

# Localisation for Transformation

Dr Wahyu Triwahyudi, Plan International Australia

Navara Kiene, WaterAid PNG

Lee Leong, Water for Women

Dr Matthew Bond, Water for Women



**WATER  
&  
WASH** 2023  
FUTURES

Achieving SDG6 in a Changing Climate



#WaWF23

# Presentation outline

1. Localisation concepts (Lee/Matt)
2. Localisation at Plan Indonesia (Wahyu)
3. Localisation at WaterAid PNG (Navara)
4. Take aways and call to action



(Image reference: Peace Direct, Time to decolonise aid, 2020)

# Why we are talking about localisation in the WASH sector?

*“A fundamental challenge facing the sector: to accept and embrace the truth that the development industry is systematically flawed along colonial and neo-colonial lines...*

*...Transformation cannot occur independently of the dialogue on racism, decolonisation and other hidden dimensions of power”*

(Reference: G Bond, From Hubris to Humility: Localisation and Legitimacy of International Non-Government Organisations, 2022)

# How much power do you have?

## WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



(Reference: Canadian Council of Refugees, adapted by S Duckworth, 2020)

# What are the barriers from transferring power from the global north to the global south?

*“We often refrain from using expressions around white supremacy or calling it out because it is frowned upon or looked at as being rude or unkind towards those people or organisations who are ‘just trying to help’ the Pacific. But when you really get down to it and peel the onion down to its core, it is what it is, white privilege and power underestimating our knowledge and skills, claiming their dominance...”*

(Reference: Ofakilevuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki, Creating equitable south-north partnerships: Nurturing the va and voyaging the audacious ocean together, 2020)

# Localisation Example – Plan International Indonesia

## Transformation of Plan Indonesia from international to local NGO status

- Plan International offices: different structures in the global north and global south
- Field Country National Office: a hybrid model combining global north and south

## Some positive aspects from the transformation

- Change of organisational identity
- Change of leadership and key positions, from international staff to national staff
- Plan Federation (global north offices) gave up power to Plan Indonesia
- Plan Indonesia leadership directly represented in the International Boards

# Localisation Example – Plan International Indonesia

## Positive aspects (continued):

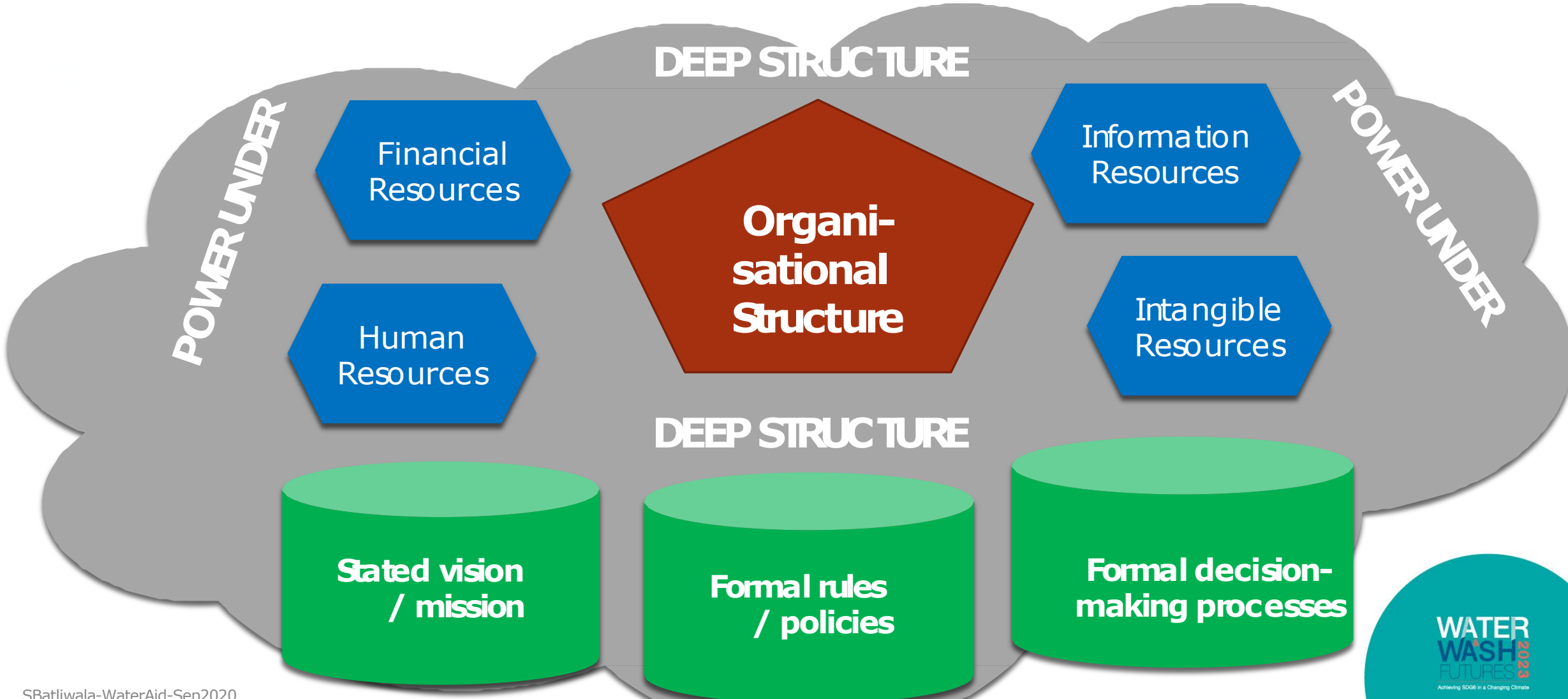
- More equal partnership with Plan International Federation
- Greater opportunities to fundraise and apply for project funding
- Less concern from global north about ‘losing money’

## Challenges during the transformation process

- Heavily controlled by Plan global headquarters, to ensure compliance, and resourced by global north offices
- Facilitated and supported by international consultants in-country

# Localisation example –WaterAid PNG

How do power structures arise and operate in organisations:





# Localisation example –WaterAid PNG (continued...)



Women's group discussion during climate resilient WASH community engagement in Walanduom, Wewak District, Papua New Guinea (WaterAid PNG)

# Some take aways...

- **Structures in the WASH sector** cater more for Western ideas, ways of working, white privilege and patriarchy.
- **Dominant identities** are more commonly found in global north partners and this power needs to be better shared.
- We need more **representation from the global south in our WASH partnerships**, especially at the governance level.
- **Recognising and valuing local knowledge and practices** through localisation can lead to greater resilience and create more equitable partnerships between South-North actors.

# Localisation for transformation – a call to action for us all

- Reflect daily on how we are showing up in the WASH, and wider development, sector
- Continuously be self-aware, reflect, and question our own power and privileges (and biases)

## Global south actors

**You can start to ‘flip the script’**

Redefine/reset rules and norms;  
set your own agenda for change  
within organisations and the  
sector

## Global north actors

It’s about

**transfer of your power**

If you can’t feel the loss of power,  
you’re not localising



## Thank-you

Contact details:

[wahyu.triwayudi@plan.org.au](mailto:wahyu.triwayudi@plan.org.au)

[navara.kiene@wateraid.org.au](mailto:navara.kiene@wateraid.org.au)

[lee.leong@ghd.com](mailto:lee.leong@ghd.com)

[mattbond@fhdesigns.com.au](mailto:mattbond@fhdesigns.com.au)

**WATER**  
**WASH** 2023  
FUTURES

Achieving SDG6 in a Changing Climate



Water For  
Women

