage pump stations and wastewater treatment plant	5.9

Source: ER&RR Final Report (SM/2011/0720).

⁽ⁱ⁾ W: Water supply system; S: Sanitation/Sewerage system

⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ Population figures, from the 2012 Census

Based on information collected from Bindura during the review field visit, there is clear evidence of the impact of such interventions on the actual beneficiaries. In this particular case the town has moved from an erratic and intermittent water supply service to one where water production and quality was improved, which is more reliable and predictable, and perceived as a great improvement by both the town council (i.e. service provider) and residents though still not 100% continuous. To a lesser extent, the programme has also resulted in 'new' access to water supply by some segments of the population who previously did not have any (or had very limited) access - through the rehabilitation of specific sections in the water supply system they can now access at least a minimum acceptable level of service.

For sanitation where all seven towns benefitted from rehabilitation under the last phase of the ER&RR, the programme has significantly improved both the sewage conveyance and wastewater treatment in the target towns. Through the ER&RR¹⁰ interventions sewage is no longer flowing at the doorsteps of residents, who now enjoy a healthier and safer environment. As regards wastewater treatment, though there is still more work required to improve the efficiency in sewage collection for parts of the towns, rehabilitation of sewage treatment ponds has reduced pollution through untreated sewage discharged into the environment. In the case of Bindura, sewage treatment ponds and pump stations which were previously almost completely dilapidated are now fully operational and even provide water for irrigation, thereby increasing intervention impacts.

Table 3: Increase in operational capacity of wastewater treatment works in selected towns

Town	Operational capacity of wastewater treatment works (ML/day)		Use of effluent / Discharge	Does it meet quality standards?
	Before	After		
Bindura	2.0	5.6	Irrigation	Yes
Chipinge	2.0	6.0	River	Yes
Chiredzi	2.0	6.0	River	Yes
Karoi	2.0	2.4	River	Yes
Rusape	0.0	5.0	River	Yes
Shurugwi	1.4	1.7	River	Yes

Source: ER&RR Final Report (SM/2011/0720). Based on estimates by UNICEF's Engineering Consultant

¹⁰ While Bindura town council applied for and was made an allocation of PSIP funding for additional sewage works, it has proved extremely difficult to access the funds from Government.

The field visit to Bindura also showed where the project was able to reach a considerable number of unintended beneficiaries - some 6,000 students at the local university are not considered permanent residents and hence not necessarily included in population estimates, yet spend a substantial number of months in the town and are also benefiting from improved W&S services.

An encouraging consequence of increased volumes of water and improved sewage networks made available to residential areas is the local initiative demonstrated in Bindura, post project showing that the community are willing to take on some responsibility for provision of household services themselves in partnership with the town council. While the programme, by design, did not include the rehabilitation/installation of household connections, this working partnership is managing to achieve this, building on the improved relations between providers and consumers developed through the programme (see Sustainability, below)

For the “hardware” component implementation strategies evolved through changing circumstances and lessons learned during the course of the ER&RR with the final phase settling on a process that has been carried forward to the STWP. An Engineering Consulting Firm (Consultants) was contracted to assess, design and supervise the execution of the works working with Town Councils and UNICEF. The Engineering Consulting Firm also supports UNICEF in contract tendering and adjudication with contractors and acts as an additional independent body for their selection. This last phase of the ER&RR was no longer looking at the “quick wins” alone but moving towards a more sustainable approach. To ensure risks were reduced and guarantee as much as possible that the work would be carried out appropriately, the contracting process took more time than had been anticipated. Selection of the Engineering Consulting Firm had to be done in advance, adding an additional contracting process prior to the subsequent three stage process - i) assessment and design ii) tendering and adjudication, iii) supervision of works. This has proved an effective if somewhat drawn-out process, nevertheless all works were eventually completed as planned, with the additional advantage that using contracting engineers brings an additional layer of ‘warranty’ and professional liability¹¹.

Both the supervising consultants and UNICEF provided supervision with the town council keeping an overview of progress and issues on the ground. The lesson from Bindura was that in future it will be important from the beginning to establish and reinforce clear communication lines between the Town council/ZINWA, contractor, supervising consultants, NGO implementing partners and UNICEF, with all parties understanding and respecting the different roles and responsibilities of each (i.e. Engineering Consulting Firm as responsible for approving works, variations and technical quality of works) as well as understanding and being able to communicate about the programme in its entirety.

While the system wide rehabilitation of W&S enhanced the number of beneficiaries reached, thereby improving equity, nonetheless there are still areas of all urban centres in Zimbabwe, including the seven towns supported during the ER&RR, which are not connected to the existing systems and which therefore fell outside the scope of this project. With the next phase (Small Towns WASH Programme (STWP)) also unable to provide for new works and networks (or expanding the existing ones to currently unserved areas), the needs of the unserved/underserved residents remain, therefore continuing to affect equity and constituting a huge risk for Cholera, Typhoid and other water borne diseases. UNICEF and partners in the STWP will endeavour to at least assess the extent of these gaps and develop strategies and recommendations as regards addressing them.

A final note on impact from the Bindura Town Clerk during the visit to Bindura town – *“the programme (ER&RR) contributed to increased water security, removed sewage from*

¹¹ Unlike the earlier process of implementation through NGOs where liability post programme was not as clear.

residential areas and strengthened council's capacity to generate revenue and reinvest it into mainstream service delivery”.

