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**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE:  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MULTISECTORAL APPROACHES**

**Sustainable sanitation promotion in Nigeria:  
A mix of approaches**

*Bioye Ogunjobi & Musa Girema, Nigeria*

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*UNICEF is in partnership with the government of Nigeria through a program titled "FGN/UNICEF Water and sanitation program" which supports government and civil society partners at the National, State, LGA and Community levels to "contribute to the achievement of MDGs related to W&S (halving by 2015 the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation-MDG 7; Target 10)" At the National level, the program supports activities in policy and systems development while intervening in thirty six states and the Federal Capital, Abuja. It aims at improving the quality of life through provision of water and sanitation services.*

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## **Background**

Prominent in this support is Environmental Sanitation which includes Community-based hygiene & sanitation and WASH in School. The Community based hygiene & sanitation seeks increased access to and use of household latrine; hand washing and personal and domestic hygiene with emphasis on change in behavior in favor of adoption of safe practices. WASH in School includes software which seeks formation of school health clubs; training of pupils & teachers in hygiene promotion; and inclusion of hygiene education in the curriculum. The hardware component comprises construction of facilities such as latrine, urinal and hand washing facility and water points.

Within the context of this paper, efforts will be made to describe the experience of sanitation promotion in Borno and Jigawa States where the FGN/UNICEF/DFID Water Supply and sanitation program is being facilitated by UNICEF. In both States, the program focuses on ten LGAs and about one hundred communities for intervention.

*At the beginning* of the program in 2004, in the self-selected communities in the two States, there were very few traditional latrines most of which were in a state of disrepair. Surrounding bush was littered with shit of varied sizes while visitors were greeted by flies very robust from the nutrient derived from the human faeces; stench was all over in some of the communities where defecation sites were not very far from the main road. The primary schools neither had latrines nor water facilities; pupils used the nearby bush for defecation while school surroundings were an eyesore.

In one of the communities, Gazabure in Borno State, defecation site was not far from their water source and this had no meaning to the people.

## **The strategies**

### **The promotional slabs**

Immediately after the initial process of Community Action Plan (CAP), the onus was on the program quickly promote Safe defecation in communities since this was tipped as a priority. During the CAP meeting, in the two States, more than a hundred households volunteered to dig pits for latrine if slabs will be provided free of charge by the program.

Within a month of the plan, more than fifty households had completed their pits and this compelled the RUWASA & WES Unit Officers to visit the communities and inspect the latrine and make slabs available. Altogether, at this initial stage forty-two latrines were ready for slab donation.

Mass Construction of Slabs: RUWASSA and WES unit officers organized slab construction training in the communities that resulted in the construction of eighty-four slabs in the two States. Local artisans were sought and trained in the communities for mass slab construction at the unit cost of \$18. Furthermore, volunteers were sought among community members to dig latrines and do the lining. Within two months of the process, more than two hundred households had got their latrines. Although this was a bit successful as pointed out by one of the householders Mallam Abdullahi popularly known as Tailor, in Kargo Community, who said *“Now my wives do not go to the bush any longer due to the existence of latrines and I am sure nobody gets to share my wives’ privacy with me. This is a thing of joy”*, it was not without its challenge. One major challenge of this approach was that less than half of the beneficiaries of promotional slabs were actually those who could afford slabs.

### **Sanitation center operations**

As demand increased every day and the free slabs were not forthcoming, the WESCOM members and the communities mapped out two strategies in order to ensure easy access to slabs by all the members of the communities. Potential sani center operators were identified and these were supported with “seed fund” by the local government WES Unit. With this, community members began to have ready access to sanitation materials and thereby avoid the hassle of going to the city and incur transport cost which is about \$100 for about \$700 worth of materials.

### **Household cooperative efforts**

In some communities, householders adopted “weekly contributions” by which a cluster of households would pool money to produce a slab weekly. The slab is mounted on the latrine of one household after digging and lining and the next week another household will get the same so that in ten weeks, ten households will have a latrine each.

### **Social marketing**

In order to widen the scope of the promotional activities, some social marketing techniques were adopted. Various promotional pictorials were developed; radio jingles were produced and aired on popular Radio Stations while hygiene promotion was incorporated into community drama group to promote safe hygiene practices. Although, the outcome of this strategy was a bit difficult to assess, there is proof that in target communities, this has heralded proliferation of latrines.

### **Hand washing campaign**

This campaign is facilitated at the State & LGA levels to target policy makers; in the communities, to target householders and in the school to target pupils and teachers. In Jigawa State, the State government has allocated a sum of \$150,000 to support provision of slabs for household latrines. This is unprecedented in the region.

### **WASH in school**

The needs assessment in the school was carried out with the pupils and the teachers and some community leaders in attendance. This led to identification of plans and allocation of responsibilities to communities, LGA and the schools while pupils and teachers were trained in hygiene promotion to promote safe practices. Hygiene clubs were formed comprising girls and boys. The clubs managed by pupils and coordinated by the health teachers are charged with the responsibility of facilitating all WES activities in school.

A few months after the training, one of the teachers trained said “I’m not only using the knowledge in the school but also in my house; there is a latrine in my house installed with a hand washing facility and we clean our surroundings daily” In one of the communities, the village head revealed that some of the pupils have influenced their parents to construct latrines in their households through their attitude against open defecation.

## Lessons learnt

- Sanitation promotion can become sustainable if the government is engaged to spearhead its promotion and key it into its policies as is the case in Jigawa State where the government is funding household latrines and constructing VIP latrines in all primary schools in the State.
- Donation of slabs free of charge at the initial stage to willing householders ended up supporting those who could have paid for slabs, so the subsidy was captured by better off households.
- Formation of Sani-Center could not have taken place from inception because high demand had not been generated otherwise, people would be procuring the materials for use other than slab construction.
- A simultaneous support for latrine construction both at home and in the schools is key to sustainable safe defecation among pupils.
- Willingness to pay is quite different from ability to pay and there are householders who love to have latrines but are not able to afford it unless supported.
- Training teachers is a major step to ensuring that hygiene is taught in schools because even when hygiene education is already in the curriculum, teachers may lack the skills to teach it.
- Identification of allies in the communities and winning their heart for sanitation makes sanitation promotion easy as these allies do “marketing” voluntarily.

## Community-led total sanitation (CLTS)

This is recently used in fifty communities in five States where triggering has been done and the enthusiasm of the people to construct low-cost household latrines. The outcome of this intervention is being monitored and will be documented before paper presentation.

## Conclusion

For a more effective sanitation implementation, it is important to adopt several functional strategies rather than restrict the program to only one strategy no-matter-how seemingly efficient it may be. This paper recommends a combination of approaches such that the deficiency of one approach is complemented by the other. It is also crucial to ensure that provision of water supply is a focus if sanitation uptake is to be increased. While demand responsiveness is essential to sustainability, a taste of subsidy will go a long way helping the poorest of the poor to afford latrines.

Support should be given to promote Private Sector owned sanitation center operations. Jigawa’s subsidy system could be modified to ensure that it benefits the poorest of the poor through what is called “cross subsidy” whereby different rates of subsidy are given to individuals according to their wealth ranking.

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## Contact details

Musa Girema  
Deputy Director  
Jigawa Rural Water Supply and Sanitation  
Agency (RUWASA), Jigawa State, Nigeria.  
giremamusa@yahoo.com

Bioye Ogunjobi  
WASH Officer  
UNICEF “D” Office, Bauchi, Nigeria.  
bogunjobi@unicef.org

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