

# WaterAid in Nigeria

## Country programme evaluation

### Introduction

This is a summary of the WaterAid in Nigeria country programme evaluation carried out in November and December 2009. The country programme supports initiatives and projects in six states – at local government and community level, closest to poor people.

The evaluation examined progress and achievements against WaterAid's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) in terms of the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of WaterAid in Nigeria's current and past work, with an emphasis on learning lessons while looking forward. The evaluation findings will also support the development of a new Country Strategy that will be aligned with WaterAid's recently developed Global Strategy. Internal organisational efficacy, equity and inclusion and partnerships were additional cross cutting themes for the evaluation. The evaluation team was led by an external consultant and consisted of WaterAid staff from Nigeria and in the UK. The team used a combination of desk reviews, field visits to three states where WaterAid supports communities and local governments directly and consultations with federal, state and local government, civil society and service users in project areas to assess progress and draw up recommendations.

### National context

Nigeria has a population of over 151 million<sup>1</sup>

people, of which an estimated 41% do not have access to basic sanitation and 53%<sup>2</sup> are not using an improved source of water. Considering that 50 million Nigerians are unable to access water and sanitation, improved basic services in Nigeria are essential if Africa is to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) water and sanitation targets.



The water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector in Nigeria is faced with substantial policy, institutional and financial challenges. Water and sanitation has recently slipped from the federal government's top priorities. Although Nigeria has a comprehensive water

<sup>1</sup> World Development Indicators, updated November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, World Bank

<sup>2</sup> The Human Development Report (2008)

and sanitation policy in place, safe excreta disposal is not any institution's primary responsibility, and hygiene remains an afterthought. Many states do not have WASH policies. The linkages between the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (FMAWR) – responsible for WASH programmes - and state ministries of water resources, are weak. Problems across states include poor functionality, badly-designed tariff structures and underfunding of software such as community mobilisation, sanitation and hygiene promotion, and operations and maintenance activities to support hardware facilities installed.

Water and sanitation services have been devolved to Local Government Agencies (LGAs) in every state. LGAs are solely responsible for ensuring access and use of these services. However, a lack of autonomy, budget limitations and poor capacity have hampered their ability to carry out these duties effectively. The LGA WASH Units in donor-assisted states, tasked with management and implementation of various projects, are dynamic, energetic and display a higher capacity to deliver quality services than the LGAs in states where donors are not present. Civil society participation is limited and sector capacity is weak.

Competing resource demands, partly caused by the consolidation of government ministries, has led to underfunding of water and sanitation in Nigeria. Expenditure has decreased in recent years and is inadequate to enable Nigeria to meet its MDG targets on water and sanitation. A lack of government-led donor harmonisation further exacerbates the paucity of funding, resulting in disparate projects, duplication, and lack of lesson learning.

With so many constraints to progress in the WASH sector, WaterAid's aim to contribute 2% of the Nigerian MDG target on water, sanitation and hygiene behaviour change is laudable but challenging.

## Findings: Relevance

The country programme's strategic objectives are highly relevant to the Nigerian context. The programme is designed to respond to sector challenges of weak political commitment, low funding, and poor demand for basic services. Expanding WaterAid's sphere of influence and increasing our attention to quality and sustainability could further increase impact.

### Strategic approach

WaterAid's dual pronged approach is based on direct service delivery to demonstrate affordable water and sanitation models for replication and scaling up by other sector actors, in tandem with strengthening civil society voices and taking action to bring duty bearers to account. This approach is most visible at local government level, and is combined with advocacy for policy change for more enabling frameworks at State level that will empower LGAs to deliver on their mandate more effectively. This strategy has yielded some encouraging early results, including:

- Half the states where WaterAid works have WASH policies which are expected to strengthen budgets and human resources for WASH Units at LGA level.
- Improved facilities and higher awareness of good hygiene practices in communities where WaterAid works.
- Commitment to scaling up WASH by LGAs and partners in assisted areas.
- Government replication of WaterAid promoted approaches in non-WaterAid LGAs and states.