Hygiene Promotion

In terms of hygiene knowledge, while the programme managed to reach the majority of the population of the target towns with hygiene promotion messages, there has not been a formal measurement of the impact of such outputs on behaviour change, which is usually a long term process beyond the specific programme interventions (though the visit to Bindura has shown some level of continuity post intervention, see below). The final report gives 175,000 people as having been reached with hygiene messages through a combined strategy of providing training and participatory health and hygiene education (PHHE) sessions through health clubs (community (CHC), schools and market); roadshows and other community mobilisation activities.

Using the urban hygiene promotion guidelines developed by the NAC technical working group on hygiene and sanitation with UNICEF support through the ER&RR programme, implementing NGO partners working with councils promoted what had been until recently exclusively a rural hygiene promotion strategy – the health club. Given that the generally accepted time period for establishing a sustainable club is at least two years, the ER&RR time frame was insufficient, nevertheless there is evidence that the health clubs supported under the programme have not only created considerable opportunity for communication among beneficiaries for improved hygiene, but also for better accountability in terms of water and sanitation services. The Bindura field visit showed that one year post the “software” programme component, some health clubs continued to function albeit at lower participant and activity levels, including carrying out solid waste cleaning campaigns with the council being called to provide the equipment to pick up the waste that communities collected. Similar cases are reported from other towns with interventions under the last phase of the ER&RR, as in the case of Karoi where a local CBO continues to work with health clubs and council for the same purpose or Plumtree, where the Town Council has supported more CHCs to develop since the closing of the last phase of ER&RR.

A preliminary conclusion may be made that hygiene promotion through CHCs can be effective and that the clubs do have a useful role to play in urban areas but still require some adaptation to increase their effectiveness and relevance to the whole community. Involvement of men and youth remains a challenge, as does motivation once the initial learning process is complete. Nevertheless clubs can provide an opportunity for communication in the community beyond hygiene promotion in areas such as water and sewage leaks/blockages and breakdowns, understanding the billing processes and generally assisting the communication flow between council and community as well as mainstreaming cross cutting issues.

Billing & Customer Care

Though still not at its full potential, the billing infrastructure and systems has also resulted in improved capacity of town councils to collect and manage their revenue (not only WASH related). Through improvement of WASH services, among others, and at different levels, town councils have reported increased revenue collection in the past years and the feedback from the billing system users is that this has greatly improved their efficiency, especially in terms of time invested and accuracy in processing accounting information and the time spent by the final user for payment of bills as well as information made available to consumers. Visiting a sub revenue point (“rent office”) in Chipadze (Bindura) which is now wireless connected with the main revenue hall through programme interventions, showed residents accessing their council statement with real-time information and expressing their satisfaction at such. The wireless link has reduced distance, cost and time taken by residents to pay their bills.

Nevertheless Bindura showed the need to up-date and safeguard the customer database. The town has not managed to carry out customer profiling and hence are not able to develop realistic customer case messaging or equity strategies.

Table 4 Annual revenue and billing efficiency for five towns.

(Source - Local Government reports as given in the UNICEF final report)

Town	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Total revenue (US\$) ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾	Billing efficiency (%) ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾	Total revenue (US\$)	Billing efficiency (%)	Total revenue (US\$)	Billing efficiency (%)	Total revenue (US\$)	Billing efficiency (%)	Total revenue (US\$)	Billing efficiency (%)
Bindura	299,734	15	644,956	46	818,006	56	923,253	46	1,017,016	48
Chipinge	120,031	28	198,107	24	307,841	39	409,174	71	563,513	75
Chiredzi	189,121	59	203,347	38	264,255	51	288,984	56	1,125,492	60
Rusape	0	0	49,646	20	244,563	21	630,400	46	1,057,912	58
Shurugwi	81,954	29	72,898	24	108,371	36	467,878	50	203,322	49

These positive outcomes were achieved through provision of ICT equipment (computer hardware and networking) and financial / accounting systems (billing systems and receipting points) in six towns (Bindura, Chipinge, Chiredzi, Karoi, Rusape, Shurugwi). In addition institutional and financial assessments were carried out and support was provided for strengthening of town council capacities on customer care, update of customer databases and development of customer care plans. While this approach has proved effective and will be further strengthened in the same six towns as well as introduced in the remaining eight towns in the next programme phase (STWP), the ER&RR final report and review identified areas requiring further strengthening and emphasis. Examples include ICT capacity and awareness among critical council staff, encouragement to councils to use the full capability of the PROMUN system for more than just billing to make the most of the software and support to develop pro-poor strategies and billing based on the databases. Bindura council reported some dissatisfaction with the ICT service provider not having the capacity to provide on-going real time technical backstopping to all towns as well as a need for supporting user groups to further develop their capacity. Finally, while most urban councils are now using PROMUN, central government is urging they migrate and use its own Systems, Applications and Products (SAP) system for consistency and conformity. UNICEF is working with the provider of PROMUN to develop an interface.

Beyond the specific 'measurable' results interventions, the impact of the programme is also reflected (anecdotally) in the ability and **confidence** of town councils when it comes to WASH service delivery. The improved level of services obtained as a result of the rehabilitation works have enabled councils to regain residents' trust to some extent which has the potential to also trigger involvement of the community for improved water and sanitation service delivery. The case of Bindura (as given above) is an example of how interventions under ER&RR have facilitated a process where community action is supported by town council (and under its leadership) for improvements in water and sanitation services at household level, expanding the gains obtained under the programme.

The impact of the ER&RR programme on residents' quality of life, though not formally measured, can also be supported by the anecdotal evidence collected in Bindura. Chipadze suburb is an example of how a high density residential area whose streets were previously flooded with sewage is now free of it. According to residents during the review team's visit, this has not only reduced the disease incidence but also allows residents to enjoy their environment. Johnson Madziva (13 years old) stated that diseases among children (especially rashes and skin infections) have greatly reduced and he and his friends can now play safely near to their houses, as opposed to before, when they needed to wait for the sewage to subside.



