CIVIL SOCIETY
WATER, SANITATION
AND HYGIENE FUND

Civil Society Organisations'
Learning for Impact in
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Programming

Palladium
MAKE IT POSSIBLE

Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Australian Aid

UTS:ISF
INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank the 100 research participants who took part in this research. These WASH professionals represent a range of civil society organisations, donors, academic institutions, consultants and think tanks. Their generosity in speaking candidly to inform the research process in order to support outcomes that are relevant and valuable to the WASH sector as a whole is greatly appreciated.

In particular, we wish to thank the civil society organisations that are part of the CS WASH Fund:

- Australian Red Cross (ARC)
- Concern Universal (Concern)
- East Meets West Foundation (EMWF)
- Habitat for Humanity (HfH)
- International Development Enterprises (iDE)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Live & Learn Environmental Education (Live & Learn)
- Plan International Australia (Plan)
- Save the Children Australia (SCF)
- SNV
- WaterAid Australia
- Welthungerhilfe (WHH)
- World Vision Australia (WVA)

Citation:

Grant, M., Murta, J., Willetts, J., Carrard, N., and Powell, B., (2016) Civil Society Organisations' Learning for Impact in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Programming: Report for the CS WASH Fund.

Executive Summary

Globally, the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector has developed knowledge and learning (K&L) initiatives over many decades to support better practice, learn from each other, improve effectiveness, and ultimately, increase the number of people with safe and accessible water and hygiene facilities. It is a sector that sees the value of learning, and many organisations consider sharing their knowledge and experience with others as core business. Various modes of face-to-face and online knowledge capture and sharing are actively used by the sector, ranging from conferences to learning alliances, webinars and e-discussions.

However, what is not well-known is the extent to which these initiatives drive better evidence-based practice, and which modes of communication are more successful than others. In early 2016, the Civil Society WASH Fund (CS WASH Fund) commissioned research into how civil society organisations share and take up the WASH evidence base for effective learning and improvement.

Six key themes emerged from surveys and interviews with over 100 WASH sector practitioners on factors that hinder and enable effective knowledge and learning processes in WASH Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). These six key themes were:

1. **Peer-to-peer** learning is very important, and includes networks that support K&L in the WASH sector.
2. **Reflection processes** are required to facilitate learning, but are not currently available to the extent required.
3. **Leadership** sets the tone and needs to drive a learning culture.
4. Knowledge and learning (K&L) duties must be identified in **work-plans** in order for time and resources to be allocated to K&L duties. Considering knowledge and learning as core business at the strategic and organisational level creates an environment where this can more easily occur.
5. **Time and funding** (resources) are perceived by most organisations to be inadequate for K&L needs, but some donors are playing an important role in providing additional resources for K&L.
6. **Monitoring and evaluation data** and processes are not always used effectively to learn from past experiences, and more attention to this opportunity is needed.

The study indicated that the **types of communications that are both most preferred and most effective** for CSO learning and uptake of evidence based practice were:

- face-to-face formats (such as conferences, presentations and networking events);

- materials that provide practical guidance (manuals, field guides, and "how to" guidance notes); and

- toolkits and training materials.

Face-to-face learning formats were reported to build relationships, to be 'experiential' and to allow people to take time out of their usual routines to learn from each other in a variety of ways. Guidance materials and toolkits were reported to be most useful when they were concise, well written, well curated and well referenced as they enable on-the-job learning. Guidance material was also reported to require active mentoring to guide its adaptation to local contexts. CSOs gave mixed responses concerning webinars, and suggested these were best when recorded and made available at other times to watch.

This research supports literature on 'learning journeys' and 'the learning organisation' which emphasize the importance of self-determined learning processes, learning on the job and with peers, and in real-world situations. The key recommendations to improve effective learning within CSOs include: for CSO leadership to create time, resources, safe and supportive environments; for CSOs to ensure learning opportunities are provided across the organisation (from field staff to those in headquarters); and for CSOs to increase their focus on learning from M&E processes.

1 Introduction

The association between effective knowledge management and business performance has been demonstrated in many studies (Andreeva and Kianto, 2012; Kiessling, 2009) and this has been found to be a result in part due to investing in knowledge and learning (K&L) increasing employee satisfaction and retention (Chatzoudes, 2015). In the WASH sector, knowledge and learning also aids innovation, and supports evidence-based practice.

The CS WASH Fund commissioned research into how civil society organisations share and take up the WASH evidence base for effective learning and improvement. The objectives of the research were to:

1. **Determine CSO learning preferences** for materials, formats and communication mechanisms and address a current gap in knowledge;

2. **Share the research findings** with CSO grantees within the CS WASH Fund and more widely, researchers and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT);

3. **Improve the quality of knowledge products, dissemination of research and good practice** in the CS WASH Fund and the wider WASH sector including WASH research supported by the DFAT-funded the Australian Development Research Awards (ADRAs).

This study addressed the following three research questions:

- **Research question 1**: How do CSOs learn and improve WASH programming and practice to align with evidence-based approaches? (This question encompasses understanding and differentiating CSOs' organizational learning and knowledge capabilities, knowledge management systems, program design, organizational culture and individual learning).
- **Research question 2**: What materials, formats and communications mechanisms are most preferred in influencing CSO learning?
- **Research question 3**: What materials, formats and communication mechanisms are most effective and innovative in improving CSO WASH program in alignment with good practice?

2 Methodology

This research drew on theories of organisational learning, and knowledge and information management in over 50 sources of academic and grey literature reviewed (Appendix 1). These informed the design of data collection methods. A mixed methods approach was used, including semi-structured interviews and two online surveys were administered including a strategic mix of closed questions and open-ended questions.

The research targeted both respondents from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as well as other WASH sector stakeholders such as donors, think thanks and academics (referred to in this report as "non-CSOs").

For the **qualitative component**, a total of 17 people were interviewed. Of these, 13 were staff of CSOs that are part of the CS WASH Fund. The remaining four included: one donor, one research consultancy organisation, one independent consultant, and one multilateral organisation working in the WASH sector. Semi-structured interviews were coded and analysed using Dedoose qualitative and mixed methods data analysis software. Over 500 codes were applied to the data set.

The **two online surveys** were administered using Survey Monkey for a period of four weeks. One survey was targeted at CSO respondents and the other was targeted at other stakeholders (non-CSOs). A total of 60 people participated in the survey for CSOs, and 22 people participated in the survey for other WASH stakeholders (non-CSOs). A non-disaggregated data analysis was first conducted for pattern identification. A number of variables from the CSO survey data were then selected for disaggregated analysis. This included:

- Differences in preferences for different types of communication across regions, organisational sizes, respondents' roles, and whether the respondents had knowledge and learning duties or not;
- Differences in levels of perceived improved practice different types of communication had led to across respondents' roles;
- Differences in responses concerning whether the organisation provided funds and time for staff to pursue learning opportunities across organisational sizes; and
- Differences in the emphasis given by CSOs respondents and non-CSO respondents concerning areas of WASH that CSOs require more K&L.

Open-ended responses from the surveys were categorised into relevant themes, allowing for the quantitative analysis of their recurrence. Where relevant, these responses were used to validate and complement responses to the semi-structured interviews.

The analytical and reporting process concerning research question one (*see section 'Results: Learning for Improved Practice*') sought to showcase examples of leading practice and the strengths of the organisations, networks and partnerships that are deepening knowledge, disseminating it effectively, and reflecting on their core values in order to improve WASH programming. At the same time, barriers to learning and knowledge management were examined, and these provided insights into what constrains organisations, and where increased attention might be focused. In turn, the reporting concerning research questions two and three (s*ee section 'Results: Effective Communication Mechanisms'*) focused on presenting interesting differences found in the non-disaggregated and disaggregated data analysis that could be explained by insights from the qualitative data.

Research Participants

CSOs: Most CSO survey respondents (56%) were based in the Asia-Pacific region, including 17% from Australia (Figure 1), and a significant proportion (44%, n=32) had managerial roles. The majority of the respondents were either from a CSO with more than 300 employees (40%) or from a CSO of up to 20 employees (20%) (Figure 1). In-depth interviews were conducted with 13 staff of CSOs. All were program managers/coordinators or had equally senior positions.

