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**TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE
AND RESILIENT WASH SERVICES**

Social and behaviour change for sustainable WASH interventions in Zimbabwe

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Unpaid Care and Domestic Work is essential for human development, well-being, healthy societies and growing economies. Poor access to basic public services increases the burden of domestic care work. This paper describes the lessons learned from the first year of the We-Care Dreams programme. The programme aims to look beyond WASH systems in their own silo and create a broader interaction with communities. Being intentional about using the provision of WASH services for more than their own sake seems very logical in theory but has come up against different types of challenges. It is hoped that the lessons learned here will be useful for others wanting to move beyond WASH service provision for its own sake.

Introduction

Underlying drivers of poverty, inadequate public services, and frequent, recurring shocks (e.g. floods, droughts) increase the time required for and the demand for care work. ‘Unpaid care work’ means direct care of persons and domestic work for family members and other households (Budlender 2007). It includes activities like caring for children and the elderly, cleaning, cooking, washing clothes, fetching water or fuel or preparing fuel products (e.g. cow dung patties for use as cooking fuel). Women and girls are often primarily responsible for domestic and caring activities (Ferrant et al. 2014).

The 2030 Sustainable Development (SDG) Agenda includes a target on care work under Goal 5, ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’ with the target (5.4.1) to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate’ (United Nations, 2015). Reducing the time women and girls spend on unpaid care is only part of the solution. In order to truly meet the SDG target we need to also work on shifting social gender norms, shifting attitudes and practices so that domestic care work is shared more equitably across both men and women. This requires a new type of approach to typical development programming. Providing a clean, safe water point either within a household or very close to one can reduce the time taken to collect water but if we do not also try to change gender norms, collecting water will always be a ‘woman’s role’ which will continue to restrict her potential for empowerment and being able to take part in non-domestically based activities.

The role of social norms in WASH interventions

Due to cultural and historic reasons, women are often the primary collectors, transporters and users of water in developing countries. They tend to have the main responsibility for health, child care and are managers of domestic water as well as promoters of home and community based WASH activities. This division of labour generally results in women’s and men’s different priorities for water use and management. (SIDA,2015) Yet, in many societies women’s views are not systematically represented in decision making bodies, and gender-based inequalities are often made invisible in debates and cultural norms. Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) is an approach to changing people’s behaviours or practices which focuses on addressing the many different factors that may influence an individual’s and society’s behaviours. SBC aims

to capture as many of these factors as possible, including individual perceptions, cultural norms, the opinion of family members and peers, and the broader physical environment in which people live or physical access to materials such as soap. (Concern Worldwide,2013) The first stage in capturing the different factors is to establish, in consultation with the community, the most appropriate structure.

This paper describes the programme in Zimbabwe, what has been done to date and the lessons learned in the first year of programming. The programme aims to look beyond WASH systems in their own silo and create a broader interaction with communities, which is one way of taking a more systems based approach. The concept of a systems based approach to development activities is not new, but as a sector we are still struggling in ways to conceptualise what it means in practice. Being intentional about using the provision of WASH services for more than their own sake seems very logical in theory but has come up against different types of challenges, many of which have been resolved along the way. It is hoped that the lessons learned here will be useful for others wanting to move beyond WASH service provision for its own sake.

Programme context

The Women Economic Empowerment and Care (We-Care) Dreams Programme is taking place over 3 years in 5 districts of Zimbabwe (Masvingo, Bubi, Zvishavane, Gutu, Seke) and 2 regions of the Philippines (Mindanao and Eastern Visayas). The programme works in both peri-urban and rural areas. The programme is part of Oxfam’s Women’s Economic Empowerment and Care portfolio which aims to promote new norms of valuing and sharing care work in families and communities. In the Philippines and Zimbabwe, the focus is on reducing the level and intensity of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work, enabling women to have more choice over how they spend their time and greater opportunity to claim their rights and engage in social, personal, economic and political activity. One of the routes to achieving this aim is through the provision of better WASH services, particularly water services in communities where the burden of collecting water for domestic use is a contributing factor to women’s unpaid care.