Photo 1: Johnson Madziva



Photo 2: Children playing where sewage used to flow

Management Coordination and Oversight

Despite the ER&RR not having formal coordination structure mechanisms at the national level (such as a Programme Advisory Committee and Management Team), experience during the programme has led to the establishment these structures under its successor programme, the Small Towns WASH Project (STWP), together with an improved support in the coordination among the urban WASH NAC sub-committee members. While no specific impact can be claimed under the ER&RR on these coordination arrangements, it is a clear lesson learnt which is now being implemented during the overlap period between both programmes, thereby facilitating some of the processes under the ER&RR.

Throughout the programme UNICEF has supported national coordination structures and processes (NAC, WASH cluster and the Urban Rehabilitation Technical Working group) and continued to do so during the final phase which saw the successful transition of the UNICEF co-led WASH cluster to the Government led WASH Sector Coordination and Information Forum (WSCIF). While there remain issues of increasing coordination capacity, this smooth transition from Cluster to National Coordination platform in Zimbabwe has been recognised as very successful, generating considerable interest in the Region and Global WASH cluster and potentially informing other countries. Outputs from this support have included undertaking and completion of the Country Status Overview (CSO) and formulation of the National Sanitation and Hygiene Strategy (developed and approved by Government) and the National Water Policy (approved by Cabinet). Information flow from the ER&RR and its successor during 2014 as well as establishment of the STWP programme advisory committee and management team has resulted in a revival of the sector's Urban (NAC) Sub-committee which had waned in previous years. It can be safely said that without the effective

support of UNICEF through the ER&RR programme, sector coordination as a whole and Urban WASH in particular would not be as strong as it is at present.

Within UNICEF Zimbabwe the ER&RR has also had a clear impact on programming and has changed the way UNICEF does business according to the Deputy Representative. At national level, through the different phases of the ER&RR, operational processes have been constantly modified and improved which has led to a more streamlined working relationship between the WASH and Operations sections within the UNICEF Zimbabwe Country Office. Procurement modalities have had to adapt from relatively rapid and streamlined processes, put in place to enable emergency response interventions at the start of the ER&RR, to more robust and fiduciary risk management contracting and procurement as the country (and programme) transitions from emergency to recovery. As a lesson learnt from the ER&RR and which has been put in place for the STWP, UNICEF has expanded its Operations to specifically support the WASH programme (Urban and Rural) and the office has physically stationed relevant staff members together to support streamlining of the procurement process.

UNICEF is uniquely placed to work with all stakeholders in Urban WASH programming – the private sector, Government and NGOs and has engaged with all three to effectively implement the ER&RR programme. Adaptability and support to private contractors trying to operate in the challenging economic environment of Zimbabwe has seen a high level of scepticism change to acceptance and eventual eagerness to work with UNICEF, which is seen as an organisation that keeps to contractual obligations and pays as per agreements (Representative of Stewart Scott International)¹².

At the regional and global level, the ER&RR programme has created a precedent for UNICEF's involvement in urban WASH programmes, and is being used as a reference for other countries initiating such scope of interventions¹³. UNICEF Zimbabwe through its urban WASH interventions, including ER&RR, is now seen as a learning field for the organisation globally despite initial "push back" at the regional and global levels.

Recommendations:

5. UNICEF and partners to ensure that the curriculum and activities of Community Health Clubs are fully adapted to the urban context, and to further strengthen the adaptation of the CHC approach to urban programming in view of the lessons learnt under the ER&RR. Additionally the opportunity for communication of other critical programme components to residents through the CHCs (billing and payment issues, reporting faults, cross cutting issues, etc.) needs to be further explored.
6. Given that responsibility for water and sewage service provision has not as yet been handed over to many of the targeted Local Authorities, and is unlikely to be so during the STWP intervention period, UNICEF should strengthen linkages with ZINWA not only for hardware interventions but also customer care and strengthening relationships with its customers – the urban residents.

3.3 Efficiency

The last phase of ER&RR was implemented during the period of a Government of National Unity. While there were marked political contestations between Ministries headed by different political parties, at the time this did not result in a major negative impact on programme implementation, save for difficulties faced by NGOs in obtaining clearances for

¹² International Engineering Consulting Firm contracting by UNICEF for supervision and contract management of hardware related interventions under the last phase of ER&RR.

¹³ Beyond UNICEF, the case of urban WASH in Zimbabwe as a response to the cholera outbreak in 2008 – 2009 has been showed-cased in the recent Global Review of Humanitarian WASH Preparedness and Response in Urban and Peri-urban areas (UNICEF, World Bank, UNHCR and UN-Habitat).

operating in specific towns and holding what were deemed to be “public” meetings especially around the election period. Indeed one NGO failed to create a town level steering committee due to political resistance. At the local level, political interference hampered the implementation and long term gains of some of the ER&RR components. For instance, in Bindura the review team noted that health and hygiene facilitators found it difficult in some wards to mobilise people before and after the 2013 general elections due to the prevailing tense political atmosphere. This was heightened by the reduced support to the facilitators by local authorities, in case they were labelled as supporting a rival political faction through the ER&RR programme. Risk mitigation remains a priority as does being able to track and report on this in the successor programme.

While considered to be the most appropriate model then, the review team noted that more impact could have been achieved if rehabilitation of hardware and soft components had been properly sequenced with regular information exchange.