Non-CSOs: Half of the non-CSO survey respondents (50%; n= 22) were based in the Asia-Pacific region, including 32% in Australia. The rest were distributed across North America (18%), Europe (14%), Africa (9%), South America (5%), and Caribbean (5%). Most (81%, n=21) were consultants, academics or from think thanks, and only two were from a donor organisation and national government. Most worked on rural WASH issues (62%). In-depth interviews were conducted with staff of one donor organisation, one research consultancy organisation, one independent consultant, and one multilateral organisation working in the WASH sector. All had in senior roles within their organisations.
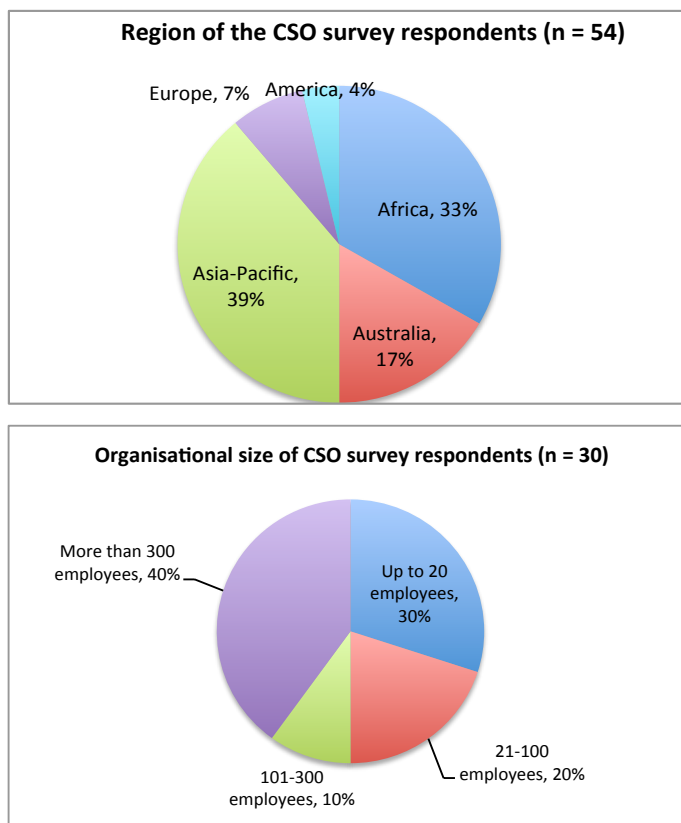

Region of the CSO survey respondents (n = 54)

Europe, 7%   America, 4%
Africa, 33%
Asia-Pacific, 39%
Australia, 17%

Organisational size of CSO survey respondents (n = 30)

More than 300 employees, 40%
Up to 20 employees, 30%
21-100 employees, 20%
101-300 employees, 10%

Figure 1: Region and organisational size of CSO survey respondents

3 Literature Review

Academic and grey literature (reports, guidance material, and briefing papers) were mapped against the three research questions, and ideas for survey and interview questions were devised from this mapping exercise. In total, over fifty sources of literature were consulted (Please see Appendix 1).

The key points taken from the literature review to inform the survey design, in-depth interviews and approach to analysis were:

- **Multiple scales and influences:** Organisational and individual learning occurs at a number of scales, and is influenced by a range of factors related to the organisational structure, how learning is built into every day work responsibilities, culture, context and power relations;
- **The learning organisation:** A learning organisation is one that fosters a range of approaches to bringing people together to learn, and uses reflective processes intentionally; and
- **Self-determination:** Self-determined learning opportunities are often the most effective in creating change within an individual, especially when they tap into deeper values held by that individual.

The literature review included studies related to:

1. **Organisational learning culture** including learning organisations, double and triple loop learning, diffusion of innovations, and knowledge management systems;
2. **Dimensions of learning** including individual and collective forms; and formal and informal learning**; and
3. **Modes of learning** including networks, team learning, and learning journeys.

These are each expanded upon below.

1. Organisational and Learning Culture

The way in which knowledge and learning is supported within an organisation, is part of an organisations' "culture". Organisational culture can be defined as the values, beliefs and hidden assumptions that members of an organisation have in common (Naranjo-Valencia et al 2011). Looking at learning processes within organisational culture, Peter Senge's (1990) renowned "learning organisation" framework has influenced organisational theory, and is pertinent to this research. While there is no universally accepted and clearly defined definition of what a learning organisation comprises, Senge (1990) proposes that they are places:

> "where people continually expand their capacity to create results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Senge 1990: 3).

Visscher et al (2006) suggest that characteristics of a learning organisation include that they are future driven, have free exchange of information, have commitment to learning from top management, that time is given to learning, diversity is valued, a climate of openness is fostered, and people are encouraged to learn from mistakes. Shipton et al (2013:2279) define a learning organisation as one that "engages effectively with external stakeholders, especially customers, while simultaneously building internal capacities". For WASH CSOs, this would translate into effective engagement with the communities, partners, and wider stakeholders in the sector that they are working with, while also focusing on building capabilities of staff within the organisation.

Organisational learning is also reported to be strongly influenced by structures and power dynamics of an organisation. In any organisation there are constantly evolving internal and external interactions, which form the basis of collective organisational learning processes (Prince and Wrigley 2007).

Organisations with a strong learning culture facilitate and enable double-loop learning (including questioning of assumptions embedded in current approaches), and triple-loop learning - where learning

is analysed in light of an organisations' mission and core values, and new strategies for learning are identified (Georges 1999:440).

The elements of organisational and learning cultures identified in the literature above informed the design of questionnaires, and underpinned questions specifically around: leadership (top management); whether or not organisations have a climate of openness and an ability to learn from mistakes; the extent to which internal capacity needs were identified and supported (with time and resources); and the extent to which organisations engage in double and triple loop learning. Responses to these questions provided an interrelated mix of responses that can be broadly be characterised as reflecting an organisations' learning culture.

2. Dimensions of learning

Knowledge can be explicit and tacit (knowledge which is gained from personal experience), and therefore passed on and communicated in a variety of ways. Learning can occur at individual or collective levels, and through formal and informal processes. Formal processes of learning include, training, workshops, monitoring and evaluation, seminars, or team meetings. In *formal* processes, the learning objectives are generally controlled by the entity delivering these rather than the learner. In contrast, in *informal* processes the learner is the one who sets the learning goals and objectives, and seeks out knowledge to meet these. Learning can also be intentional, when the intent of the learning goals and objectives are clear from the onset, or incidental, when the learner picks up on something unplanned during the learning process (Figure 2) (Mills et al 2007; Marsick and Watkins 2015).
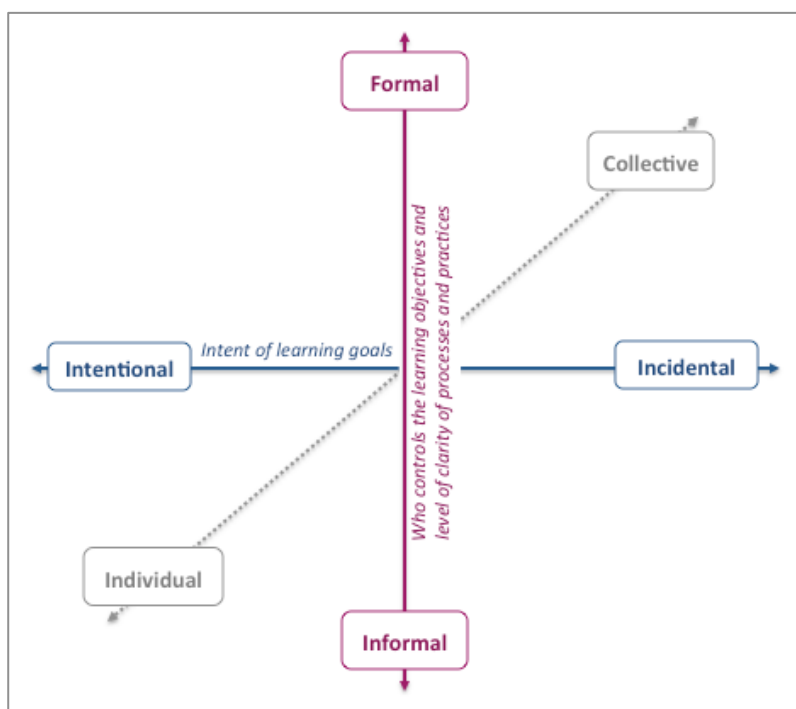

Figure 2: Dimensions of Learning (based on Mills et al 2007; Marsick and Watkins 2007)

Literature in the field of communications theory, individual and organisational learning highlights that for learning processes to be effective it is important to recognise the influences of culture and context, relational dynamics, and informal and unconscious forms of learning (Prince and Wrigley 2007; Britton 2005). As such, there may be differences in the most appropriate and most effective learning mechanisms and processes within international WASH CSOs, for example, between headquarters and in-country based offices.

Research participants were asked about these kinds of dynamics, particularly related to how much value they place on different types of learning and knowledge products and processes; and how they engage with formal and informal modes of learning.

3. Learning individually and together

Learning within a CSO occurs through many modes, channels and flows of information including:

A) Individual learning, including through "learning journeys";

B) Team learning; and

C) Communities of practice and learning alliances.

Understanding these flows is helpful in identifying where, how and by whom different materials and communications are engaged with and utilised. Some literature relevant to these three modes is presented below.

A) Individual learning through "learning journeys"

The concept of 'learning journeys' begins with the premise that learning will be most effective if people are able to identify their own learning needs, and learn while doing, through real world experiences (Crick Deakin et al 2014). Learning is reported to be more powerful if it can be integrated with the flow of daily work, be applied to solving authentic challenges, and build around networks and relationships, while tapping into the individuals' core values (Crick Deakin et al., 2016). To this end, survey participants were asked to what extent they were able to choose the learning opportunities that they pursed as a proxy measure of how much agency they had in determining their own "learning journeys".

B) Team Learning

One of Senge's five disciplines is "team learning" where people share their experience and insights together, have time for reflection and joint inquiry. Leaders are important to this process, in that they need to develop skills to facilitate such discussions, and create the time and space for deep reflection (Senge 1990). The importance of observing and modelling the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others underpins Social Learning Theory, which offers that learning processes are intimately connected with our observations of others (Bandura, 1977). In this sense, our direct peers are very important to learning processes, and their behaviours are a key source of modelling and information that we use to inform our own personal practice.

