

## Eawag Seminar Invitation

# Education in WASH: how we are overlooking the “Sustainable” in the Sustainable Development Goals

Speakers **Prof. Elizabeth Tilley, ETH Zürich, Switzerland**

When **March 18, 16.00 – 17.00, CET**

Where **Online via Zoom, contact [seminars@eawag.ch](mailto:seminars@eawag.ch) for access details.**

Abstract When Mark Green became the new head of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2017, he said, "I believe the purpose of foreign assistance should be ending its need to exist". Poignant, but not new. For the last 75 plus years, the “development industry” has not only not ended its need to exist it has created a vicious, self-perpetuating cycle of dependency and foreign intervention.

The Sustainable Development Goals, an ambitious framework of targets and indicators to achieve before 2030, address obviously pressing issues like maternal health, clean water, and climate change. However, despite the rhetoric around integration, education - particularly tertiary education - has not played a significant enough role in achieving the SDGs or ultimately, ending the need for foreign assistance.

In this lecture, I reflect on my five years teaching, supervising and conducting research at the University of Malawi in Blantyre, Malawi: the most prestigious university in the country, yet one, which does not even rank among the top 100 Universities in Africa. I will highlight the role of technology access, funding cycles, and the legacy of colonialism and ongoing politics to explain why without immediate attention to higher education, the SDGs (or their future incarnation) will most certainly fail.