Within its internal procurement procedures, UNICEF Zimbabwe adapted its approach to supply and contracting so as to allow the necessary flexibility to support the ER&RR. As an example, the normal lead time for procurement processes (6 -9 months) was streamlined to suit ER&RR requirements (as well as other sector programmes in UNICEF Zimbabwe), where procurement of goods and services was achieved within three months. However this was also complicated by limited local contractors’ capacity to respond to tenders and short lead time for regional or international firms to set up or mobilise.

Given that the initial phases of the ER&RR were implemented within the ‘emergency period’ UNICEF allowed for a higher threshold of risk (and stronger mitigation measures) in order to achieve on the ground results. Nevertheless, with the country and UNICEF CO transitioning from emergency to recovery, the full-fledged procurement processes have been progressively re-instated. In this evolving context, UNICEF’s experience in the earlier phases has been put into practice as procurement processes became more rigid and flexibility decreased. To address this issue, dedicated resources from WASH and Operations have been placed together to facilitate and speed up the procurement processes, while at the same time reducing the practice of working in silos. This is a unique model which being considered by other sector programmes as well as other UNICEF country offices in the delivery of urban WASH programmes

Coordination arrangements – During the implementation of the ER&RR, unlike the Small towns WASH programme there was no national structure to coordinate implementation of the programme in the different towns and to manage risk especially the process of transitioning from emergency to early recovery. While the Urban Sub Committee of the NAC, chaired by the Ministry of Local Government did exist at the time it did not have the capacity to support coordination of the implementation of the ER&RR. There have been expectations raised for government systems strengthening; the rural model is well resourced through provision of vehicles, equipment, staff allowances for M&E and departments interacting with UNICEF Urban WASH programme have also tended to expect to receive the same level of support as their “rural” counterparts. Learning from the gap in Government inter-ministerial engagement in supporting and monitoring the ER&RR, the successor STWP has established both a Programme Advisory Committee and Programme Management Team to strengthen this element.

Though UNICEF played a major role in creation of the National Coordination Unit, the sector missed an opportunity for creating sector benchmarks through the Joint Sector reviews. This situation according to the World Bank could have been a function of prevailing uncertainties in the environment. There are other structures that UNICEF could have used to leverage such as theUCAZ forums.

Implementation arrangements – these could have been improved in some instances. In the case of ZINWA run town water and sanitation systems, institutional support from UNICEF was not delivered to the same scale as that provided to Local Authorities implementing similar interventions. The software components, decentralized billing and customer care support were offered to local authorities and not extended to ZINWA resulting in ZINWA having more of an observational role in towns like Karoi for the software component. For the hardware interventions ZINWA was in the forefront in terms of technical consultation, decision-making and capacity building (such as training of O&M staff). While ZINWA indicated its interest in being part of the tendering process for the STWP programme, this needs to be approached with caution to maintain the independence of programme decision making. The World Bank Water and Sanitation Programme, Beitbridge Emergency Water

Supply and Sanitation project Report¹⁴ provides an example of the opportunities and challenges in collaborating with ZINWA in programme governance and delivery.

The discord at times between central government and local authorities impacted negatively on the implementation of the ER&RR. One particular instance was the debt cancellation by the Ministry for Local Government which had the net effect of reducing revenue, while the programme aimed at increasing revenue. Though some government officials justified the debt cancellation owing to the fact that the capacity of citizens to pay had been eroded by the economic situation, the move was also described by some as populist and “cosmetic”. Non-payment of individual debts left authorities with debts of their own and they resorted to increasing other tariffs in order to pay off owing debts. The Bindura Town Clerk noted “It’s a vicious cycle; we owe other government departments, ZESA, ZIMRA, staff obligations among others. It was going to be fair situations if these debts were also written off for all to start on a clean slate”.

Hardware related interventions - UNICEF procurement unit noted that the design of programmes like this usually fail in considering the time required for the procurement process (i.e. tendering and contract adjudication). Partly as a result UNICEF sought a six months no-cost extension to properly wrap up hardware components. However the extension was mostly to allow for the final ‘closure’ of hardware interventions - which, looking backwards, was perhaps not considered or discussed sufficiently - meaning the need to include proper time for handover of rehabilitation works to beneficiaries and contract closure procedures was not included in programming. There were no major contractor challenges reported during the last phase of the programme. However, supported NGOs reported that the time given to conduct assessments was unrealistic to deliver. While UNICEF’s approach to deliver these components was flexible, no specific strategy was developed to support or provide guidance to NGOs on how to deliver soft components, mainstream cross cutting issues and track impact.

One of the major challenges towards achieving efficiency in the long term was that due to a freeze for hiring of new staff necessitated by council’s financial situation, local authorities were challenged in being able to hire critical staff for operations and maintenance of hardware supported under the ER&RR. This was compounded by the capacity of existing staff and the need for the right skillset for the job. This affected operations and maintenance of supported infrastructure. The Engineering consultants on the Programme (Stewart Scott International) considered that the local authorities’ technical capacity was lacking mainly due to ‘brain drain’ related to the economic crisis and the existing staff did not necessarily meet the required technical capacity and experience, had limited grasp of contract management and that nodal support was also absent. UNICEF pointed out that delivery efficiency was also hampered by the assessments leading to development of initial technical designs

¹⁴ World Bank Water & Sanitation Programme, Beitbridge Emergency Water Supply and Sanitation Project Impact Report. (September 2104).

needing to rely on inaccurate and insufficient information due to the lack of technical archives at town council/ZINWA level. Added to that, all the seven towns did not have maps and proper drawings required for carrying out rehabilitation works in sewer and water systems. This meant more unpredictability in the work and hence contributing to the request for six months no-cost extension.