C) Communities of practice and learning alliances

The WASH sector has recognised the importance of networks, alliances and communities of practice for some time (Smits et al 2007; IRC 2013; Sutherland et al 2012). The creator of 'diffusion of innovations theory', Everett Rogers also highlights the importance of peer to peer conversations and networks (Rogers 2003). Conversations with peers are critical to the adoption of innovations (and behaviour change more broadly) because of the need for trust to underpin a personal (or organisational) risk assessment, and to make the adoption or trialling of a new approach perceived attractive (Robinson 2009:2-3).

Communities of Practice (CoPs) have gained greater attention and support over the last decade in various professional domains, including in the WASH sector. These networks engage in a process of collective learning and are made up of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Learning may be intentional, or an incidental outcome of member's interactions (Wenger-Trayner 2004).

Similarly, but more deliberatively, learning alliances are an approach to learning that brings together representatives from government, civil society, universities and other research institutions and the private sector to do joint research, find solutions, and share knowledge and skills in areas of common interest (IRC 2013; and Smits et al 2007).

Research participants were asked whether or not they participated in communities of practice (CoPs) and/or learning alliances, which ones, and how these networks were important to their learning.

4 RESULTS: Learning for improved practice

Research Question 1: How do CSOs learn and improve WASH programming and practice to align with evidence-based approaches? This question encompasses understanding and differentiating CSOs' organisational learning and knowledge capacities, knowledge management systems, program design, organisational culture and individual learning.

To respond to the first research question, CSOs and other WASH sector stakeholders (non-CSOs) were asked a range of questions related to:

- How **individuals learn** and the extent to which this is supported and enabled by their organisation;
- Knowledge and learning organisational **culture**;
- Knowledge management **systems**;
- How knowledge and learning is used in program **design and adaptive processes**; and
- How knowledge and learning has resulted in **improved processes** and practices in alignment with evidence based approaches.

How individuals learn

Emails, on the job meetings and conversations were highlighted as key modes of information sharing for CSO staff as shown in Appendix 2.

Individuals were asked about their preferences for modes of learning, and **on-the-job learning, discussions and partnerships** also were revealed as top three ways that people prefer to learn as shown in Figure 3.
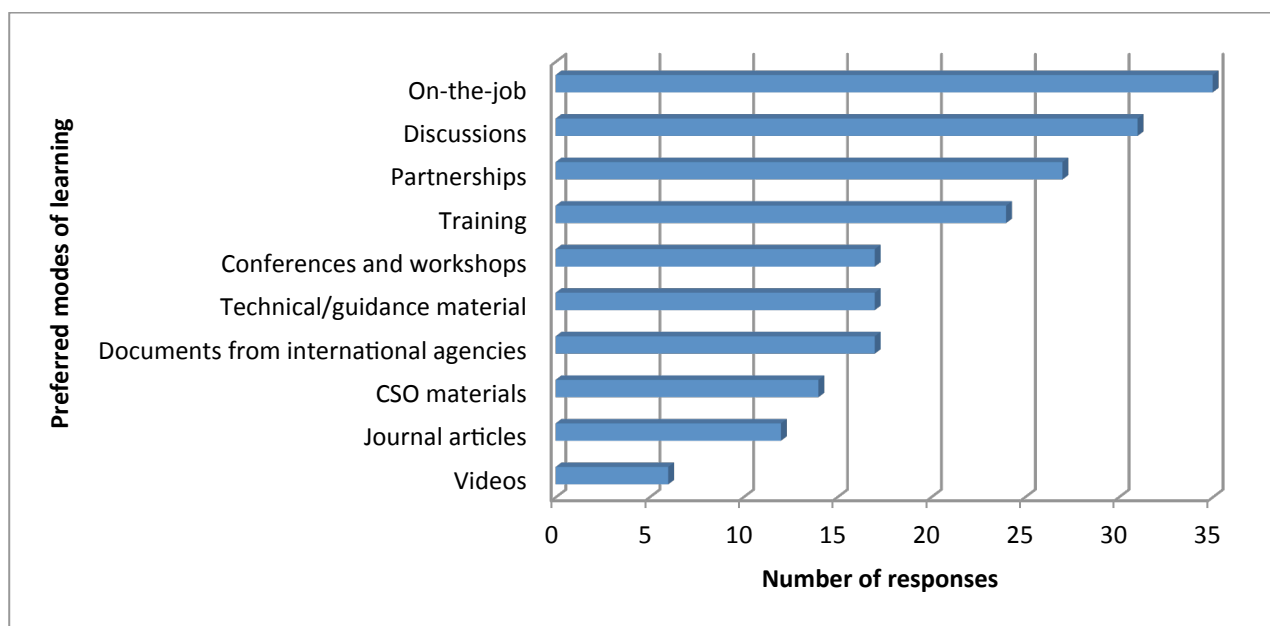

Figure 3. CSO modes of learning preferences

Knowledge and learning for improved processes and practice

When asked what has influenced the uptake of a new evidence-based approach within their organisation, CSOs identified a range of drivers around the themes of research, support, and learning together (Table 1).

Table 1: Examples of drivers for the uptake of new evidence-based approaches

Research and piloting	• In-country action research. • Conduct a scan of good practice on a particular topic; conducting a D-Group discussion on the topic; develop a model; test the model; evaluate the model.
Support	• Space and encouragement within the role and organisation to trial something new. • Donors requiring the implementation of a specific practice/approach (and

	providing financial support for this).
Learning together	• Bringing WASH committees at the community level together to learn from each other. • Partnerships with governments and aligning programs to national policies.

When participants were asked to imagine a WASH organisation with a good knowledge and learning culture and describe the features that it displays, they identified:

- Dedicated and significant **time and financial resources** to knowledge and learning activities;
- Regular **internal presentations and reflection processes** including forums to share successes;
- Proactive approaches to **partnerships;**
- Facilitating a culture where it is **okay not to know**, and openness **to new ideas;**
- Willingness to innovate and try **new approaches;**
- **Donor support** for knowledge and learning; and
- **Leadership** from the CEO and management.

Emerging themes: barriers and enablers

A successful learning culture includes one that is able to take up new evidence and apply it meaningfully in policy and programming. Research participants were asked about barriers and enablers to learning, and six core themes emerged:

1. **Peer-to-peer** learning is very important, and includes networks that support K&L in the WASH sector.
2. **Reflection processes** are required to facilitate learning, but are not currently available to the extent required.
3. **Leadership** sets the tone and needs to drive a learning culture.
4. Knowledge and learning duties must be identified in **work-plans** in order for time and resources to be allocated to K&L duties. Considering knowledge and learning as core business at the strategic –organisational level creates an environment where this can more easily occur.
5. **Time and funding** (resources) are perceived by most organisations to be inadequate for K&L needs, but some donors are playing an important role in providing more resources for K&L.
6. **Monitoring and evaluation data** and processes are not always used effectively to learn from past experiences, and more attention on this is needed.

These six areas are expanded upon below.

1. Peer-to-peer learning

The benefit of learning from peers whilst on the job, in workshops and conferences, and through networks was raised as a critical means of learning. Over 68% of CSO survey respondents identified discussions within their organisation as being very important to their learning, and 76% identified learning on the job from experience as being a key source of learning. Interviewees noted the power of horizontal learning within their organisations, where field advisors from one country/context met with advisers from another context to learn from each other. Learning exchanges within organisations, and between organisations were also identified as powerful learning forums. One organisation holds and annual summit at the organisations' headquarters, and the agenda for this summit is set by participants, with learning needs identified in advance of the summit so that they drive the direction of the event. One interviewee discussed the importance of drawing on the knowledge of people you know and trust. Face-to-face meetings were seen to serve an important role in fostering these trusting relationships and thereby facilitate this mode of learning. The high costs of peer-to-peer learning, especially through face-to-face opportunities requiring travel was acknowledged by CSO and non-CSO respondents.

Learning alliances and Communities of Practice (CoPs) have received considerable focus in recent years within the WASH sector, through organisations such as the IRC. 65% of CSO survey respondents reported that they are part of a formal learning alliance and/or CoP. Useful and active networks identified by respondents included: The Australian WASH Reference Group, SuSanA forum, SanCoP, Sanitation Updates, IDS, CLTS Foundation and Knowledge Hub, Sanitation Portal, Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN) forum, India Sanitation Coalition, and ASH Community of Practice.

2. Reflection processes

Time for reflection processes was also seen as critical to learning within organisations. Both CSO and non-CSO survey respondents identified that they perceived a gap between available knowledge, and the translation of this into policy and practice, partly as a result of a lack of time for reflection processes. When asked whether or not they agreed with the statement: "CSOs don't have time to learn and reflect on policy and practice outside of day to day duties", 89% of non-CSO survey respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed. As one non-CSO interviewee noted:

> *"CSOs are extremely overworked and have little time for adequate reflection – In some cases evaluation activities are conducted by consultants who have little time/remit to build the capacity of the team to understand the process and findings and so opportunity to incorporate learning into practice is diminished."*

Respondents noted in both the interviews and surveys that learning events and face-to-face workshops and conferences were useful partly because they provided time for critical reflection that was not available during busy normal work hours.