### Service delivery and advocacy linkages

WaterAid's contribution rests on how effectively limited funding and small projects can be leveraged to influence the sector at scale. Over 350,000 people have benefitted from direct service delivery and this work gives WaterAid credibility and capacity with which to influence dutybearers. Successful

### Taking a leading role

WaterAid in Nigeria has made a significant, positive contribution to the WASH sector and has high credibility amongst partners and sector actors. The federal government and other donors/stakeholders (such as UNICEF and DFID) perceive WaterAid in Nigeria as well positioned to play important influencing and leadership roles in taking water and sanitation to scale in Nigeria. Partners, government officials and international organisations across four states shared this view while making the following comments:

- WaterAid in Nigeria is in a corner. Needs to be known and better appreciated for its contribution and work at federal level
- WaterAid should extend its technical support inputs to non focus LGAs and states
- Should work closer with state government –and ensure closer interaction and dialogue.
- The country programme should work beyond project areas and more strategically with non-WASH stakeholders such as Ministries of Finance, Health and Education.
- WaterAid should support better monitoring and evaluation in the sector by putting in place a unified structure that includes states, LGA, and CSOs.

WaterAid in Nigeria is perceived to be at the edge of major sector discussions rather than at the centre. It is essential that the country programme utilises its strong technical evidence base to influence change at the national level. In doing so, it will ensure that WaterAid is known and appreciated for its work in the WASH sector.

advocacy efforts have put sanitation firmly on the state and local government agenda in states where WaterAid operates. By extending influencing work to include greater engagement with stakeholders at state and federal levels and with non-WaterAid states, WaterAid's impact could reach even further.

### CLTS model

Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) has been widely accepted by governmental and non-governmental sector actors as the only viable model to address the vast sanitation and hygiene needs of Nigeria's poor on a large scale. WaterAid is credited as the first agency to have introduced and successfully demonstrated the approach. CLTS has subsequently been enthusiastically embraced by government, donors and NGOs. WaterAid has implemented CLTS with variable quality across our project communities. While some Open Defecation Free (ODF) communities display high commitment to maintenance of facilities and hygiene behaviour change, the use and behaviour change outcomes in others risk poor sustainability, underlining the importance of quality processes and control when implementing the model.

Despite widespread rhetoric on the importance of software inputs to achieve change, sector funding continues to prioritise hardware and physical outputs, leaving software significantly underfunded. WaterAid's advocacy should continue to emphasise the importance of prioritising and funding software for sustained behaviour change in order to achieve the desired health and productivity gains.

### Partnerships

WaterAid has entered into service delivery partnerships in five states with UNICEF, the European Union and UNHabitat amongst others. The rationale is that together, with increased rural and peri-urban coverage, these partnerships will yield greater visibility and influence. Geographical presence and funding

realities have also been important considerations in the choice of partners. Going forward, these partnerships will need to be analysed thoroughly to ensure they are meaningful and more importantly, contribute to WaterAid's strategic objectives.

### Findings: Effectiveness

Over the past decade, WaterAid has effectively harnessed and leveraged state and federal investments to increase funding for WASH projects. WaterAid is seen to be effective by all key actors in the sector including government at all levels, multilateral and bilateral agencies and NGOs. WaterAid's advocacy for increased government investment in the sector nationally is notable and is achieved through various complementary initiatives such as budget tracking, citizen's action and dialogue with state and federal government.

### Influencing and capacity building

The country programme adds value at local, state and national levels in different ways. The knowledge and experience of working at the local level are effectively applied in lobbying and advocacy at the state and federal levels. WaterAid's sector contributions supporting this process include:

- WASH operational support such as training of LGAs and civil society
- Capacity building of state and national governments
- State WASH policy support
- Innovative technology pilots
- Creation of spaces for dialogue between poor people and dutybearers through the citizen's action work
- Sector sharing and lesson learning

### Water

The contrast between WaterAid facilities and those installed by the government or other actors is often quite stark, with users in the three states visited reporting higher functionality and greater use for WaterAid facilities overall. The functionality and maintenance of WaterAid constructed or rehabilitated boreholes and dug wells observed by the evaluation team were quite satisfactory. An increased focus on software, planning and systems in the five states also marks a recent positive shift. Some instances of technical challenges linked either to geophysical conditions or inappropriate technology and equipment were observed and will require systematic follow up to identify solutions.

