



## Rural water supply and sanitation development in Nigeria

O. N. Habila, Nigeria

NIGERIA HAS AN estimated population of 120 million and a land mass of approximately 923,768 square kilometers falling between latitudes 4° 1' and 13° 9' N and longitudes 2° 2' and 14° 30' E. The country has three tiers of government: Federal, State and Local governments and is divided into six geopolitical zones (Figure 1), 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and 774 local government areas (LGAs). About one half of the population, that is 60 million, live in rural communities of less than 5,000 population.

Infant and under-five mortality rates are estimated at 71 and 133 per 1,000 live births respectively. Malaria, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections (ARI) and typhoid account for almost 70% of child mortality and morbidity<sup>1</sup>.

Access to safe water and improved sanitary means of excreta disposal is estimated to be about 54% and 53% respectively<sup>1</sup>. There remains a wide disparity in the prioritisation of water supply and sanitation (WSS) by both communities and government. For the communities, this is evidenced by a Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) study carried out by UNICEF<sup>2</sup> (Figure 2). Government priority ranking of sanitation is evidenced by the inadequate support to sanitation development.

For the WSS sector communities are divided into three categories based on population:

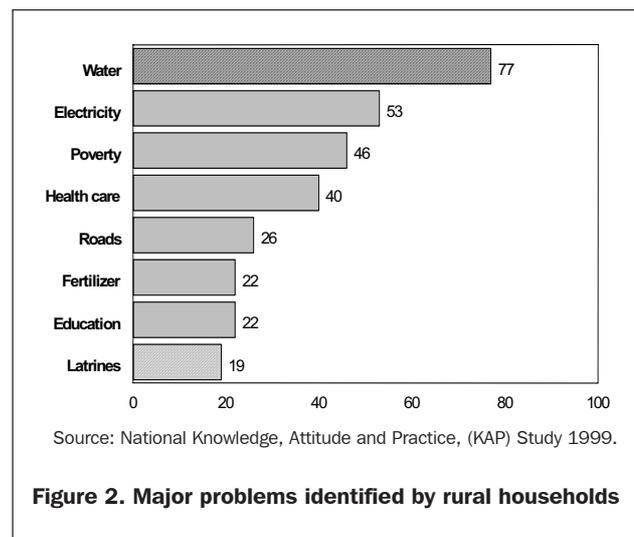
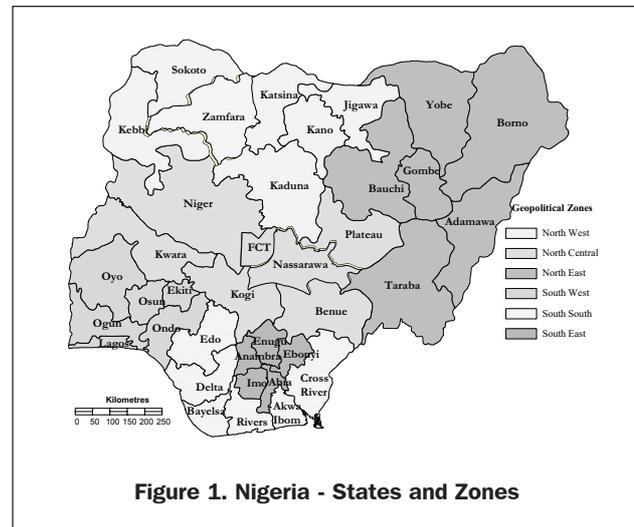
- Urban - > 20,000
- Small Towns (or semi-urban communities) - 5,000 - 20,000
- Rural communities - < 5,000 population

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) development began in Nigeria in earnest at the beginning of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD). This paper documents the development of RWSS from this period to date showing the lessons learned, current developments and the main challenges.

### Highlights of RWSS development

Organised development of rural water supply and sanitation in Nigeria is quite recent. Key developments in RWSS during the past two decades and planned developments for the next decade are shown in Figure 3 below:

Two of the most consistent of the developments are the Federal Government of Nigeria/UNICEF Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES) Programme and the development of local manufacture of handpumps. The onset of democracy is accompanied by renewed interest in investing in the sector including support for the development of the



over-arching multi-sector Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the interim version of which was released in 2001.

