

Advantages of Learning Alliances for Plan Tanzania, CARE Tanzania and WaterAid Tanzania Learning Forum

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Abstract

Plan International (Tanzania), CARE International (Tanzania) and WaterAid (Tanzania) have been contracted with the Dar-es-Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority (DAWASA) to implement the Community Water Supply and Sanitation Project (CWSSP) which is funded by a grant from World Bank. The CWSSP is being implemented in the peripheral areas covering three Municipalities of Dar-es-Salaam City. This grant is being channeled through DAWASA.

According to the project implementation manual, all CWSSP NGOs (i.e. Plan, CARE and WaterAid) are undertaking similar activities, but in different locations, and therefore a need was identified for a Forum for these three international NGOs. The aims of this Forum, which meets on a quarterly basis, include to enable maximum utilization, coordination, technical support and supervision of available resources includes service providers; sharing information and experiences in order to avoid confusion in the communities; learning from each other; and to facilitate effective and efficient project management for all stakeholders: the client (DAWASA), the communities, the CWSSP NGOs, and other stakeholders.

This paper documents the objectives of The Forum, the experiences which have been learnt so far, and the advantages in relation to 'scaling up initiative' approaches in the water and sanitation sector. The strengths, opportunities and threats/ pitfalls of The Forum have also been documented along with The Forum collaboration with other stakeholders and the future plans for The Forum.

Introduction

The Community Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (CWSSP) is a component of the Dar es Salaam WSS project which is aiming to provide a minimum WSS service to low income communities. It is located in the three municipalities of Dar es Salaam (Ilala, Temeke and Kinondoni) and in the Bagamoyo and Kibaha districts along the transmission lines that supply the city from the Ruvu river. These are all areas which may not be able to benefit initially from the comprehensive rehabilitation of the water distribution system which will be implemented under the Dar es Salaam WSS Project.

Schemes which are to be implemented are mostly independent water supply distribution systems which are supplied from point sources (wells or boreholes) or from a bulk supply from the DAWASA distribution system, as well as on-site sanitation facilities. The CWSSP schemes are limited to US\$20 equivalent per capita with a ceiling of US\$50,000 equivalent per subproject to cover the costs of the supply of equipment (pumps and pipes) and the construction. The project also covers fees for the CWSSP NGOs (Plan, WaterAid and Care) who are assisting communities to identify their needs, in the design and implementation of their projects and in the management of the WSS service.

The identification criteria relating to potential beneficiaries (communities) includes: low income households with inadequate access to services; cholera prone areas; hazard free land; areas seriously deficient in water supply; and areas distant from existing or proposed water sources.

Objectives

Initially The Forum was formed in order to share information and experiences in order to avoid confusion in the communities, as all CWSSP NGOs were assigned similar work but in different locations. The Forum members consist of two staff from each CWSSP NGO who meet on a quarterly

basis to discuss and agree implementation strategies of activities as identified in the CWSSP Operational Manual.

It was found that the organizations learnt from each other because experiences and capacities of the members and also the organizations themselves differ. One CWSSP NGO, specifically WaterAid Tanzania, specializes only in the water and sanitation sector while Plan and Care Tanzania both also integrate their water and sanitation programmes with other areas such as education and health.

Due to a limited or inadequate number of service providers (in the private sector) in the water and sanitation sector, The Forum also discusses the issue of how to maximize the utilization, coordination, technical support and supervision of the available service providers. Representatives from identified key service providers e.g. consulting firms and CBOs working in water and sanitation are also invited to The Forum meetings. DAWASA, the CWSSP Client, also uses The Forum for information sharing and easy and effective communication between the communities, the CWSSP NGOs and other stakeholders. DAWASA staff also use The Forum for clarification on the project if such a need arises.

Learning areas

The learning areas are based on the CWSSP projects / activities and include:

- Community mobilization, including registration of Water Users Associations (WUAs);
- Development of subproject proposals, including activities like environmental impact assessment (EIA); training and development of operation and maintenance (O&M);
- Financial management manuals; and
- Hygiene promotion.

The design and construction supervision of subproject proposals have also formed part of the learning areas. The learning areas are coordinated by the CWSSP NGOs and these include activities such as the development of working tools. The CWSSP NGOs' Forum tries to coordinate available resources in Dar-es-Salaam and also the funds from the Client. These include the available service providers and the sharing of costs of services and the development of working tools and messages. A good example is the cost of airing a hygiene promotion message through three well known radio stations, which was implemented as a joint activity between all of the CWSSP NGOs. Also The Forum develops and coordinates other issues and activities in the water and sanitation sector at the national level e.g. the development of hygiene promotion messages which is not only used by those involved in the CWSSP.

Methods and tools used to facilitate learning

Meetings (both regular and emergency), visits, consultations and presentations are some of the tools used for learning between The Forum members and also other stakeholders, such as the invitees for example, the service providers or DAWASA. Also the learning process is facilitated and enabled through the implementation of joint tasks such as the development of working tools, for example, strategies, guidelines and hygiene messages and also through networking (often through e-mail).