Time for reflection can also be enabled through internal processes of evaluation of existing programming activities. For example, one CSO interviewee also explained how reflective practice through such processes had been one of the drivers for the organisation to include gender in WASH project monitoring (Box 1).

Interviews with CSOs and other WASH stakeholders revealed that **learning from failure** was an area that could be improved on within organisations. A number of factors were identified by CSOs and non-CSOs that hinder the systematic use of failure in learning processes, including: fundraising and brand concerns influencing the space for openly discussing failures; perceived donor expectations; and fears of negative personal consequences resulting from admitting that things did not go according to plan. One non-CSO respondent observed:

> *"I think among CSOs generally there is a fear of scrutinising themselves because their funding is linked to reputation and external/charitable funding rather than customer satisfaction. If only one CSO is criticised, it risks making them look less favourable next to others and therefore compromises their sustainability as an organisation."*

Box 1: Multiple drivers for inclusion of gender in WASH project monitoring

One CSO interviewee identified the following drivers for inclusion of gender in WASH project monitoring:

- Global agency level imperatives for improved gender transformative work;

- Evaluations/reflections on existing programming activities that identified gaps in monitoring;

- A reasonably well embedded understanding of practical gender changes within implementing staff teams;

- Funding and other resources (including specialist in-house technical advice); and

- Interested and motivated WASH program staff.

---

3. Leadership

Leadership was reported as a key factor in facilitating a learning culture within organisations in the WASH sector. Leaders in relation to learning were identified both formally (i.e. the CEO and senior management) and informally (champions within the organisation). One example of a leader within an organisation driving

learning was a staff member who has established an organisation wide document reference and access system, connecting staff to relevant academic literature.

In response to *"our leaders support and encourage a learning culture"*, 45% of respondents strongly agreed; 27% somewhat agreed; 9% somewhat disagreed; and 9% strongly disagreed. Power dynamics and hierarchical structures were not reported to be a significant problem within the CSOs surveyed, with 63% responding that these issues did not hinder information flows and uptake within their organisation. At the same time, non-CSO interviewees emphasised the importance of leadership in driving K&L, and that they felt that a lack of support from the top for time, space and resources dedicated to K&L was one of the key impediments to learning in the sector.

"Our CEO emphasises his support for transparency, and accountability but encourages learning from failure. When something doesn't go according to plan, it's managed without finger pointing" (CSO participant)

4. Knowledge and learning duties identified in work-plans

Defining K&L in work-plans including identifying time and funding, was reported to be in place for most CSO survey respondents, but this was not reported to be adequate, as responses to other questions indicated that more resources are required for effective K&L processes. Given the literature on "learning journeys", which offers that learning is more effective when people have agency in defining what they are going to learn based on their core values, it was positive to find that the majority of CSO survey respondents reported that staff have some influence over the learning opportunities that they pursue. Almost 80% of the CSO survey respondents reported that they have knowledge and learning duties as part of their role and work plan. Of these, almost 60% reported that they are provided with funds and/or time to pursue learning opportunities, and almost 60% of these people are able to choose the learning opportunities that they pursue.

A significant factor that was identified in supporting knowledge and learning being embedded in work-plans was the extent to which K&L is "part of the organisations' DNA". Three organisations interviewed explained that K&L was a core function of the organisation and one of their key objectives, and that

Box 2. K&L as core business

One CSO has made K&L core business by using strategies such as:

- K&L is defined in the overarching goals of the organisation
- Annual reflection studies for each program
- Regular learning events
- K&L responsibilities clearly defined in work plans
- Formative research studies
- Every project budget has a line for K&L
- Support for K&L from some key donors
- Joint projects with academic partners.

this made it possible to fund specific K&L support roles, and for K&L to be embedded into work plans. This direction from the top seemed to be a highly influential factor in promoting K&L within these organisations. Please see Box 2 for an example of how one WASH CSO has made K&L part of their core business.

5. Resources: Time and funding

The issue of time and financial resources was raised by research participants as a constraint to knowledge and learning. The amount of time and funding made available to employees for K&L activities varied across the survey sample. Many cited the importance of donors in requiring knowledge and learning processes and outputs as conditions for funding and within funding agreements. DFAT's role in driving K&L in the CS WASH Program was praised, as was K&L supported by the Gates Foundation.

'We're not stuck for resources – we're stuck for filtering and time' (CSO research participant)

Funding specific K&L support roles was also seen as beneficial, although where these people were situated within the organisation (unit and relative hierarchy) was seen to influence the degree to which designated K&L staff drove learning within the organisation. The relationship between K&L and M&E was identified by several interviewees, with one respondent explaining that now that the knowledge and learning role is sitting in the same unit as staff conducting M&E, this may improve the connection between these two inextricably linked sources and drivers of organisational learning.

One organisation is considering establishing a K&L fund for the organisation to use strategically for learning needs. One organisation has conducted an internal review of K&L capacities, and one of its recommendations to create a fund specifically for learning events; program exchanges; mentoring; peer review of projects; knowledge brokers; and forums to share information as it happens, rather than at the end of a program.

The issue of who gets access to learning opportunities such as conferences and events was raised, with some CSOs reporting that field staff didn't get as many opportunities as management at Headquarters, and that more focus needs to be placed on connecting knowledge and learning across organisations and roles, especially within large organisations.

6. Learning from Monitoring and Evaluation

Strong feedback loops between monitoring and evaluation processes and programming was considered particularly important to non-CSO participants, with 40% of respondents stating that M&E is not at all used effectively for continuous improvement in the CSOs that they work with, and 60% stating that M&E was somewhat effectively used. One non-CSO respondent commented that:

> "Monitoring data is often considered donor-driven and may lack meaning for the partners – [it] requires commitment to training and ongoing support for staff to understand M&E information and incorporate into implementation."

However, 24% of CSOs strongly agreed that "monitoring and evaluation reports are routinely analysed to identify what has been learned, and what lessons could be applied in the future", and 53% of CSOs somewhat agreed with this statement. This shows that the majority of CSO survey respondents agreed that M&E was used within their organisation but to varying degrees.

Interviews revealed that where M&E staff are located within an organisation, and who conducts M&E processes, greatly impacts on the extent to which it can be used for knowledge and learning purposes. In one CSO it was noted that there was a disconnect between those responsible for doing M&E, and those doing program implementation. Concern was raised about baseline studies being outsourced and therefore not understood and 'owned' by on the ground staff. One respondent also suggested that M&E should be in all relevant roles work plans and not centralised and/or undertaken by external consultants (Box 3).

Box 3. Challenges

Weaknesses identified by CSOs and non-CSOs to knowledge and learning processes and practices were identified primarily as:

- **Lack of time for reflection** and to take on the results of M&E processes and data;
- In some organisations, leaders are not **driving a "learning culture"**;
- **Reputation and funding concerns** impeding K&L processes;
- **Learning from failure** is ad-hoc and sometimes avoided due to perceived pressures from donors and not wanting to be exposed (personally and organisationally).
- **M&E data** and processes not being used more effectively in continuous improvement. This included that some M&E processes are outsourced and therefore knowledge sits outside of some organisations; the donor driven nature of some M&E processes seen to not be as relevant to 'on the ground' knowledge needs as they could be; and lack of time available/built in to learning from M&E.

If I could change one thing …

In order to focus on the critical changes that might be needed to further support CSO knowledge and learning culture and activities, research participants were asked to identify one key factor they would focus on. Table 2 presents a summary of their ideas categorised into four themes: resourcing; supportive structures; knowledge capture and sharing; and attitudes and outlooks. Please note that this synthesis draws on the views of CSO and non-CSO participants, from both surveys and interviews.

Table 2: Critical factors to improve K&L

Theme	Examples from survey and interview participants (CSOs and non-CSOs)
Resourcing	• Specific budget - lines for K&L across the organisation and within each project are in place. • More time is made available for personal, team and organisational reflection. • Conferences are attended by all levels of staff (not just management). • Knowledge and learning is integrated into funding requirements by donors. • A knowledge management system is adequately resourced, and staff supported to maintain the system.
Supportive structures	• A global focal point to capture K&L may assist accessing relevant information. • Staff are supported identify what the learning needs are of the community they are working with. • Learning from failure is formally supported and processes put in place to capture this knowledge and learning from when things don't go according to plan.
Knowledge capture and sharing	• Action research processes are employed. • Formative research underpins programming. • Most significant change stories are captured. • CSOs would conduct baseline studies so that knowledge is kept "in-house" (rather than by consultants). • More external speakers are organised to present to staff. • Program staff are heavily involved in M&E rather than M&E being outsourced, or conducted by separate units. • Important literature is translated into local languages. • The value of workshops and training is better understood and evaluated. • Organisations build skills to communicate their knowledge more creatively.
Attitudes and outlooks	• Management and staff are open to not having all the answers. • Fundraising and concerns about reputation do not unduly influence open learning processes within organisations. • A culture where learning is valued is translated down to the individual work plan level.

Box 4 illustrates the process followed by two CSOs to develop a K&L strategy and define what to focus on to support K&L within the organisation.