Communications and Branding- While bill boards showing the joint partnerships were erected close to sites being rehabilitated, the Bindura site visit demonstrated that beneficiaries were unaware of the source of financial support for the programme, especially as regards the software related interventions. As a result there was a very low recognition of Australian Government support. On another communication level, while customer care trainings were conducted, citizen engagement was limited to PHHE focusing on health messages while not integrating other components such as billing literacy, metering as well as providing updates on council business in order to gain residents trust.

Recommendations:

7. Document and formalise the organisational arrangement UNICEF put in place for streamlining their procurement processes and ensure these are in place throughout the implementation of the STWP. This will also benefit internal institutional learning.
8. UNICEF be aware of potential political risks and regularly update risk management strategies. Improved dialogue with local stakeholders will increase UNICEF's ability to deal with emerging political challenges.
9. Strengthen information exchange with NGOS on the hardware components (and vice versa on software) to improve fit between software and hardware. Use of steering committees to strengthen information exchange
10. Communication and Visibility – Develop a specific Communication strategy - which will include communication to beneficiaries on the partnership between UNICEF and Australia and a bi-annual newsletter/bulletin.

3.4 Sustainability

Sustainability of supported towns is dependent on the operating environment and supportive policy reforms from Government including ring-fencing WASH generated revenue for reinvestment in service delivery.

The programme focused on increasing production, quality and security of drinking water. However, rehabilitation of infrastructure did not fix all system challenges and water loss remains high (estimated between 35-40% on average according to supported councils 2013 reports). There was evidence of cost recovery improvement from supported councils. Bindura is a classic example where council managed to use generated WASH funds that contributed to the purchase of utility vehicles thus strengthening service delivery.

ICT upgrade of the wider or local area network, installation of computers motivated staff, improved service delivery and trust between councils and residents. ICT upgrade requires huge investment in training and mentorship of staff and setting up technical user groups for councils to assist each other. However, only two out of the eight Promun modules are being used due to lack of training and inherent resistance to change from the different town council divisions. To solve this issue, besides additional training, a commitment from the town council management is required to lead the change. The service provider Burco is not always available to support councils to troubleshoot posing challenges to sustainability. The proposed introduction by Government for all local authorities to migrate to SAP accounts and information management system in light of ICT investments might affect gains made, though the successor programme is including the development of an interface between Promun and SAP to allow a seamless interaction between these two software packages.

In Bindura, the Local Authority forged partnerships with the private sector for on-going financial and technical support. However, private sector support is dependent on the operating environment and supported towns are at different levels. Therefore, this support may be erratic due to a number of factors that include operating environment and indigenisation laws implications.

NGO social mobilisation support through civic education to promote participatory Health and Hygiene was carried out from November 2012¹⁵ to September 2013¹⁶. This was a short period hence there was little synchronisation between hardware and soft components thereby undermining sustainability. While collected revenue is on the increase, updating customer database, household connections and repairing or replacement of old water meters were not supported under this programme. Clients bills are based on estimates hence need for further analytical work to understand the dynamics of willingness, ability to pay and customer profiling to inform programming. There are drawbacks to sustainability which are location specific; due to rampant artisanal mining in Bindura, rehabilitated infrastructure is prone to vandalism by miners due to water piracy, while in Shurugwi farmers have tapped into the raw water supply resourcing water for their cattle.

Provision of uninterrupted power supply is important for sustained delivery of predictable water, sanitation and hygiene services. In Karoi UNICEF provided ICT upgrade support to council instead of ZINWA (see earlier discussion) hence creating capacity gaps and potential conflicts. With ZINWA still responsible for water supply and distribution to residents and billing in Karoi, ownership of assets remains complex and affects eventual hand over to the town council.

It was not clear from the council visited during the review if collected revenue is to be reinvested as per Ministry of Local Government 2012 directive that 30 % of collected revenue is to be utilised for administration or salaries and 70 % to be ploughed back into mainstream service delivery.

Post project an encouraging intervention in Bindura was noted during the review mission. With increased revenue flow and improved communication between the town council and residents a mutually supportive system for improving connectivity is in place. The community dig the required trenching for water and sewage and the council with its increased mobility and ability to employ plumbing teams come and lay the sewage piping. In the case of water household connections residents purchase the piping, connections, taps etc. and the plumbing teams install them.



¹⁵ PCAs with NGO implemented from November 2012.

¹⁶ For ACF (covering Chipinge and BLESSING

vely active in the towns in

ASE CHECK WITH

Recommendations:

11. UNICEF to explore possibilities for BURCO (the PROMUN service provider) to partner with other local ICT companies to provide technical backstopping to councils. Include rolling out a trainer of trainers of programme and set up user groups for ICT experts drawn from supported towns. UNICEF to continue exchanging ICT upgrade note with GIZ for cross learning and encouraging supported towns to engage in structured exchange initiatives and peer reviews.
12. Tariff setting and bulk water metering, reduction of water losses, investment planning, customer care, citizen engagement and programme exit strategies require strengthening. More training is required to support operations and maintenance.
13. To strengthen PHHE and group sustainability measurement the STWP to embed the use of PHHE and Group Maturity Indexes in implementation partner (IP) and council planning. Encourage IPs to explore innovative ways of increasing male participation in hygiene promotion and strengthening club sustainability through WASH related income generation activities.

3.5 Cross Cutting Commitments

While the design of the initial phases of the ER&RR programme was primarily to address hardware, the last phase made a deliberate attempt to incorporate cross cutting issues within the delivery of programme interventions. These were principally articulated as the need for the programme to ensure environmental and social safeguards and address Gender aspects.