The CWSSP NGOs are working together through The Forum meetings and through Task Forces which comprise of members from all NGOs. In the meetings issues are discussed and agreed. Individual people from any of the NGOs and or a Task Force can be assigned for follow up and for the development of working tools.

Working procedures of The Forum

Each Forum member follows the working procedures of their organization, especially in the areas of management, finance and administration. The procurement of services and materials is based on the Client's procurement procedures – the World Bank procurement procedures. However, in some areas where the Client's procurement procedures are not in line with the CWSSP NGO's procedures, discussions are held to agree on which one can be used. For instance, the Client's (The World Bank's) procurement procedures allow single sourcing for small amount (less than US\$100,000) whilst in most of the CWSSP NGOs' procurement procedures, single sourcing is not allowed.

Common procedures are applied in the implementation of the programs and projects. Following common procedures was the original and main focus of the CWSSP NGOs' Forum, in order to try and prevent confusion in the communities. Guidelines and policies have been developed to ensure that each NGO is working using similar procedures. These working procedures in the programs and projects are based on the CWSSP Operational Manual. All documents produced by the CWSSP NGOs belong to the Client and hence authorization is needed from The Client if the NGOs want to use the documents for purposes other than the CWSSP.

Forum strengths and experiences

The Forum is made up with members of a range of skills and experiences. These include people with skills, knowledge and experiences in management, engineering, community mobilization, etc. So far The Forum members have managed to meet six times on a quarterly basis to discuss, plan and agree implementation strategies. Also through The Forum a Hygiene Promotion Strategy was developed and approved by the Client (DAWASA), which is one of the working tools of the CWSSP NGOs. The development of the strategy was coordinated by a Task Force made up of one member from each CWSSP NGO.

Also through this Task Force a message was developed which was used by the DAWASA to campaign about cholera through the national radio and other well known radio stations. This came from a request from DAWASA who wanted to create awareness in the general public on cholera near to the start of rainy season. Guidelines for development of TORs and subproject proposals were developed and shared within The Forum members. Also a message regarding the transmission route of water related diseases, particularly cholera (which is currently still in a draft form) was developed.

Relationship with other stakeholders

The CWSSP NGOs' Forum works in close collaboration with DAWASA. Note should be made that everything undertaken / developed by the CWSSP NGOs first needs to get approval from DAWASA before its implementation. DAWASA is a government authority and hence through DAWASA the CWSSP NGOs' Forum works very closely with government. Also at each respective Municipality the CWSSP NGOs works very closely with the Municipal Council. Government staff members from the Municipal Council participate in the whole process including supervision, technical support, coordination and regulation of activities. The Municipal Water Engineer (MWE) is the person responsible in the water and sanitation sector at the Municipal level. The CWSSP NGOs' Forum also works in collaboration with different service providers such as consultants who undertake studies and assessments. At each respective municipality the CWSSP NGOs also work with local NGOs and CBOs (partners) in the implementation of the CWSSP.

Lessons learned

So far a number of lessons have been learned. through The Forum it has been learned that working together in collaboration and partnership enables comprehensive documents such as strategies and guidelines to be developed. The Forum also enables easy and quick dissemination of technologies, ideas, etc and the effective mobilization of resources, as well as the coordination of activities and general management of day-to-day activities. But there is also an imbalance in the capability and experiences of The Forum members which also affects the active participation and equal learning of all Forum members.

Opportunities

There are number of opportunities which can be used to strengthen the CWSSP NGOs Forum. These include inputs from other existing structures and fora such as the International NGOs Forum, the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) – Africa led by World Bank and the Citywide Sanitation Approach lead by WaterAid in Tanzania. Government structures including DAWASA structures and programs, for example, the DWSSP, which involves many stakeholders and structures/ committees at the Ministry level e.g. the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Ministry of Water are among

of the forum opportunities. The structures can be used promote The Forum and Learning alliances concept.

Pitfalls and threats

Different organizations' policies, missions, visions, the number and capacity of staff in the sector are assumed to be one of the threats and pitfalls of The Forum. If one CWSSP NGO has good number and experienced staff members in the water and sanitation sector it could dominate or suppress the other CWSSP NGOs. This can affect an equal, two-way learning process between the members within The Forum. The many commitments of The Forum members leading to high workloads are also a threat to the effective operation of The Forum.

Future plans

It is expected that in the future the initiative and experiences of the CWSSP will be shared with other stakeholders in the sector, within and outside the Dar-es-Salaam area. This will be done through The Forum members and also through individual CWSSP NGOs in their program areas. Apart from CWSSP, the CWSSP NGOs work in different areas / regions within the country, and so it is believed that there may be opportunities to scale up or replicate similar learning forums in other regions.

Reference

Dar es Salaam Water & Sewerage Authority (2003), Dar es Salaam Water and Supply and Sanitation Project (DWSSP) Operational Manual.