While local capacity building has been ongoing, a major strategic input was made when senior managers in the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, National Water Resources Institute and of the RWSS Programmes of 22 states were trained by WEDC at WEDC, Loughborough, UK and in Nigeria with UNICEF sponsorship. This was occasioned by the realisation of the need to build capacity for RWSS programme management at that level.

During this period also, an evaluation of the FGN/UNICEF WES Programme, was funded by DFID as a

RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA		PERIOD (IN YEARS, 1981 - 2010)																												
Development Events	Demo 2		Mil 5			Military 6					Int		Military 7			Mil 8	Democracy 4													
	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
<b>A Government Programmes</b>																														
1	National Borehole Programme																													
2	DFRRI RUWATSAN Programme																													
3	Petroleum Trust Fund RWS Project																													
4	Improved Access Programme																													
5	National RWSS Programme																													
<b>B Programmes supported by ESAs</b>																														
6	UNICEF Assisted WES Programme																													
7	UNDP-World Bank RUSAFIYA Project																													
8	UNDP RWSS Project																													
9	EU Water & Sanitation Programme																													
10	DFID W and S Pilot Project																													
11	WaterAid RWSS Programme																													
12	JICA Rural Water Supply Project																													
13	Local manufacture of handpumps																													
<b>C Key Sector Instruments Developed</b>																														
1	Water Supply Sector Memorandum																													
2	RWSS Sector Strategy and Action Plan																													
3	Water Resources Decree 101																													
4	NIS for Handpumps (1st Edition)																													
5	National WS and S Policy																													
6	Generic Act for State RWSS Agencies																													
7	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper																													
8	RWSS Programme Strategic Framework																													

Figure 3. Major RWSS developments in Nigeria 1981 - 2010

precursor to formal partnership and to inform areas for DFID’s special focus in four states of the Federation. DFID has approved funding of £15 million to be used by UNICEF for RWSS in four states over the next six years.

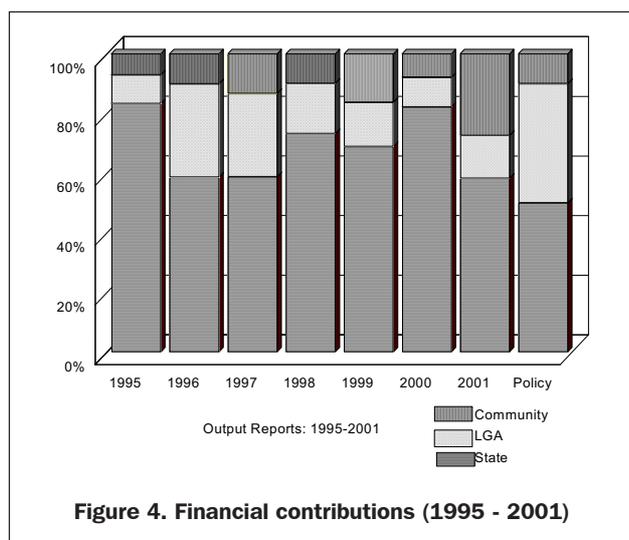
**Key lessons learned**

The key lessons learned during the past two decades include the following:

- The External Support Agencies (ESAs) have provided a major catalyst for sector development, advocating for and supporting the implementation of new approaches for sustainable delivery of water and sanitation services. Most of the ESAs have moved from an approach of direct implementation to one of partnership within the context of a Sector-wide approach.
- Due to the collaborative efforts of government and ESAs, a new National Water Supply and Sanitation Policy was issued in year 2000 and this has provided an impetus for the development of a more coherent RWSS programme, including the formulation of a new RWSS

Programme Strategic Framework currently in advanced stages of finalisation.