All implementing partners (Engineering Consulting Firm, Contractors and NGOs) played a role in the incorporation of various crosscutting issues. Although for the 'hardware' component (carried out by the Engineering Consulting Firms and Contractors) these were more related to the environmental compliance of rehabilitation works, especially wastewater treatment plants, they also contributed towards equity by targeting specific areas in the towns for rehabilitation of critical sections, usually where the most disadvantaged populations live so they could have access to W&S services.

Gender

As for the 'software' side NGOs were charged with managing this component with the town councils and most succeeded in carrying out gender training for council staff and at least starting to draft a gender plan as well as providing some orientation in WASH for disabled people. It is unclear how effective this training has been, in Bindura there appeared to be a disconnect between the officials trained by the NGO and the official council gender desk - with the key gender entry point not being used targeting problems emerged. It also appeared that the connections between different departments and opportunities for working together in mainstreaming cross cutting issues such as gender management were not followed through. This is possibly due to the level of staff participating in the trainings (all sub director level)

and lack of follow up by the NGO to ensure the concepts are embedded in all council operations – a lesson learned for the STWP.

Nevertheless all gender related interventions as articulated in the original proposal were implemented by the partners with extensive sex-disaggregated data given in all their reports; planned training conducted and attempts made to ensure greater participation by women in meetings although the programme time frame did not allow for much change. The issue of male participation in hygiene promotion activities was raised above (Impact) and remains of concern. Even in schools the number of male health teachers responsible for health clubs was significantly lower than women teachers – reinforcing the stereotype.

Given that 52% of the urban population benefitting from improved level of water supply and sanitation services are women and girls¹⁷, overall gender related achievements of the programme (in addition to having increased safe water available for their use) include:

- In terms of access it is reported from end line surveys that improved water supply has resulted in considerable reduction of amount of time women and girls (who bear the responsibility of water collection) spent fetching water from alternate sources.
- According to women's testimonies this has also reduced the drudgery of fetching water from alternate or unsafe water sources by women and children and has potentially increased girls school attendance, opened up spaces for women to participate and be involved in WASH dialogue and decision making processes as well as increased productive time and personal safety (girls and children being reportedly attacked in the bush going to defecate and collecting water at night).

Social safeguards & Equity.

While rehabilitation works under the ER&RR programme aimed at increasing access and service level through enhancing universal access, the rehabilitation of some critical sections in the water distribution and sewage networks in the target towns have resulted in considerable improvement in service levels to the urban poor in high density areas (where over 60 per cent of the urban population is living).

In addition through the Partners working on software interventions, specific hygiene promotion sessions and discussions on WASH related issues were organized for people living with disabilities in 3 towns (i.e. Bindura, Karoi and Rusape). Also as part of supporting town councils on customer care and engagement with residents associations, UNICEF has started advocating for the identification of the most vulnerable households in the town as well as the development of pro-poor tariffs / payment plans. Although initial steps were made during the implementation of the ER&RR programme, continuous efforts will be made as part of the Small Towns WASH Programme. It is worth noting that the Bindura Town Clerk suggested that a full urban assessment is required to determine whether the urban poor are appropriate for specific targeting, however IDS and ZIMSTATS are two of a number of sources which clearly outline urban poverty and required targeting.

Environment.

The ER&RR Programme, through rehabilitation works as well as community mobilisation for solid waste management, has partially addressed environment pollution in the target towns by significantly reducing the amount of untreated sewage and solid waste being discharged/disposed in the open.

Unblocking and upgrading critical sections of the sewage network and rehabilitation of sewage pump stations has resulted in improved conveyance out of residential areas and subsequent reduction of the health risk associated with overflowing of sewage. In addition, rehabilitation of wastewater treatment works in selected towns (desludging of ponds,

¹⁷ Census figures

rehabilitation of breached embankments and geometric shapes) has resulted in both additional treatment capacity and better quality of the effluent being finally discharged. (see table 3.). The Bindura case articulated in section 3.2 (Impact & Effectiveness) elaborates this process.

Moreover, in line with the Zimbabwean Environmental regulations (i.e. Environmental Management Act), specific method statements for the rehabilitation of wastewater works were prepared and approved by the Environmental Management Agency (EMA). As the works related to rehabilitation of existing facilities Environmental Impact Assessments were not required.

Engaging with EMA has proved fruitful and has led to its further involvement in the STWP with training for Town councils being provided by EMA. Meanwhile improved understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities is resulting in EMA being seen increasingly as a potential facilitator and not just a fining organisation – advocacy is on-going.

In general however implementation and follow up of some cross cutting issues was perceived as rather weak at the town level and a stronger connection to the implementation processes were necessary. Implementing partners were not as strong with follow up as they might have been to both town council and communities. Additionally while UNICEF had a dedicated Gender specialist available to advise the programme in the initial phases, that officer's departure and non-replacement meant the programme did not receive as strong a guidance as it might have. Other cross-cutting issues such as Disaster Risk Management and Climate change were not strongly emphasised in the programme. Given the importance of cross cutting components in the STWP this will need to be much further strengthened in the successor programme.

Recommendations:

14. A robust and concrete strategy for implementation of mainstreaming and reporting on Cross Cutting issues should be developed (together with the implementing partners) for the successor programme.
15. UNICEF should consider how it could strengthen its own support to implementing partners so they in turn can support the towns and populations with which they are working.
16. Cross cutting plans (Gender, social inclusion, Environment (LEAP) etc.) developed as part of the software strategy in the STWP to be incorporated (together with the business plan) into town councils "Master Plan".

