



UNDP
World Bank
Water and
Sanitation
Program

Building Capacity for Sanitation

The launching and follow-up of an initiative promoting a participatory approach to finding solutions to Urban Environmental Sanitation issues for West Africa

West and Central
Africa Region



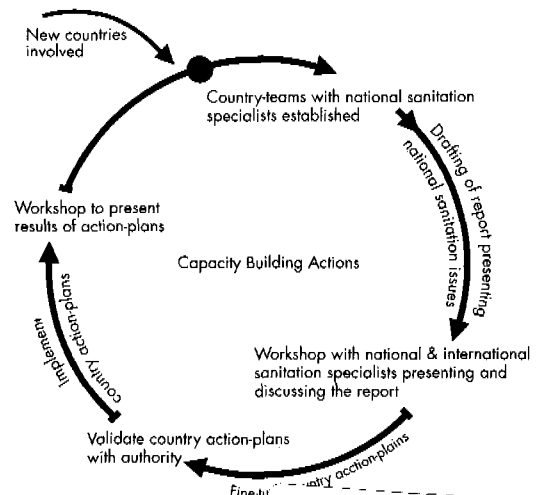
The initiative: Building capacity from within
The initiative was planned and developed as a continuous capacity building process. Country-teams were put together gathering key national sanitation specialists. Together, these specialists drafted reports which focused on the specific sanitation issues/problems in their respective countries. Following this, the workshop provided a forum for the various country-teams to present their reports, and with the assistance of the resource people, they fine-tuned their country action-plans. The workshop also served as a platform for synergy, cross-fertilisation of ideas, similarities and differences. Currently, the country-teams are preparing the implementation of their action-plans, and the RWSG/WCA is providing follow-up consultations and guidance as and when requested. In order to facilitate the ongoing learning process, a subsequent workshop will be organised once the respective country action-plans are evaluated. Further synergy of ideas and experiences is expected.

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Urban Environmental Sanitation (UES) is becoming increasingly problematic to deal with as the population in poor peri-urban areas continues to grow. Furthermore, sanitation services, when available, are charged at exorbitant prices relative to the income of the service users. To meet these challenges, the Regional Water and Sanitation Group for West and Central Africa (RWSG/WCA) launched a regional initiative for the improvement of urban sanitation in five West African countries, namely: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Senegal. This initiative was developed with the collaboration of various institutions* active in the sector and its objective is twofold. Firstly, the aim was to foster and support the national capacities of the countries; secondly, to develop and implement country-specific strategic sanitation plans.

* Resource people joined the workshop from the World Bank and other multilateral and bilateral organisations. The workshop was sponsored by the RWSG/WCA, GTZ, the EDI of the World Bank and UNICEF.

The Capacity Building Cycle



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Workshop objectives & themes

The main objective of the workshop was to discuss and review the key issues that were presented in the reports and which have an impact on urban sanitation, so as to further elaborate the country action-plans and develop them into strategic approaches to urban planning. The following areas were identified and discussed.

Political profile: There is a need to develop political commitment for the future development of the sector, advocating for sanitation and advancing persuasive arguments for the inclusion of sanitation policies on the political agenda.

Public-private partnership: There is a need to analyse the potential of private sector participation and stimulate this new partnership which should allow for a more efficient and effective delivery of services in low-income urban areas.

Institutional issues: A regulatory framework needs to be established to promote sustainable investments. To enforce this regulatory framework effective institutional reforms and public administration is needed to foster reliability and encourage private sector participation.

Mobilisation of resources: Sanitation should be regarded as an economic good, with major improvements in cost-recovery arrangements and a more efficient tariff structure. Appropriate mechanisms for financial investments in poor neighbourhoods need to be developed; level and target of subsidy needs to be clearly defined.

Capacity building: This was the all-encompassing objective of the workshop; emphasis was put on the need for improved access to information and a means to continue sharing essential information, ideas and experiences in the field of urban sanitation.

Key Outcomes

* Urban sanitation services (still largely provided by the small-scale informal sector), tend to offer level and cost of services that the consumer demands. If financing were available to them they could increase coverage and improve the quality of services.

* Private sector participation was one of the highlights of this workshop; it was agreed that this should be the main focus for the follow-up programs.

* Private lending for sanitation is growing fast in the region and the possibility of generating local sources of capital represents an untapped resource.

* The advantages of the combined services of water and sanitation are well established. The current split of these two services has made it difficult to enforce sanitation measures and collect payment for these services.

* There is a need to enforce sanitation measures

and promote hygiene education (i.e. in schools), and to make sanitation a more personally felt priority.

* Country participants emphasised their interest in stormwater drainage and solid waste collection which were both considered first priority.

Action-Plans of the country-teams

There was a strong emphasis on the need for access to timely and pertinent information, and for the sharing of this information between countries through the various means available (e-mail, newsletter, workshops, etc.). The dissemination of information to other provinces within the countries was also seen to be crucial as a means to heighten awareness nation-wide. Agreement was reached on the need for better co-ordination of the actions being carried out by the different agencies. Consensus was reached on the need to acquire country-specific knowledge through missions, training and seminars, with emphasis on financial and technological aspects of sanitation. There was a resolve to promote political support for sanitation; thereby facilitating more visible and successful actions as to improve sanitation services.

Recommendations

The country action-plans were discussed by the participants during the country specific working groups and plenary sessions. These action-plans were finalised in-country in early 1998. As a follow-up action, field visits will be carried out by RWSG/WCA staff in each country to discuss the implementation of the action-plan with the country-team, and to discuss the process of validation of the plans with the authorities. Upon validation of the plans, the RWSG/WCA will support the country-teams to promote their programs and to help launch selected capacity building activities.

RWSG/WCA's Role

The RWSG/WCA will provide guidance and leadership as and when requested. Specifically the group will:

* play a key role as an intermediary for the country-teams by supporting the establishment of a regional network which will enable the sanitation specialists to share experiences and information.

* promote training in financial and economic analysis in the sector of WSS, and will support ITN centres in designing these components.

* promote and provide information on best practices in how to stimulate private sector activity.

* share information on innovative approaches and appropriate technologies.

* promote the network activities in neighbouring countries; specifically: Togo, Benin and Mali.



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