- Significant achievements made in the sharing of costs between communities, LGAs and States for RWSS (Fig.4) and in the establishment of State RWSS Agencies (done in 16 and ongoing in 13 of the 36 states of the Federation) demonstrates that the persistent advocacy of ESAs like UNICEF is an effective strategy for institutional reform.
- As demonstrated by the RUSAFIYA Project and the DFID funded WaterAid Executed Oju/Obi Project, support for the establishment of community management is best carried out by the Local Governments through RWSS units within the structure of the LGA.
- Significant reduction in Guinea worm cases is a major success of the water/sanitation and health sectors demonstrates the need for a multi- sectoral, collaborative approach to dealing with water and sanitation related diseases.
- Limited success in the uptake of improved sanitation technologies is due mainly to low perception of sanita-



tion, a supply driven approach and limited capacity for promotional activities.

### New developments in the RWSS sub-sector

Major developments are taking place in the RWSS Sector within the context of an improved partnership involving the key government agencies, ESAs, the private sector and NGOs. In the year 2002, the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and UNICEF agreed to collaborate in, among other things, three strategic areas. These include (1) review of the RWSS Sector Strategy and Action Plan (SSAP), (2) the development of a separate sanitation policy for the country, and, (3) the continued development of capacity to locally manufacture handpumps to international standards.

The SSAP developed in 1992 is being significantly modified to provide a new Strategic Framework for a national RWSS Programme. The process involved setting up of a RWSS Working Group (made up of Federal Ministry of Water Resources (FMWR), six States and ESAs including UNICEF which is leading the process amongst the ESAs) which reviewed the the 1992 SSAP and drafted a new strategic framework. This document is currently going through various stages of stakeholder consultations before final approval by the Federal Government. Figure 5 conceptualises the main elements of the National RWSS programme framework that is emerging.

The development of a sanitation policy has been initiated through a National Task Group (NTG) on Sanitation led by the FMWR and made up of the key agencies including the Federal Ministry of Environment, the Federal Ministry of Health, UNICEF, World Bank, DFID and European Commission.

The development of local manufacture of handpumps (to ensure in country availability of standard handpumps and spares for sustainable delivery of safe water to rural communities), has been ongoing for more than a decade. It began with a handpump testing project which resulted in

the adoption and standardisation of two handpumps for local production and use in the country. These are the RUWATSAN 1 (based on India Mark III) and RUWATSAN 2 (based on Afridev). Recent assessment, with the support of SKAT, however has shown the need to review the standards and this is ongoing through a Handpump Steering Committee<sup>3</sup>. This may lead to adoption of three standard handpumps one for each of the depth applications (direct action, deepwell and extra-deepwell). A process of re-evaluation of existing and certification of new local manufacturers is ongoing as well as capacity building for third party inspection of handpumps. This aspect of the programme is the clearest example of public private partnerships that is yielding some good results.

Concurrent with these key sector developments is the development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the interim version of which was concluded in 2001. It specifically indicates that availability of electricity and water can radically improve income-generating opportunities for the poor and at the same time reduce women's workload thereby improving their livelihoods.

These developments which mostly have happened during the few years of the current democratic government are providing an enabling environment for increased investment in the sector as may be seen from Figure 3.

### Main challenges

The main challenges for the RWSS sub-sector include the following:

- As noted by the DFID funded WELL Evaluation report<sup>4</sup>, decentralisation of the programme planning and implementation process is a major challenge. More states need to form RWSS agencies and LGA RWSS departments and the capacities of the agencies and LGA RWSS departments need to be strengthened especially with respect to sanitation, hygiene promotion and participatory/social marketing techniques.
- The arrangement for the delivery of the Federal share of the investment costs so as to enhance a collaborative relationship based on partnership between the Federal, States, LGAs and communities as well as take cognisance of the desire of the federal legislatures to make visible impact in their constituencies through RWSS projects.
- Although some success has been made in the establishment of community management structures, lack of handpump spare parts distribution outlets, inadequate number of trained and equipped village mechanics and interference by local and state governments is hampering full management of water supply maintenance by communities.
- Proper positioning of the National Water Resources Institute as a training and research institute for more effective capacity building in the sub-sector. This will include significantly strengthening the institute especially in the "software" components of sanitation and

hygiene promotion, participatory techniques and processes leading to community management. Linkages with NGO groups and other training institutions will also be required.