3.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

The programme was continuing to evolve even in the last phases and this complicated development of a robust and simple, easy to follow M&E framework with clear indicators or yearly milestones for all supported components. In addition, the programme was informed by rapid assessments and not detailed technical and social baselines. Though the programme attained direct and indirect results beyond the scope of emergency investments, components such as solid waste in Bindura were under reported. Measuring impact of soft components such as PHHE without assessing baseline results, end of project evaluation and use of tools such as PHHE index, group maturity among other behaviour change monitoring tools remains complex, as it has to be measured longitudinally. It is not clear how much of the cumulative budget was allocated to M&E hence it has been difficult to assess its adequacy. UNICEF WASH has a dedicated M&E officer, however the officer's level of effort and support to the ER&RR programme is not clear.

On the positive side, the indicators in the ER&RR proposal were realistic and achievable within set reporting timeframes. UNICEF is engaged in the national Service Level Benchmarking (SLB) process though data integrity from supported towns was questioned by UCAZ and World Bank WSP. The review team noted weaknesses on data management (UNICEF and council level) with the absence of a consistent approach for monitoring the soft and institutional components.

While the M&E responsibilities for contractors, councils, NGOs were articulated in the respective agreements these were not included in an M&E framework. There was some confusion on the extent of councils' and ZINWA's role in supervising contractors. Local councils felt their on-going role to supervise contractors was unclear, "we had to take it upon ourselves to encourage the resident contractor's workforce" according to the Bindura Town Clerk, otherwise rehabilitation works would have dragged on for too long. (see also the discussion relating to establishing clear responsibilities and lines of communication between supervising agencies in Section 3.2 Impact and Effectiveness (above)).

Joint M&E visits between UNICEF and the DFAT staff provided useful insights into the programme. Government teams from ZINWA, EMA, Ministry of Local Government and Ministry of Environment, Water and climate also monitored the programme and certified contractors completed works in line with set standards. Contractors and supported NGOs were responsible for monitoring their respective components. To allow for consistency on monitoring indicators under Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with NGOs these were aligned with the ER&RR logframe. This helped comparison between towns and consolidated reports. This approach has also been adopted in the STWP.

There were indications that M&E was not used as a necessary management tool for decision making by local authorities. In one example SSI alluded to the fact that councils were not monitoring water balances, a key indicator for decision-making.

Recommendations:

17. UNICEF WASH section to strengthen and provide additional resources to M&E (specifically in the Urban WASH programme) to develop better systems to improve outcome monitoring and supporting councils and NGOs to provide high quality data. The PHHE index, group maturity index are useful measures of behaviour change impacts and other soft components.
18. UNICEF to further support town councils develop their own capacity for M&E and work towards institutionalising this in a sustainable way. Strengthening their capacity to feed quality data into SLB and UNICEF core indicators will be critical. Councils to be encouraged to use generated data to inform key management decisions.

4. Key Lessons Learned & Overall Recommendations

The key lessons learned enumerated below reflect those identified during implementation of the Programme as well as a result of this review. A post-implementation lessons-learned exercise, envisaged before the end of 2014, will document more fully such learning and continue to inform implementation of the Small Towns WASH Programme as well as UNICEF management and other stakeholders.

1. Given that the ER&RR programme was originally conceived as an emergency programme aimed at reducing the risk of cholera through emergency rehabilitation interventions, the activities and timescales for the initial phases were reflective of this approach. With the transition towards recovery and development, the nature of activities, approaches and timelines needed to change progressively in to incorporate institutional strengthening and long term sustainability issues. In that regard, the formulation of the Small Towns WASH Programme and its implementation is a realisation of that need;
2. Despite the significant improvements in the water supply services in the target towns, challenges still remain. These include: problems with the water distribution network, especially leakages and low pressure in high lying areas with the result that some localities are still not receiving adequate water supply; inefficient sewage reticulation and treatment systems; and high numbers of non-functional water meters. The works under the last phase of ER&RR Programme assisted town councils in addressing some of these challenges, nevertheless additional support is still required some of which has been included in the Small Towns WASH Programme – this still focuses on the main (existing) treatment and distribution systems and is unable to include household connections or expansion to unserved areas.
3. Town-specific needs require more than ‘strict’ rehabilitation. Due to the lack of investment for expansion of systems over the past decades, the existing infrastructure has become inadequate/ unsuitable for the actual population needs. While the Programme has been successful in resuscitating critical components of the water and sanitation systems, additional support is still required to reach those who are not currently reached by the existing systems.
4. The private sector is yet to fully recover and be able to efficiently provide goods and services. The liquidity challenges faced by Zimbabwe’s economy, especially during early 2012, affected the local contractors’ ability to access adequate credit lines to pre-finance rehabilitation works. This contributed to delays in completion of some of the works. The mitigation measures put in place (such as introduction of flexible payments and cash advances against bank guarantees) have helped to overcome this challenge, although the problems persist. Based on this, UNICEF improved its pre-qualification process with more strict assessments of contractors’ financial capacity for future rehabilitation works. In the last phase of the Programme, some contractors participated through partnerships/joint ventures, enabling them improve their financial soundness;
5. Unreliable power supply was (and still remains) a major obstacle in improving provision of safe water supply in urban areas and growth points, despite the significant gains made through rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure by UNICEF and partners. UNICEF, together with AfDB and other partners, and in close coordination with ZESA engaged in specific advocacy for dedicated power lines for water and sewage works, resulting on some towns accessing these facilities;