Box 4. Developing a K&L strategy

Two participating CSOs have assessed the status of K&L within their organisations, including staff needs and opportunities to bring staff together to learn from each other. These detailed baseline assessments underpin strategies to enhance K&L in WASH within the organisations, and to focus resources where they are identified to be most needed individually, and across the international offices.

---

5 RESULTS: Effective Knowledge and Learning Products

Research Question 2: What materials, formats and communications mechanisms are most preferred in influencing CSO learning?

Research Question 3: What materials, formats and communication mechanisms are most effective and innovative in improving CSO WASH program in alignment with good practice?

CSOs and non-CSOs were asked via survey and in-depth interviews a range of questions that related to:

- Most commonly used and **preferred types of communication**;
- **Types of communications and tools for learning** that have led to the greatest level of **improved practice** within CSOs;
- Types and formats of communication CSOs used to **disseminate their work and lessons learned;** and
- Examples of **good knowledge and learning (K&L) products** and their characteristics.

In addition to these question areas, the study also investigated the CSOs' learning needs across a range of WASH topic areas.

CSO preferences for types of communication

Overall the study indicated that the types of communications that are **most preferred and most effective** for CSO learning are:

- **face-to-face formats** (such as conferences, presentations and networking events);
- materials that provide **practical guidance** (such as manuals, field guides, and "how to" guidance notes, toolkits and training materials); and
- A **diversity of online formats** - WASH practitioners showed that they have a range of preferences for modes of online learning tools and knowledge products.

This finding was supported by both survey and semi-structured responses. The proportion of CSO survey respondents that rated these types of communication as having led to 'a lot of improvement' was comparatively higher than other types of communication (

). Similarly, the proportion of CSO survey respondents that selected these types of communication as their preferred was comparatively higher than other types of communication (Figure 5). This preference was evident across respondents at managerial and non-managerial roles, and from different regions and organisational sizes.

Most CSO interview respondents (62%: 8 of 13) noted a preference for face-to-face formats as effective learning mechanisms. The emphasis on practical guidance materials and/or learning opportunities was also consistent with survey results on the characteristics of good knowledge and learning products described further down, which highlight the importance of these providing practical guidance and tools. Practical field based learning through, for example, exchange visits and visits to model areas was also emphasised as important learning experiences by a significant proportion of CSO respondents (46%: 6 out 13).

There is a range of possible reasons behind this preference for face-to-face formats which link to some of the key enablers of organisational learning discussed in Section 4, including time for reflection and peer-to-peer learning. By taking people away from their offices and normal routines, face-to-face learning opportunities such as learning events, free people from their organisational time constraints, and as one interviewee noted, force them *"to learn because there is nothing else to do"*. Further, often these events offer experiential hands-on, peer-to-peer learning experiences, and allow for networking and the formation of partnerships.

However, there are challenges with how CSOs use and implement what they learn and the resources they get access to at these events. For example, one non-CSO interviewee noted that although *"CSO staff want tools and practical guidance […] typical pitfalls happen when these tools need to be adapted and are not localized enough"*. Findings from research conducted by Results for Development (2016) aligns with this,

concluding that CSOs often lack mentoring or 'reach back support' in applying tools or skills learned at learning events to their contexts, which limits the effectiveness of this mode of learning.
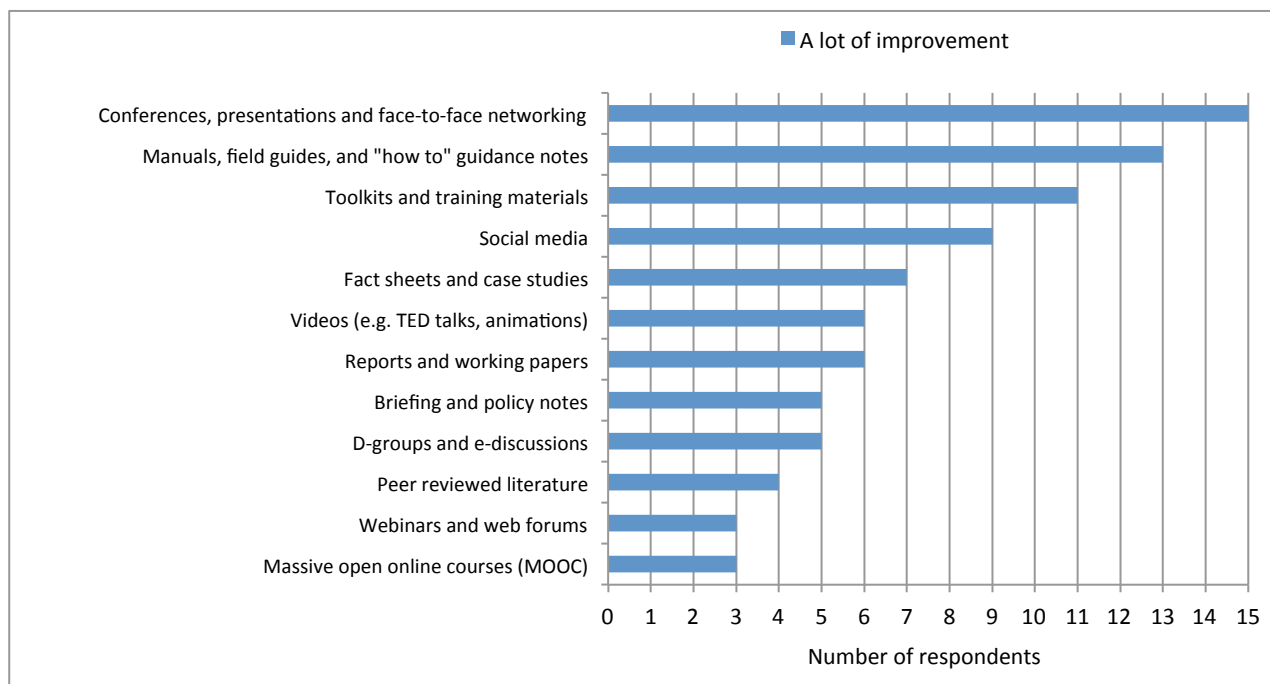

Figure 4: Knowledge and learning products perceived by CSO respondents to have led to the greatest level of improved practice within their organisations
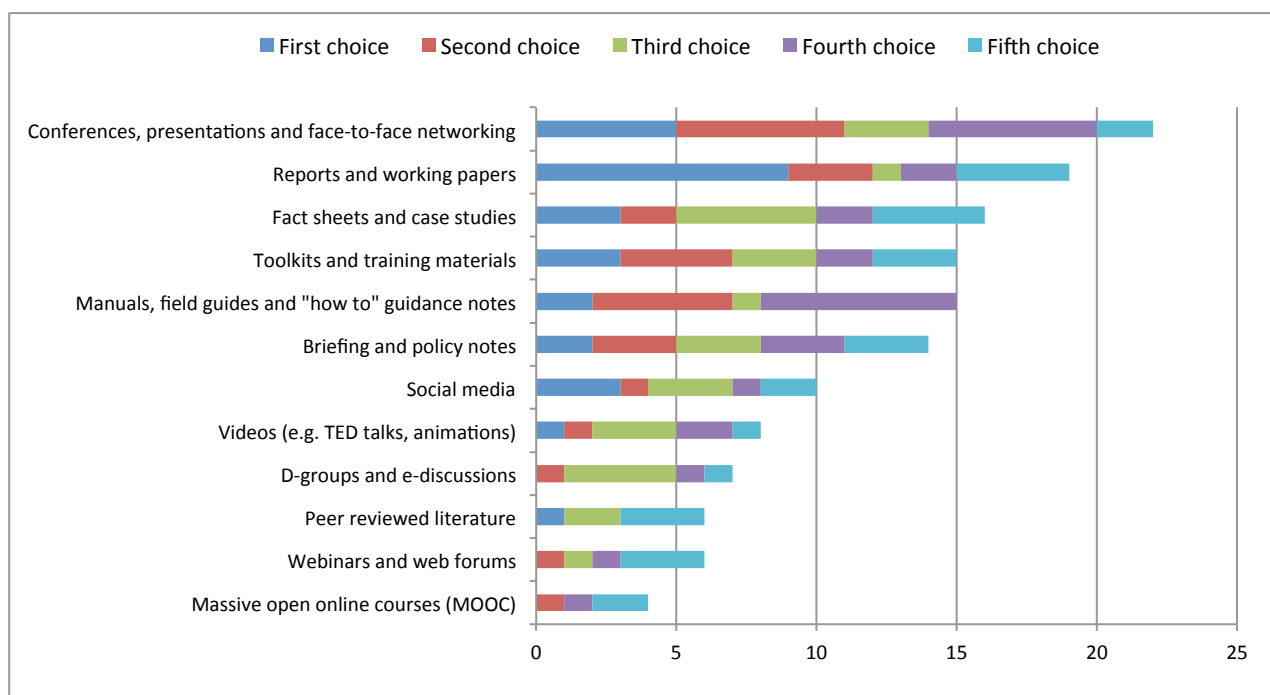

Figure 5: Personal preferences for types of knowledge and learning products by CSO survey respondents

Although other types of knowledge and learning products such as reports and working papers, briefing and policy notes, and fact sheets and case studies were also highlighted as preferred formats (Figure 5), only a small proportion of CSO survey respondents considered these to have led to 'a lot of improvement' within their organisations (Figure 4).

