

WaterAid in Nigeria Country programme evaluation

WaterAid in Nigeria is highly respected and considered by many to be pitched where it matters most – closest to poor people at local government and community level. Aiming to contribute 2% of Nigeria's MDG target on water and sanitation and hygiene behaviour change, WaterAid in Nigeria must ensure its limited resources deliver sustainable change while ensuring the poorest and most vulnerable are not left out. This is no mean task in a country of 160 million people, where the water and sanitation sector is under resourced on all fronts, and where sector reform and harmonisation remain a distant dream.

This evaluation looks at progress and achievements against the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) objectives. Although those objectives were revised in October 2007, they remain highly relevant to the current programme portfolio and there is no radical change in operational modalities or overall positioning of the country programme at the time of the evaluation that would make this CSP redundant or obsolete. The evaluation framework focuses on the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of work as well as organisational effectiveness. Additional themes included in the evaluation were equity and inclusion and partnerships.

WaterAid in Nigeria aims to deliver high quality models for inclusive and sustainable access to (and use of) water and sanitation services, which are accompanied by critical hygiene practices for selected communities of urban and rural poor in six states. In addition, WaterAid in Nigeria also works with key demand side issues of voice and accountability through civil society networks on budget tracking, citizen awareness raising and action linked to water and sanitation in these same states. Through its advocacy work on almost all aspects of the sector, it seeks to link its work on the ground to state and federal level policy and action that will impact nationally and regionally.

The current assumption underlying much of WaterAid in Nigeria's service delivery work is that an exponential increase in sanitary toilets at the household level, through the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach, will improve access and reduce the numbers of people defecating in the open. There is an unspoken linked assumption that this will lead to an increase in hand washing practices and ultimately improved health. Newly formed umbrella networks of NGOs work on citizen voice and demand with WaterAid in Nigeria support aiming eventually to raise awareness and strengthen the demand side, holding duty bearers to account.

The evaluation team is of the view that the current approach (based on an array of projects) places administrative and management burdens on the country programme without contributing adequately and efficiently to strategic objectives. Programming is incomplete and too unsystematic to result in inclusive and sustainable community-wide behaviour change which would lead to the linked health and productive benefits in project communities, let alone more widely across Nigeria. Citizen action work is inconclusive and documentation, for the most part, not well targeted or effective. Despite some real gains, the ad hoc attention to quality in process and outputs could present serious risks to future credibility.

Summary of our findings and conclusions

1 Changes in access and rights in WASH for the unserved

Partially achieved. Improvements are not systematic or community-wide (unlikely to deliver sustainable health benefits) and the exact scale of achievement is unknown. Achievements in sanitation, currently at a very basic first rung of the ladder, may be short-lived.

2 Changes in sector capacity to achieve WASH mandate

Not achieved. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is extremely weak and changes and impact too isolated and ad hoc to add up to a movement or a critical body of evidence even in WaterAid states, with little or no impact on the sector as a whole at the moment. Despite the rhetoric, hygiene behaviour change remains an afterthought or an assumption and the projected approach to service delivery continues with high Government reliance on external donors.

3 Changes in the development environment in relation to WASH

Likely to be partially achieved. WASH policies have been approved in three states – with policies in more states pending approval. The proof of change will lie in the actual implementation of these policies. Benefits and changes in the WASH environment are currently only evident in donor assisted communities and there is no evidence of systematic funds flow to WASH units and WASHCOMs even in WaterAid assisted communities/states. Civil society organisations also have a long way to go with regards their conceptual and operational capacity on hygiene behaviour change.

4 Organisational effectiveness

Largely achieved (for the level at which the CSP is currently pitched). WaterAid in Nigeria is operating at a relatively low level, in projected mode, with insufficient attention to sustainable, inclusive outcomes. Organisationally, management has done well, building a strong and cohesive team. This team will now have to aim several notches higher to achieve what WaterAid, the sector in Nigeria and poor people demand.

Overall assessment (November 2009)

Partially achieved. WaterAid in Nigeria has made substantive progress on raising the profile of the sector in Local Government Assemblies (LGAs) and states where it works directly. Sanitation has gained in importance although it is still limited to latrine coverage interventions that could run high sustainability and equity risks. There is much work to be done on hygiene promotion which remains under-resourced (financial and human). We estimate that WaterAid in Nigeria has pitched its advocacy and influence too low without adequate attention to quality outcomes on the ground.

WaterAid in Nigeria is the second most respected name in the business of water and sanitation in Nigeria – after UNICEF. It is second only because of the much more substantive and older basket of funding that UNICEF brings to the table and not because of the quality or impact of its contribution. Indeed, WaterAid in Nigeria is synonymous with CLTS, feted by many as being the pioneer in bringing an affordable and viable response to address the sanitation needs of millions of poor people.

There is no doubt that sanitation and to a lesser extent, hygiene behaviour change, are finally on the agenda of state and local government agencies in WaterAid in Nigeria assisted states; and increasingly in other states as well. However, they remain under-funded and unsystematic and somehow delinked from the more politically fraught issue of safe water. WaterAid in Nigeria's potential contribution rests on how cleverly it is able to leverage its limited funding and successful small projects to demonstrate measurable, conclusive results for poor people in order to impact the sector at scale, moving all sector actors and especially the Government towards sustainable behaviour change for whole communities.

WaterAid in Nigeria is armed with substantive capital going forward, whether it is in its programming, partnerships or its internal team. We are confident that WaterAid in Nigeria will carry this forward as it prepares and implements its new Country Strategy to move further upstream in order to make a measurable difference in the lives of poor people.

The following is a summary of the detailed recommendations shared with WaterAid in Nigeria staff in Abuja before the team's departure in December, 2009.

Summary of recommendations

- Formulate and implement clear strategies to guide management, advocacy and operations. These include:
 - Funding strategy.
 - Strategy to develop credible regional models (CLTS, Citizen's action, safe water, etc.).
 - Equity and inclusion strategy.
 - Influencing strategy.
- Revamp monitoring and evaluation work to inform and support WaterAid in Nigeria objectives, ensure internal performance and external accountability, enhancing national and regional credibility.
- Redraw organisational structure and management systems to support a clearly articulated new Country Strategy and resource this adequately and creatively.
- Review, streamline and reformulate strategic partnerships to support corporate objectives and strengthen internal learning and external advocacy.
- Reformulate capacity building approaches as corollary to influencing strategy.
- View and develop documentation and learning as an integral and systematic strategy to increase WaterAid in Nigeria's market value and positioning.



WaterAid transforms lives by improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation in the world's poorest communities. We work with partners and influence decision-makers to maximise our impact.

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