We do not expect there to necessarily be a direct correlation between improved access to water and a reduction in women’s unpaid care, as the direct time saved can be small each day (e.g. 30 minutes per day), which when added up over a week or month becomes significant, but saved daily, this time can be easily taken up with other activities. However, we have 2 hypotheses. One, that by improving access to basic services it becomes possible to have a more tangible conversation about social norms change around care responsibilities and two, if WASH infrastructures are valued for more than their impact on family health and domestic cleanliness, both viewed as women’s responsibilities in many countries, then the sustainable use of WASH infrastructures, particularly where communities are expected to keep services sustainable, can be improved.

One aspect we must be particularly careful about is the potential transfer of women’s unpaid care from the home to the community, especially that upkeep of communal facilities can tend to fall on women. As highlighted during the community mapping in Masvingo, Zimbabwe, where one respondent stated *‘the water point committee has 5 women and 2 men, it was agreed on by the community. The women are plenty because they must clean the points’* (respondent during the community mapping exercise, 2017).

Landscaping studies

The first year of the programme focused on landscaping studies in both countries. These included a review of the enabling environment for the WASH sector, a household care survey, community mapping of WASH services and a social feasibility study on time and labour saving equipment (TSLE) distributed through the programme.

Enabling environment for WASH

Historically, Zimbabwe’s urban water supply services were driven by principles of high service levels and standards, and universal access, making them unique in Sub-Saharan Africa. It was mandatory that construction and legal occupation of urban houses be preceded by the development of road, water supply, and sewerage services. This approach ensured that service delivery kept pace with housing developments. A 2004 WASH inventory estimated that 75 percent of the 47,000 hand pumps in Zimbabwe were non-functional (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency and ICF International, 2012). Responsibility for WASH service provision in Zimbabwe is uncoordinated and split between several national and local level bodies, causing confusion over roles and responsibilities. Those with some level of responsibility include, The Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate Change (MEWC), National Action Committee on Water

Supply and Sanitation (NAC), The Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (MHCW), The Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development (MTID) and Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA).

Methodology

A mixed method approach was used to enable a better understanding of the programme context. Since project looks at going beyond a ‘technical quick fix’ and instead catalyze change in social norms it was important to consider both qualitative and quantitative data. The Household care survey is a primarily quantitative tool (with some options for write in answers). The community mapping and social feasibility study are qualitative tools.

Household care survey

A household care survey questionnaire was administered in all project areas. The HCS uses random sampling to select households to be surveyed. Since 2014, Oxfam has conducted three rounds of Household Care Survey (HCS) data collection. In the 2014 study, access to water (through a public standpipe or yard connection) was considered as having access to time and labour saving equipment (TSLE). This study showed inconsistent results between access to TSLE and decreased care hours. In the 2017 HCS (third round) a special section on WASH was added which looked at the use of different water sources for distinct water-related activities, laundry and water-related illnesses. A total of 4734 respondents were interviewed in the 2017 HCS, 541 in the Philippines, 3114 in Uganda and 1079 in Zimbabwe. In this round, it was found that having access to an improved water sources was associated with women spending less time on any care responsibility (Rost and Koissy-Kpein, 2017). Whilst producing incredibly useful data, the HCS highlights that needs, attitudes and behaviours differ throughout a country and are dependent on several factors, not least geographical context. The community mapping and social feasibility studies were done at a much more localized level of intervention to provide a richer picture of specific needs.

Using data derived from the HCS, community mapping and social feasibility studies were conducted with the different communities, through focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

Community mapping and social feasibility study

The community mapping exercise was intended to create a living record of the programme and a tool for understanding, planning, decision making and recording activities. The aim was to identify the main problems faced in each community, then develop a shortlist of potential actions to remedy those problems, in most cases a mixture of technical, social norms change and advocacy actions focused on service provision duty bearers. The results highlighted;

- protection and safeguarding of women and girls walking long distances to collect water were a concern for all of communities involved.
- women are not given the opportunity to be trained as pump minders and the men that are leave the community.
- there is also no one solution that will solve water access issues all year round in some areas that experience cyclical drought
- in some areas, communal laundry facilities are wanted (Seke) but in others that’s considered ‘*outdated*’ (Bubi).
- in all areas where communal laundry facilities once existed they have been destroyed on public health grounds [The 2002 Public Health Act has a generic article prohibiting the washing of clothes, people or animals in any place draining into a water body].
- ‘*only women do the laundry because it is their job*’ (respondent in Bubi).
- time taken to wait for the laundry to dry is unproductive (usually 3-4 hours)