A significant proportion of the CSO survey respondents (30%: 10 out of 30) rated social media as one of the top five preferred types of communication (Figure 5) and considered it to have led to 'a lot of

improvement' within their organisations (32%: 9 out of 28) (Figure 4). Further, although it appears as one of the top three types of communication considered to have let to 'no improvement at all', this represents a significantly small proportion of respondents (17%: 5 out of 28) (Figure 6). It is also interesting to note that a preference for this type of communication was only evident amongst CSO survey respondents based in developing countries in Africa and the Asia-Pacific.

The **least preferred types** of communication were massive open online courses (MOOCS), webinars and web forums, peer reviewed literature, and d-groups and e-discussions (Figure 5). MOOCS, D-groups and e-discussions, and peer-reviewed literature also appear as the top two types of communication considered to have led to 'no improvement at all' (Figure 6), although this represents a relatively small proportion of the CSO survey respondents (17-21%: 5 to 6 out 28). Responses to in-depth interview questions add a nuanced understanding of these findings. For

> "I like webinars, the ones that are recorded, because I can view them at any time."
> (CSO interviewee)

example, the lower preference for peer-reviewed literature contrasts with responses on the characteristics of good knowledge and learning (K&L) products, which emphasised products that are well referenced, based on evidence, and from a trusted source. One CSO interviewee also noted a preference for this type of K&L product and explained that his/hers organisation *"prides itself in operating evidenced-based programs"* and that it stood out from others for publishing and using peer-reviewed literature to inform the design of their programs. In turn, the lower preference for webinars from CSO survey respondents could be a result of the fact that these types of communications rely on fast Internet connections, which might not be available to the respondents based in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific and Africa. One survey respondent noted that a way to address this limitation could be to provide *"smaller audio component [of the webinar] to download for later listening".* Several (7 out of 13) CSO interviewees said they liked webinars and two emphasised that to address Internet connection issues they need to be made available offline to be watched at a later time. The lower preference for massive open online courses (MOOCS) and videos (e.g. TED talks and animations) could also possibly be due to internet connection issues, but also to the low reported usage of these types of communication by the respondents. Note, however, that three CSO interview respondents demonstrated a preference for audio-visual materials such as short videos and one highlighted that these are good alternatives to written formats *"if it has a balanced way of presenting findings, and doesn't only share the successes".* Another respondent was of the view that *"online learning is really influential and has a way to go due to is relatively easy access".* Hence it would seem that there are a variety of views about online knowledge and learning products, and processes and how they are used.
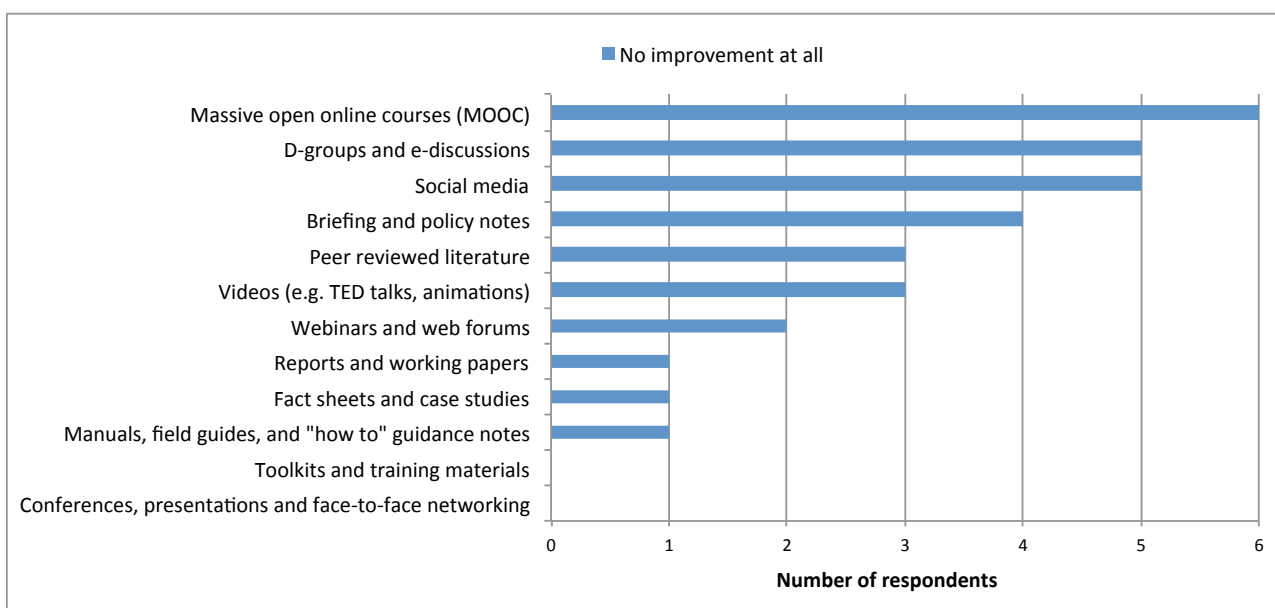

Figure 6: Communication types perceived by CSO respondents to have led to 'no improvement at all' within their organisations

Types of communications produced by CSOs

The survey results revealed that the types of communication products CSOs create and disseminate match the CSO reported preferences for types of communication described above. The **most common types of communications created and disseminated by CSOs** were written materials including reports, working papers, toolkits and training manuals, manuals, field guides, and "how to" guidance notes. These were followed by social media, and face-to-face formats such as conferences, presentations and networking events. In turn, **the least common types of communications created and disseminated by CSOs** were MOOCS, D-Groups and e-discussions, videos (e.g. TED talks, animations), peer reviewed literature, and webinars. In-depth interview responses also supported this finding. The relative importance of, and approach to producing and disseminating "knowledge products" such as publications differed amongst the CSO interviewees. While some CSOs reported that the production of such materials was core business, others considered it to sit outside of their focus and skill set. For example, two CSOs explained that they were not focused on being 'knowledge providers', and that their strength was rather in community engagement and implementation of projects.

> "We don't have a lot of what [some CSOs] create like guidance notes. They produce a lot of good documents of this type. We're more focused on implementing projects and don't have people dedicated to this kind of work."
> (CSO interviewee)

The majority of the CSO survey respondents (62%: 15 out of 24 responses) said that didn't know if the effectiveness of K&L products their organisations had produced had been assessed by their organisations or that it hadn't been assessed.

Characteristics of good knowledge and learning products

Respondents perceived **good knowledge and learning products** to have the following characteristics:

- Provides practical guidance and tools
- Well-written and easy to read
- Short, concise, and summarised
- Contains images and infographics
- Easy to access and share (e.g. easy to download)
- Cheap
- Well referenced, based on evidence, and/or from a trusted source
- Provides resources for further research
- Well curated

Of these characteristics, **practical guidance** and the **provision of tools** were most often identified by CSO respondents as being key to learning and uptake. Examples of knowledge and learning products that were referred to as being very useful included the 'Human Centred Design Toolkit' by IDE[1] and the 'SanMark Learning Series' by UNICEF[2]. One survey respondent noted that in the 'Human Centred Design Toolkit' *"the information is clearly presented concise and [it] provides practical guidance on implementation of the techniques."* Concerning the UNICEF SanMark Learning Series another respondent noted that this K&L product was *"well produced, clearly written with practical steps to take through a series of steps/elements of thinking about, research, developing, implementing and monitoring a sanitation marketing intervention".*

Please see **Appendix 4** for other knowledge and learning products that were identified as being highly relevant, accessible and applicable to CSOs work.

Learning needs within WASH

Both CSO and non-CSO survey respondents highlighted that the WASH topics that CSOs have greater learning needs in were 'functionality and service sustainability' and 'monitoring and evaluation of WASH'. In addition to these, CSO survey respondents highlighted the need to learn more about 'WASH and water security', and 'climate change and WASH'. Non-CSOs also highlighted 'engaging local government', 'equity and WASH', and 'market based approaches as learning needs for CSOs.

Please see **Appendix 5** for learning areas needs identified by CSO survey respondents.

---

[1] https://www.ideo.com/work/human-centered-design-toolkit/
[2] http://www.sanitationmarketing.com/sanitation-marketing-blog/sanmark-learning-series#.VwrL3LR4FiE

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

This research identified that face-to-face and experiential (on the job) learning is important and effective, and meaningful to WASH sector CSO staff. In terms of content, CSOs are seeking to learn more about service sustainability and how to incorporate water resources management issues into WASH programming, and they would like this to be in the form of practical, hands on guidance for improving policy and practice. CSOs are seeking evidence that is easy to understand and apply to improving WASH programming. CSO organisations' learning culture plays a critical role in creating the time and space for key knowledge and learning processes, such as time for reflection, utilising M&E data and processes, and seeking opportunities to learn from peers and from failure. Concerns about reputation, funding issues, donor perceptions, and simply being extremely busy and overworked were key barriers to learning identified by CSO and non-CSO respondents. The research found that donors play a critical role in legitimising knowledge and learning processes and activities, and that flexible, iterative reporting processes can enable programs to adapt in the context of things not going according to plan.

