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Improving Nigeria-Urban E-WASH Service Delivery through Multidimensional Engagement and Mobilization

USAID Effective Water, Sanitation & Hygiene project
implemented by Connected Development



Project Background

Access to clean water and sanitation is a basic human right. This is based on the universal recognition of clean water and sanitation as essential bloodlines for human life, dignity and poverty eradication. However, these bloodlines have been identified as luxury especially to the Nigerian poor.

A large part of Nigeria's population still live without access to clean water or sanitation. In many urban parts of the country, the delivery of water and sanitation services is fragmented and fails to guarantee the average standards of service, while those without access, lack the means and influence to change their situation as they are often the poorest and the most marginalized groups of society.

Narrowing down to the urban centres, inadequate water supply is a regular phenomenon. The situation is increasingly deteriorating and compounded by a rapid growth explosion as a result of massive rural-urban migration. This is despite the availability of vast surface and underground water resources. A variety of factors constrain urban water supply and they manifest in poor financing; inadequate data on operation and maintenance; insufficient and inefficient use of funds; poor management of water supply facilities; inappropriate system design, low profile of operation and maintenance; as well as inadequate policies, legal frameworks, and overlapping responsibilities by multiple agencies created by government.

As such, the USAID Effective Water Sanitation and Hygiene Services (E-WASH Program) is quite timely as it addresses the poor delivery of WASH services in Nigerian urban areas. The Project, implemented by CODE, supported civic advocacy and WASH stakeholder engagement, coordinated with government and other WASH service providers (including private sector) to improve urban WASH service delivery.

CODE has been able to strengthen policy, institutional, and regulatory frameworks for improved WASH services by mobilizing relevant stakeholders at the state level on E-WASH service delivery and creating platforms for engagement between the government and civil society in Niger, Taraba and Delta States.



Successes recorded during the project:

CODE also leveraged its citizen mobilization and multidimensional engagement expertise, resources and strategies; presence and network in the aforementioned states; WASH accountability capacity; to broaden collaborations between relevant government agencies, State Water Boards (SWB), lawmakers, community based associations/organizations (CBA/O), Water Consumer Associations and the general public to expand and improve urban water service delivery.

The Organisation applied innovative approaches to achieve the following successes during the project implementation.

- Written commitment of traditional rulers and legislators to accelerate the project objective of increasing better WASH services in the State.
- Successful signing of the Water Law by Executive Governors of the State.
- Increasing media coverage of WASH issues.
- Enabling the WASH Customer Forum to be knowledgeable about WASH budgets and engaging government appropriately on budget lines.
- More public awareness of hygiene and sanitation practices in the State through radio shows.



Pledge-card signing

The pledge card signing is a written commitment to get influential stakeholders in Niger, Delta and Taraba to commit to an improved WASH services to the residents of the State. When these opinion influencers sign, they are obligated to drive policies and support improved access to clean water services, sanitation and hygiene for Nigerians living in urban areas.

During the course of the project; Signed Pledge Cards:

Hon. Mohammed Abdulkarim, Chairman House Committee of Water and Hon Abbas Umma Kaura Hon. Member of House committee Water resources signed the E-WASH pledge cards in Taraba State in November 2019

The State Commissioner for Water Resources, Hon Yusuf Sulieman signed the E-WASH pledge card in Niger State in November 2019.

Social-media countdown

Signed Pledge Cards during the Project Year

After CODE's team discovered that there was a delay with assenting to the WASH bill in Taraba and Niger State, it deployed a strategy to pressure the State governments through advocacy and social media count-down that would get the attention of the legislators and government officials to pass the second reading and eventual assent.

We counted down daily on social media platforms and engaged the media till Taraba and Niger WASH bills were assented in December 2019 and July 2020, respectively.



EWASH Radio programme

The radio was mainly a strategy to create more awareness and reach a wide-dispersed residents of project States and to inform them of their rights to WASH services. The 60-minute show touched on various topics such as accountability and transparency in WASH budget tracking, detailing the amount State governments budget for WASH services and how citizens can track to ensure funds are properly expended. Recommendations of proper hygiene and sanitation practices as well as risk communications and proper handwashing mechanisms during COVID. The program also suggested innovative ways through which the government can improve access to WASH services for vulnerable groups including women, young girls, and People With Disabilities (PLWD).

Shows in project states recorded a high number of call-in and interests displayed by residents.

Story-telling training for WASH media forum

The WASH customer forum is a platform for interaction between Customers and Water Service Providers taking into account people living with disabilities and the vulnerable with an objective to provide a platform where customers air their challenges, views and concerns with regards to water supply and services, among other WASH-related responses.

CODE trained the team on the essence of leveraging media platforms to advocate for improved WASH services in their State. A communications strategy that can stir public reaction to WASH issues are human-angle stories of the hardship households face in accessing clean water and how children, girl especially, have to cut back on school to provide water for the family.

The WASH customer forum provides a platform for service providers to respond to difficulties and other service issues experienced by the customers and seek or negotiate for the best possible solutions and facilitate knowledge sharing and encourage collaboration and learning between diverse urban WASH stakeholders.



Lessons Learned

- Media is a vibrant tool for effective social mobilization, behavioral change initiatives, with media engagement, achieving aims and objectives of any well-designed theory of change is a lot easier and its impact is far-reaching too.
- The reach and frequency of key messages were stimulating enough to generate quick actions from government and residents alike.
- The tactic of triggering citizen's interest towards social accountability through online and offline media platforms was successful.
- The Knowledge Cafe was a tremendous success as participants became aware of the roles and obligations of the State Water boards and the customers.
- The capacity building activities were important to raising interests and community ownership of WASH services.

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