- The development and implementation of a monitoring and database system (including water quality) that is simple, reliable and involves the communities, enabling the latter to play a more active role in demanding for improved services based on being well informed from their participation in the monitoring process.
- The minimisation of corruption in the contract procurement processes and thus creating an enabling environment for cost effective private sector participation in the delivery of goods and services.
- The lack of clarity with regards to responsibility for sanitation at the national level. The Federal Ministry of Environment and the Federal Ministry of Water Resources both claim ownership and this is slowing down the pace of support for sanitation development.

### Conclusion

This paper has reviewed the activities of the RWSS Sector in the past two decades. It is evident that the haphazard and intermittent nature of programme development during the military regimes has made the RWSS sector the worst for it. However, there is growing evidence that the onset of democratic governance is providing an enabling environment for partnerships between government, ESAs and, to some extent, the private sector in shaping a more consistent framework for sustainable RWSS programme development and delivery. Furthermore, the willingness and ability of communities to contribute to investments in the sector

has been clearly demonstrated. It will appear that major players in RWSS subsector, in partnership with the communities, are fairly well positioned to change the low level of access to safe water and sanitation in Nigeria. In spite of these positive developments, there are still major challenges to be tackled to take the sector forward. The evidence is that there is both willingness and ability to meet these challenges.

### Bibliography

1. *Children's and Women's Rights in Nigeria: A Wake Up Call: Situation Assessment and Analysis 2001* – a National Planning Commission/UNICEF Publication
2. UNICEF Water and Environmental Sanitation Programme – Report of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Communities in Nigeria
3. Mudgal, A.K. (Consultant from SKAT) - *Improving Sustainability of Local manufacture of handpumps and Components in Nigeria – A way Forward*. Consultant Report May 2002.
4. FGN/UNICEF Water and Environmental Sanitation Programme, Nigeria, Evaluation Report – Part One: Main Report, 2001.

OTHNIEL N. HABILA, Project Officer, Water and Environmental Sanitation, UNICEF, Lagos, Nigeria

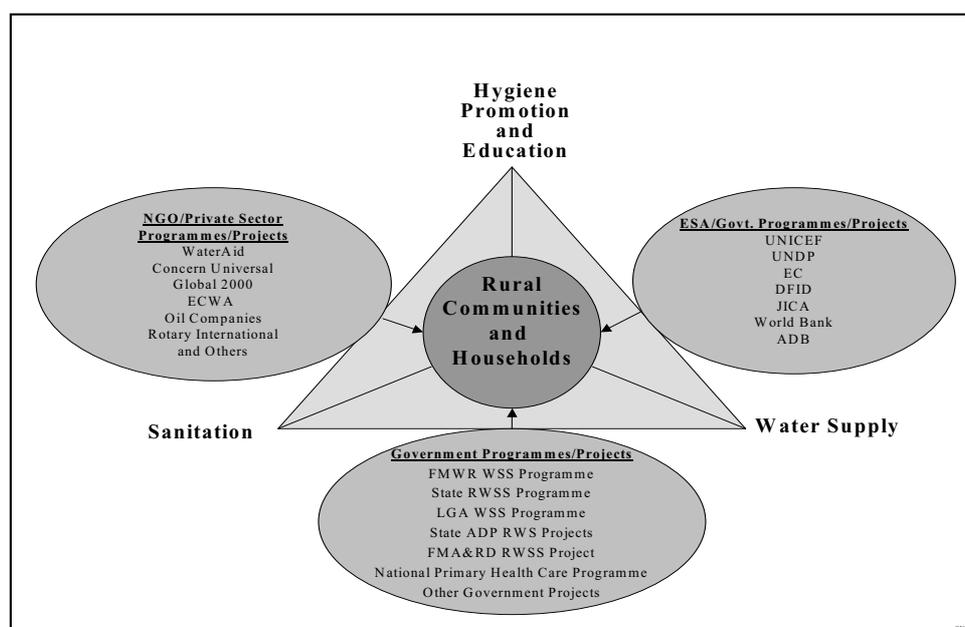


Figure 5. The national RWSS programme framework