The following recommendations for CSOs and donors are drawn from the perspectives provided by over 100 WASH sector practitioners across the world who took part in this study:

Recommendations for CSOs driving a learning culture

- Leaders set the tone when it comes to creating the space, time and resources for knowledge and learning activities, as well as providing safe and supportive environments to learn from failure.

- K&L activities and initiatives need to be actively resourced: CSOs would benefit from developing budget lines for K&L across the organisation and within projects where possible.

- Attention needs to be given to ensuring that K&L opportunities are provided across an organisation – from field staff to those at 'headquarters'.

- Greater focus on learning from M&E processes will be beneficial to evidence based practice.

Recommendations for CSOs producing K&L products

- Traditional formats of information sharing (such as reports) are still relevant, but are most effective when presented in a practical, well written, concise and evidence-based manner.

- Face-to-face learning with peers is critical, and reported to be most effective in learning for improved practice.

- There was a clear preference for guidance materials, however these need to be concise, well written and curated, and often require mentoring to guide adaptation of learning into a new context.

- When using online platforms, it is preferable to use a variety and combination of formats (e-discussions, webinars, social media, etc.) to accommodate the range of preferences that individuals have.

APPENDIX 1. References and Resources

ACFID. (2009), Promoting Voice and Choice. Exploring Innovations in Australian NGO Accountability for Development Effectiveness.

ACFID (n.d.), *Learning*, Viewed 7 June 2016 <https://acfid.asn.au/learning>

Andreeva, T., Kianto, A., (2012), 'Does knowledge management really matter? Linking knowledge management practices, competitiveness and economic performance', *Journal of Knowledge Management*, Vol. 16, Issue: 4, pp.617 - 636

Bandura (1977), *Social Learning Theory*, New York: General Learning Press.

Britton, B. B. (2005), *Organisational Learning in NGOs : Creating the Motive, Means and Opportunity*, Praxis Paper, viewed 7 June 2016 <http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/398/Praxis-Paper-3-Organisational-\n\nLearning-in-NGOs.pdf>

Britton, B (2010), *Self Reflection: monitoring and evaluation for personal learning*, in Ubels, J., N. Acquaye-Baddoo and A. Fowler (eds) Capacity Development in Practice, Earthscan, pp. 264-276

Brophy, J, (1990), *Educational Psychology: A realistic approach*, New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston

Capacity (n.d.), *Learning*, viewed 7 June 2016 <http://www.capacity.org/capacity/opencms/en/topics/learning/index.html>

Chatzoudes, D., Chatzoglou, P., and Vraimaki, E., (2015), 'The central role of knowledge management in business operations: Developing a new conceptual framework', *Business Process Management Journal*, Vol. 21, Issue: 5, pp.1117 - 1139

Chetley and Vincent (2003), *Learning to Share Learning*, viewed 7 June 2016 <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.114.9300&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Crick, R.D., Haigney, D., Huang, S., Goldspink, C. (2013), 'Learning power in the workplace: the effective lifelong learning inventory and its reliability and validity and implications for learning and development', *The International Journal of Human Resource Management,* Vol. 24, No.11, pp. 2255-2272

Crick, R., Huang, S., Shafi, A. A., Goldspink, C. (2015), 'Developing Resilient Agency in Learning', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 63, Issue: 2, pp. 121-160

Crick, R. (2015), *Learning Journeys: a learning ecosystem for Living Labs*, viewed 7 June 2016 <http://ruthdeakincrick.net/>

Cross, J. (2007), *Informal Learning: Rediscovering the Natural Pathways That Inspire Innovation and Performance*, San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

da Silva-Wells, C, and Verhoeven, J., (2013), Contributing to a learning and adaptive WASH sector. IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, viewed 7 June 2016 <http://www.ircwash.org/sites/default/files/rcns_contributng_to_sector_learning_2009-2012.pdf>

David, G. (1993), 'Building a learning organisation', *Harvard Business Review*, July - August, pp. 78 – 91

Ebrahim, A., (2003), *NGOs and Organizational Change: Discourse*, Reporting and Learning Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (book)

Georges, A., Romme, L., Arjen van Witteloostuijn, (1999),'Circular organizing and triple loop learning', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 12, Issue: 5, pp. 439 – 454

Gino, B. Y. F., & Staats, B. (2015), 'Why Organizations Don' t Learn', *Harvard Business Review*, November, pp. 110–118.

Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) (2016), 'Learning journeys' for adaptive management – where does it take us?, GPSA Note 12, viewed 7 June 2016 < http://gpsaknowledge.org/knowledge-repository/gpsa-note-learning-journeys-for-adaptive-management-where-does-it-take-us/#.V2OAObTrg6I>

Guijt, I (2010), 'Accountability and learning: Exploding the myth of incompatibility between accountability and learning' in Ubels, J., N. Acquaye-Baddoo and A. Fowler (eds) *Capacity Development in Practice*, Earthscan, pp. 277-292

Hearn, S., and White, N., (2009), Communities of practice: Linking knowledge policy and practice, ODI, November 2009

Hornik, R., (2004), Some Reflections on Diffusion Theory and the Role of Everett Rogers, *Journal of Health Communication*, Vol. 9, pp. 143 – 148

Hovland, I. (2005). Successful Communication. A Toolkit for Researchers and Civil Society Organisations. Overseas Development Institute (ODI), September 2005

IRC (n.d.), *Sector Learning*, viewed 7 June 2016 <http://www.ircwash.org/tags/sector-learning>

IRC (2012), *Continuous improvement for services that last*, viewed 7 June 2016 <http://www.ircwash.org/sites/default/files/IRC-2012-WASH-sector.pdf>

Kiessling, T.S., Richey, R.G., Meng, J. and Dabic, M. (2009), 'Exploring knowledge management to organizational performance outcomes in a transitional economy', *Journal of World Business*, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 421-33

Kofman, F., and Senge, P.M., (1993), Communities of Commitment: The heart of learning organisations. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States Organizational Dynamics, Vol 22, issue: 2, pp. 5–23

LINGOS (n.d.), *Impact through learning* (NGO Capacity Building program), viewed 7 June 2016 <http://lingos.org/>

Marsick, V. J., Watkins, K. (2015), *Informal and Incidental Learning in the Workplace*, Routledge Revivals, New York

Mills, A. J., Bratton, J., Mills, J. C. H., Forshaw, C. (2007), *Organizational Behaviour in a Global Context*, Broadview Press, Canada

Mosley et al (2005), *Frameworks for thinking: A handbook for teaching and learning*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Naranjo-Valencia, J.C, Jiménez-Jiménez, D., Sanz-Valle, R., (2011), 'Innovation or imitation? The role of organizational culture', *Management Decision*, Vol. 49 Issue 1 pp. 55 - 72

Nugroho, Y., (2011), Opening the black box: The adoption of innovations in the voluntary sector – The case of Indonesian civil society organisations, *Research Policy*, Vol. 40, pp. 761 - 777

Pearson, J. (2006), 'Organisational Learning Across Cultures', Praxis Note 20, INTRAC

Prince, B. S., & Wrigley, R. (2007). Organisational Learning in Civil Society : Influences of Culture , Relational Dynamics and Informality, viewed 7 June 2016 <http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/21774/1/Organisational Learning in Civil

Society Influences of Culture Relational Dynamics and Informality.pdf?1>

Ramia, G (2007), 'NGOs and Organizational Change: Discourse, Reporting and Learning', *Public Management Review*, Vol. 9, issue 4, pp.590-592

Results for Development (2016), Barriers to Implementing New Ideas, Lessons Learned from WASH, Health and Education Innovators Across East Africa and India

Robinson (2009), A summary of Diffusion of Innovations, viewed 7 June 2016 <http://www.enablingchange.com.au/Summary_Diffusion_Theory.pdf>

Rogers, E.M. (2003), *Diffusion of Innovations*, 5th Edition, New York: Free Press

Senge, Peter M. (1990, revised 2006), *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization*, New York: Doubleday

Senge, Peter M., and others (1994), *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization,* New York: Doubleday

Senge, P., & Kim, D. H. (2012), 'From Fragmentation to Integration: Building Learning Communities', *The SoL Journal on Knowledge, Learning, and Change,* Vol. 12, issue 4

Shipton, H, et al (2013) Is there a global model of learning organisations? An empirical, cross nation study, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 24, No. 12, pp. 2278-2298

Smits, Stef; Moriarty, Patrick and Sijbesma, Christine (eds) (2007), Learning alliances: Scaling up innovations in water, sanitation and hygiene, Technical paper series, no. 47, Delft, The Netherlands, IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre

Soest, A. Van, Carriger, S., Casella, D., & Wells, S. (2015), Sector learning and adaptive management

Tosey et al (2012), The origins and conceptualizations of 'triple-loop' learning: A critical review, *Management Learning*, Vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 291-307

USAID (n.d), *Learning Lab*, viewed 7 June 2016 <http://usaidlearninglab.org/>

Visscher, J. T., Pels, J., Markowski, V., & De Graaf, S. (2006), Knowledge and information management in the water and sanitation sector: A hard nut to crack

Watkins, Karen E. & Marsick, Victoria J. (Eds.), (2003), 'Making Learning Count! Diagnosing the Learning Culture in Organizations', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, Vol. 5, No.2. Thousand Oaks, Ca:Sage