The evaluation also examined water quality issues and pilot initiatives. Water quality testing is in place for LGAs in states where WaterAid works and WASH Unit staff have been trained in this area. Greater attention to addressing specific problems such as high iron content in some areas and working with communities to evolve acceptable options is needed. Rainwater harvesting is being piloted in Benue State where groundwater resource sustainability is challenging. Cost-effectiveness and equity factors at household level should be carefully analysed to ensure the viability of various approaches before any technology is taken to scale.

### Sanitation and hygiene

WaterAid has put in place the beginnings of a distinctive, appropriate and workable sanitation model through CLTS. The understanding and application of the approach varies widely across the country for WaterAid as well as other sector actors, with mixed outcomes. Field personnel talk about ODF status, requiring use of latrines, safe water and safe excreta disposal to gain this status. In practice, all pieces of the puzzle do not always come together quite so systematically at community and household level. The sector

would benefit from a clearly written and tested model of how CLTS could be applied in different geophysical and socio-economic typologies based on the learning and experience of WaterAid's work. Careful costing of these models will be needed before they can be taken to scale.

Households and communities display good awareness around hand-washing and safe excreta disposal in WaterAid project areas. The knowledge doesn't always transform into practice and the extent of actual hygiene practices is quite unclear as monitoring remains physical output focussed. Currently, ODF status is linked to one latrine per household, and more analysis is needed on actual functionality, use and hygienic status. While this is a notoriously difficult area to measure achievement, WaterAid can start with a simple measurement system that includes key indicators to measure and report minimum conditions for hygienic behaviour change, moving away from assumption based reporting on hygiene practices.

### Equity and inclusion

Equity and inclusion are sensitive issues in Nigeria, particularly in rural areas where patriarchy and religious beliefs deny the equal participation of women. The evaluation team saw little evidence of thinking on the need for creation of spaces to include traditionally marginalised groups like women and people with disabilities. All sector stakeholders support equitable and inclusive approaches such as gender mainstreaming in theory, but these are not meaningfully operationalised or implemented. Facilities are often not designed to meet the needs of certain groups, and women are substantially under-represented and have little voice in Community WASH Committees (WASHCOMs).

WaterAid has done well in its selection of marginalised and unserved communities. This was striking in Benue, Jigawa and Plateau

states, where poor communities were carefully selected through a detailed vetting process based on human development and other criteria. Improvements can be made on intra-community and household inclusion in participation, decision-making and distribution of benefits and sharing of burdens, particularly with regard to gender. A clearer vision of how equity and inclusion and rights-based approaches will be operationalised in programmes, their effectiveness measured and the impacts used in influencing work is recommended.

### Case Study: Impact of a Water Consumer Association (WCA) on One Household

The ladies in a household, Hadiza and Aisha, were interviewed and asked about the Water Consumer Association in their community. The women were aware of the existence of the WCA. Hadiza stated that the role of the WCA was to raise awareness on cleanliness and hand-washing and to teach children to wash hands before eating and after using the toilet.

When asked about their hand-washing activities before WCA intervention, Hadiza said that it has always been of religious importance to clean the kitchen and dishes after cooking, but that before the WCA. Hadiza didn't clean the toilet or bathroom regularly. Now this is part of her morning routine. After preparing the children she cleans the bathroom and herself, this due to the awareness raising activities of the WCA Women leader.

There is still some way to go in terms of equity issues for the WCA. Hadiza was asked if women's views were represented to the WCA, and she responded that there is currently no opportunity to air their views and that she looks forward to such a time.

### Findings: Sustainability

WASHCOMs form the bedrock of sustainability as they are community-based and ensure that facilities are well-maintained, access is equitable and developments keep pace with community growth and needs. WASHCOM members in both older and newer project areas were aware of their roles and responsibilities and maintained water points effectively. However, committees were not supported by strong action plans or any system to fund ongoing operation and maintenance costs. Engagement with and responsiveness of LGAs to hardware breakdowns is variable, often leaving the community to cover the costs of repairs when a major breakdown occurs.

#### Institutional capacity

A strong institutional structure is critical for the sustainability of investments, and there is good evidence of institutional strengthening in the states where WaterAid works. State agencies provide technical support to the LGA, and the LGA's implement at the community level in the current structure. In WaterAid communities, state and local government demonstrate enhanced skills, competent management systems and awareness of critical hygiene issues. Non-assisted states could benefit from shared learning in these areas.