In terms of demographics, the communities are poor or very poor with many employed informally or casually with limited or no access to credit or savings products. Water committees are present in some areas but struggle to fulfil their functions of keeping boreholes and wells operational. It was found in Bubi District that households are expected to contribute Z\$1 towards a borehole repair fund but the regularity of this contribution is not clear. For those with household connections managed by ZINWA (the national utility) the tariff is Z\$3 per month.

A social feasibility study is a process that provides a framework for prioritizing, gathering, analyzing, and incorporating social information and participation into the design and delivery of projects. It ensures that

infrastructure project development is informed and considers the key relevant social issues and incorporates a participation strategy for involving a wide range of stakeholders. Infrastructure projects will often have significant social and environmental impacts arising from their construction and operation, which can be both positive and negative. Social impacts on communities affected by the project include, for example, requirements for resettlement and the associated impact on quality of life and livelihoods, and impacts related to environmental alteration (e.g. on health and livelihoods) The survey was conducted to ascertain if installing Time and Labor Saving Equipment (TLSEs) in the different districts was socially acceptable. The survey was conducted through a focus group discussion (FGD) consisting both male and female participants. The results highlighted;

- the participants proposed that laundry facilities could be constructed to ease the burden encountered in doing laundry by women. Both male and female participants agreed that the laundry points will reduce the time spent doing laundry, by cutting down the distance travelled to collect water from a water source and doing laundry at home.
- energy saving stoves (Tsetse stoves) were proposed as a favourable TLSE that will reduce the time spent by both men and women in search of firewood since access to firewood is a challenge and there are also by-laws which do not support deforestation. The stoves will not only reduce the burden endured in firewood collection, but they will decrease the amount of soot that collects in the kitchen and will also present an income generation opportunity for women and men who construct them.
- wheelbarrows and bicycles were suggested as they'll ease the burden and travelling time spent in water collection
- most communities did not have any problems with women being trained as pump minders for the maintenance of water points. Women will make sure that if there is a breakdown it is attended to speedily.
- most communities were not comfortable sharing communal laundry facilities with the fear of domestic violence and lack of trust among each other, with others citing witchcraft as a hindrance to them using communal drying lines
- in some communities, both men and women agreed on having a duty roster for cleaning the water and laundry facilities whereas in other communities it was agreed to be a women's job
- women in almost all the communities suggested they would like do other income generating projects around the water points. This incited a debate where others were arguing that engaging in other projects will increase the burden of unpaid care work on women

Lessons learned so far

We do not have clear results for our two hypotheses yet but will continue to be test them during programme implementation and at strategic review points (e.g. midterm reviews). So far, we have spent a great deal of time and energy establishing what social norms look like in each of the communities where we're working, what the needs are in terms of WASH services and how the two intersect. Some of the challenges we encountered were anticipated (e.g. government reluctance to invest more in services) but others were not (e.g. persuading water engineers and social norms professionals into the same room since they are used to working in silos).

Collective ownership and management of WASH infrastructure by communities has been observed to be a challenge despite the community based model being widely adopted in Zimbabwe. A clear workflow was established and we encouraged the participation of both men and women in the decision making of the type of water infrastructure they require. to facilitate for shared responsibility of managing the WASH services. Multiple-use water projects are being prioritised as they address women's needs more effectively, rather than a one-dimensional project. We have also learned that it is critical to understand the social and gender dynamics within different communities as these can help or hinder project effectiveness. 'Communities' are not one homogenous group and 'women' are not a singular group either.

Conclusion

Water is political in Zimbabwe and changing social norms is a big challenge. The challenges from government at one level and community resistance from the other have meant that we have had to learn and adapt as we go. For hypotheses one, there are some emerging changes in communities, where men and boys are actively participating in care responsibilities, which is an early indication of changing social norms within the communities where we work. However, sustaining the infrastructures is more challenging and

only time will tell if by valuing the infrastructures for more than family health and domestic cleanliness will support sustainability (hypotheses two).

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