WaSH MEL (n.d), viewed 7 June 2016 <http://www.washmel.org/>

Wenger-Tayner (2015), *Communities of Practice - a brief introduction, viewed 7 June 2016* <http://wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/07-Brief-introduction-to-communities-of-practice.pdf>

Wenger, E., (2004), 'Knowledge Management as a Doughnut', *Ivy Business Journal*, Issue January/February
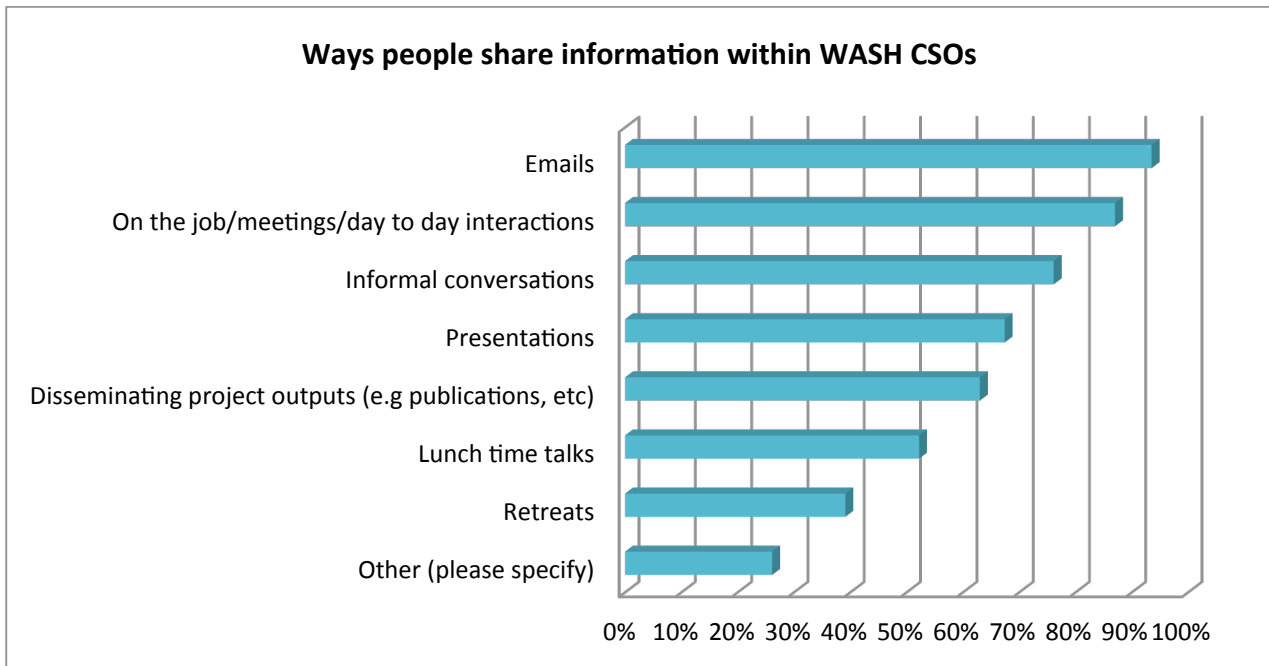
Appendix 2: How information is shared

Figure 7. How people share information with each other within WASH CSOs.

Appendix 3: Non-CSO views on barriers to learning in CSOs

Statement provided to non-CSO research participants	**Agree** *Strongly agree and somewhat agree*	**Disagree** *Strongly disagree and somewhat disagree*	Don't know
CSOs don't have time to learn and reflect on policy and practice outside of day to day duties	89%	11%	0%
CSOs are not motivated to find out about new evidence based approaches	33%	67%	0%
CSOs have committed to programs/projects and need to follow through with current approaches rather than try new evidence based approaches	70%	30%	0%
CSOs are siloed and cross-organisational learning is not prioritised	67%	33%	0%
Power dynamics and/or hierarchy hinders information flows and uptake	60%	40%	0%
Monitoring and evaluation processes are not able to be effectively incorporated into future programming	70%	20%	10%
CSOs don't have space and time provided for informal networking and interactions between staff (e.g round-tables,meetings, presentations, internal communications, etc)	56%	44%	0%
CSOs don't have opportunities and resources made available to support staff's learning through formal training	22%	78%	0%

Appendix 4: Examples of K&L Products

Examples of good knowledge and learning (K&L) products and/or information sharing platforms that were considered to be effective in supporting CSO participants' learning included:

- CLTS Knowledge Hub (http://www.communityledtotalsanitation.org)

- Inclusive WASH website (http://www.inclusivewash.org.au)

- Gender in the Pacific WASH website (http://www.genderinpacificwash.info)

- SuperAmma campaign for changing handwashing behaviour (http://www.superamma.org)

- Violence, gender and WASH toolkit (http://violence-wash.lboro.ac.uk)

- RWSSN (http://www.rural-water-supply.net/en/)

- SuSanA (http://www.susana.org/en/)

- CS WASH Fund website (http://www.cswashfund.org)

- Girls in Schools webinar by the CS WASH Fund

- UNICEF's guide on child, gender and disability

- UNICEF's WASH in schools distance-learning course

- WSP's Global Learning Events

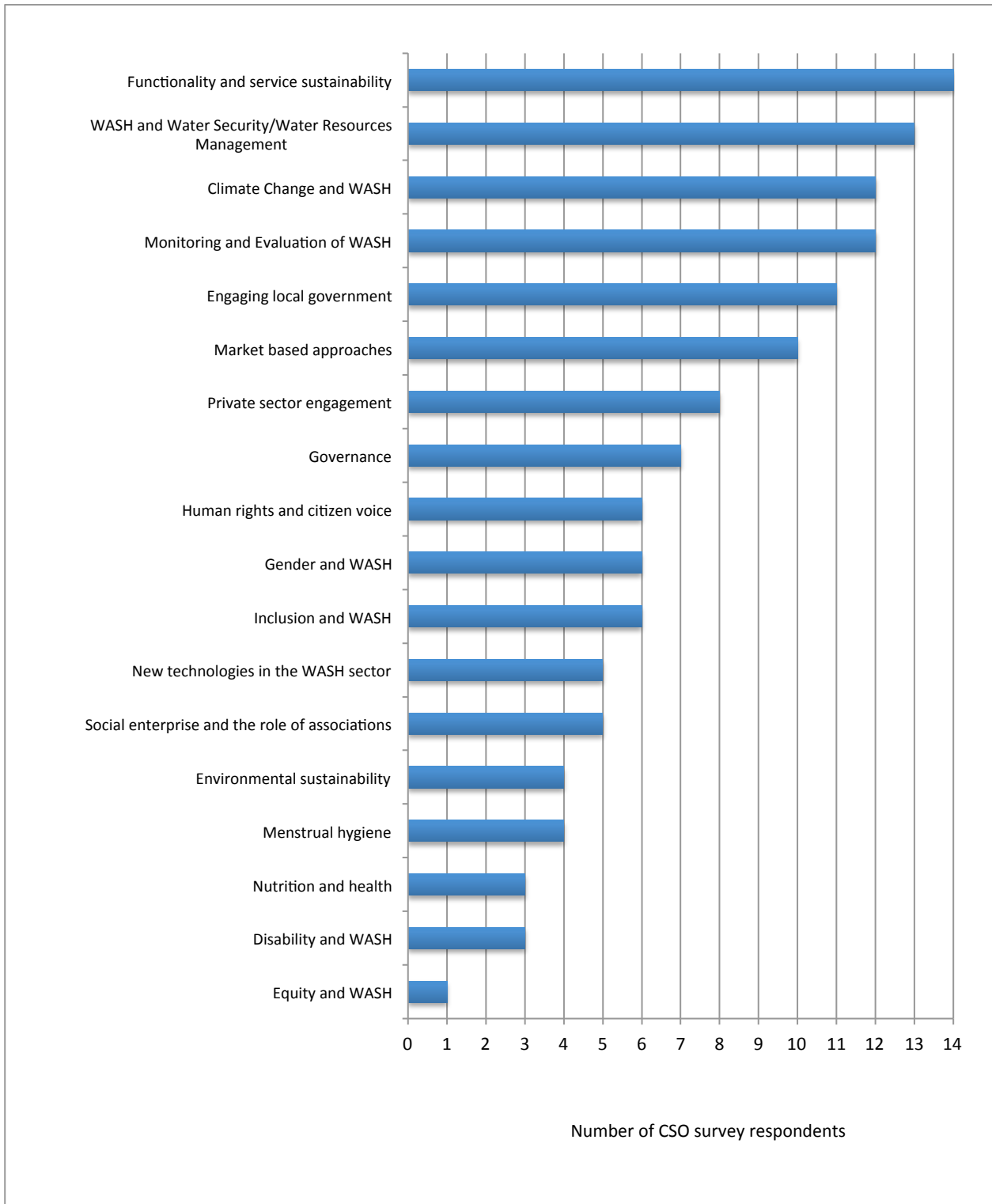# Appendix 5: Content areas and learning needs by CSO survey respondents

Figure 8. Content areas and learning needs by CSO survey respondents