#### CLTS sustainability

Communities where CLTS has been adopted show a reduction in open defecation. Sincere commitment to achieving ODF status is articulated by many communities, but actual community-wide achievement (necessary for public health gains) is less widespread and the sustainability of facilities and practices remains at risk. Endangering factors include poor durability of pit latrines due to loose soil and heavy rains, non-availability of more robust affordable technology options, large family sizes with inadequate latrines and scarcity of water for hand-washing. The current approach often de-links markets and schools (where people, work, play and study) from households.

In order to turn knowledge into practise and then habit, CLTS approaches will need to move beyond ODF ensuring that all pieces of the puzzle (adequate and appropriate facilities, adequate and conveniently located water for washing and knowledge and systematic practise) fit together.

### Findings: Organisational effectiveness

The country programme has a responsive Senior Management Team who are quick to address and resolve programming issues through established internal processes. WaterAid's current structure is centred around service delivery in six states, but this does not leave the country programme appropriately positioned to influence the entire sector. Funding and projects are generally sought in these states, resulting in little impact on the remaining 36 Nigerian states. A clear organisational effectiveness strategy identifying an appropriate structure and human resources will improve the country programme's capacity to influence the sector.

#### Budgeting, planning, monitoring and evaluation

Recently, WaterAid has improved planning, budgeting and monitoring processes. Quarterly meetings are now held to discuss progress against plans and budgets, and a Programme Effectiveness Road Map has been implemented to improve planning and phasing of activities. Annual plans could better reflect the Multi-Year Plan and Budgets (MPB) framework used across the global organisation to strategically and programmatically plan, monitor and evaluate (PME) work. This would entail a shift of PME focus to outcomes and impacts, rather than outputs and expenditure as is currently the case.

#### Capacity and skills

With the country programme's strategic shift, WaterAid has carried out a skills gap

assessment and created an action plan to tackle some of the key areas including sustainability, documentation, monitoring and evaluation and use of appropriate technology. These are positive actions to increase organisational effectiveness. A more comprehensive human resources review will be required to identify what capacities are needed internally, the comparative advantage of different skills and how this can be packaged in the organisational structure to achieve the strategic objectives.

### Learning and documentation

Improving documentation has been identified by the country programme as a top priority. WaterAid plans to conduct targeted training and support activities that can strengthen documentation and dissemination based on evidence from their programmes needed for influencing and advocacy. It is also looking closely at its aim of developing a learning culture internally within the country programme and also servicing learning and capacity strengthening needs of WaterAid in West Africa through the Regional Learning Centre on Sanitation, which is located in Abuja.

## Recommendations

**Formulate and implement clear strategies** to guide management, advocacy and operations. These are necessary for funding, equity and inclusion, influencing and regional models like CLTS in order to align with Global and Country Strategies and to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of approaches.

**Strengthen technical capacity to deliver quality processes and outcomes internally and of partners.** Strengthen technical skills (of WaterAid and partners) to address geophysical constraints as well as socio-politico-cultural complexities to ensure equity and sustainability

of physical outputs and behaviour change outcomes.

**Revamp Monitoring and Evaluation systems** to better inform and support WaterAid's objectives and programmes. Monitoring should have a stronger focus on programme effectiveness and sustainable outcomes and impacts.

**Review partnerships** to ensure they support the achievement of strategic objectives and move beyond projects in order to scale up and replicate work across Nigeria. This may require the country programme to rationalise funding and partnerships where they do not contribute to strategic objectives.

**Reformulate capacity building approach as corollary to influencing strategy.** Assess the competitive advantage of WaterAid to deliver against WASH sector needs and clearly define the intended contribution toward filling the gaps. The country programme will then need to focus on strengthening both internal capacity to deliver in these defined areas of need and also on external/partner capacity to contribute.

**Redraw organisational structure and management systems** to support the new strategic shifts with adequate, high quality human resources in areas like influencing and equity and inclusion. Streamline the current programme and funding lines, complete skills assessment and deploy resources, together with dovetailing fundraising and the influencing strategy.

**Improve research and learning** by recognising documentation and learning as integral to improvements in service delivery. Further using lessons learned to enhance influencing strategies and organisational credibility.

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