6. Besides rehabilitation works, sustainability of results in the medium and long term requirements investment on capacity development, cost recovery and customer care. While the programme made a deliberate effort to increase capacity of local authorities through training of town council staff in different technical areas (O&M, hygiene promotion, customer care, billing systems, gender awareness, etc.); to achieve long-term results there is a need for sustained training over time, peer support and other supporting mechanisms all of which are to be addressed in the STWP.
7. The linkage between rehabilitation works and hygiene promotion and other community focused interventions (“hardware” and “software”) is critical to achieve the expected results in public health – a view expressed strongly by implementing partners. This disconnect was evident in the last phase of the programme with rehabilitation works continuing long after the software elements had concluded. A critical gap appeared to be the lack of understanding among some sectors in the towns that the software component was an integral part of the hardware rehabilitation – i.e. one programme with the same objectives and goal. UNICEF and particularly the IPs will need to reinforce this message in the STWP.
8. Urban settings require adaptation of the traditional hygiene promotion approaches (usually developed for rural programmes) to be effective. Issues related to communication channels, messaging, timing and the need for enforcement of health regulations/by-laws are required to be considered as part of hygiene promotion in urban areas. The involvement of men in hygiene promotion activities (such as community health clubs) has been identified as a challenge by all and is to be tackled during the implementation of the Small Towns WASH Programme. The review identified Community Health Clubs as an as yet unrealised opportunity for communication on issues beyond hygiene promotion between the town council/programme implementers and residents and recommended that this be further explored in the STWP.
9. Improvements in the accounting and billing systems supported through the Programme have visibly increased local authorities’ revenue for improved service delivery. Also, support for improved customer care capacity and relationship with beneficiaries is improving community perception and strengthening the trust between councils and residents. Nevertheless it is also recognised that to get the maximum from these interventions, these should be incorporated as early as possible in the design and implementation of the Programme. There is little evidence of ring fencing and more effort will be required to persuade councils to ensure a percentage of water and sanitation revenue is indeed used for further improving service delivery.
10. Coordinated support of the WASH urban sub-sector and at local level is required for advancing on better delivery of WASH services in urban areas. In this regard, national level coordination has improved the allocation of resources by reducing the potential overlap of interventions. It has also allowed for consistency in approaches and methodologies, learning and collaboration between projects. Nevertheless support to NCU/MoEWC/MLG is still required to bring the urban WASH sub-sector to the same level of ‘activity’ as rural WASH. This may require additional dedicated resources for urban WASH in NCU so to move the agenda forward consistently. The Urban WASH Rehabilitation Working Group continues providing a platform for information sharing, strategy definition and advocacy. At town level, coordination through Steering Committees has been instrumental in managing expectations from stakeholders, foster synergies among them and increase town councils’ accountability for WASH related issues.

11. Cross-cutting issues have to be integrated in all components and stages of the Programme and also need special follow-up after its implementation. Close follow-up and strengthening awareness has to be emphasised throughout the programme to get councils (officials/councillors) and others to really accept cross cutting issues' importance and not just pay lip-service to their inclusion.

- a. Vulnerability: Despite vulnerable areas in target towns were identified as part of interventions, several of them are located within new residential areas and require extension of networks, which was beyond the scope of the Programme. However work with councils has started in terms of identifying particularly vulnerable households and articulating pro-poor billing strategies – but this requires much more effort.
- b. Gender: While gender awareness training have led into town councils identifying needs and plans for gender equity, there is need for close follow up and supporting the implementation of such plans in the mid and long term. All councils have a gender desk (focal point) and it is essential that IPs identify and work closely with this officer. Additionally gender training is simply the beginning: to inculcate gender thinking and commitment, senior officers have to be involved
- c. Environment: Although environmental compliance has been considered as part of the rehabilitation works, harmonizing the understanding and application of the Environmental Act among local level stakeholders is required. This has already been embedded into the STWP with EMA providing training to all 14 town councils and have committed to following up with all through their local officers, together with the NGO IPs on the ground.

12. Monitoring & Evaluation - While the expected results have mostly been achieved, there was no systematic process to track them over the course of the programme. There is need for UNICEF to better assess performance of its various implementing partners as well as to empower Town Councils / ZINWA to be able to track progress of their operations by themselves (aligned with SLB).

General.

Internally to UNICEF, the ER&RR programme has served as a reference for urban WASH programming in the region and globally, with UNICEF Zimbabwe providing a showcase for UNICEF's institutional move into urban WASH in other countries. At country level, the programme has also served to position WASH at a very high level in the Zimbabwe Country Programme, which has also supported development of the urban WASH programme.

Finally, as the programme migrated from emergency to recovery, the internal institutional arrangements for its implementation have also evolved to be able to deal with the additional risk management measures involved in the high value contracts involved in the programme. The internal coordination model put in place by UNICEF Zimbabwe is helping to streamline contracting processes and is gaining internal recognition. It is therefore recommended that UNICEF Zimbabwe document and formalise such arrangements so these remain active during the implementation of the STWP.

5. Conclusion

The Review team concluded that the review process had been useful and necessary and provided considerable insight into Urban WASH interventions. The ER&RR programme has met its objectives and has served as a great resource for learning for urban WASH programming, not only for UNICEF Zimbabwe but also for other implementing agencies in Zimbabwe and other UNICEF COs in the region and beyond. This is demonstrated by the

Australian Government's commitment to continue funding the successor Small Towns WASH Programme as well as UNICEF Harare's determination to continue contributing significantly to improving the well-being of urban residents in the country.

Strengthening systems (financial and managerial) demands a long-term process and also willingness for changing from the involved institutions (i.e. town councils). While the ER&RR has started the process there is still more work to be done, including the political willingness to continue with the changes (both from central and local governments).

Annexes

A1: TORs

A2: Interview guide

A3: List of people/organisations interviewed and field visit itinerary

A4: Human Interest story: "Australian Government and UNICEF help to restore access to clean water and sanitation in small towns in Zimbabwe".

A5: NGO discussion table – opportunities and Challenges