



Peri urban strategy development process: The case of Zambia

Chimwang'a Maseka, Zambia

ZAMBIA IS A sub Saharan country characterized by rapid urbanization. Infrastructure and housing development has not matched the rate of urbanization thus giving rise to numerous unplanned and informal settlements known as "peri urban" areas. It is estimated that 40-80% of the urban population living in these areas lack adequate water supply and sanitation services [reference?]. The reoccurrence of water borne-diseases like cholera has been a constant reminder of the cost the country continues to bear for the environmental degradation faced in these areas. In 1993, the Zambian Government undertook major institutional and legal reforms to remedy this situation and address other problems facing the water sector. The sector was restructured to (i) transfer central water supply and sanitation operational responsibilities to the Ministry of Local Government and Housing; (ii) allow local authorities to form commercial water utilities to manage the country's water and sanitation services, and (iii) establish a statutory regulatory body, the National Water and Sanitation Council, NWASCO. This institutional framework was underpinned by a national water policy and a new legal framework. To address the need for improved services to peri urban areas, the Government initiated the development of a water supply and sanitation strategy. The process involved extensive consultations through workshops, working group meetings and field interviews with central government and local authority officials, commercial utility managers, non-governmental organizations and communities.

The Government established the peri urban Working Group through the Water Sector Reform Support Unit, to guide the process and oversee the development of the strategy. The working group agreed to follow the following 5 stages for the process:

Stage 1 consisted of assembling existing data, information and documentation and carrying out key informant interviews and representative field surveys by the study team, which consisted of consultants and a representative from the Working Group. Analysis of information and identification of key issues and best practices in service delivery was also carried out. At the end of this period, a draft situation analysis report, which included implications of current practices to the strategy, was prepared.

Problems encountered of peri urban data availability point to the need for improved data collection and storage of information specific to peri urban requirements.

Stage 2 entailed consultations with stakeholders through a national workshop at which the draft situation analysis report was presented and discussed. The objectives of the

workshop were; to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the water supply situation in peri urban areas and informal settlements, to reach consensus on key issues to be addressed by the strategy and to develop an outline framework for the strategy.

The three-day workshop was attended by 35 people representing key stakeholders from central government, local authorities, water utilities, non- governmental organizations, external support agencies and water vendors. It was structured to include an opening session by the Local Government Deputy Minister, presentations of the situation analysis report, identification of issues and omissions, collecting and collating information, experiences and practices and recommendations on the implications for the strategy. The inputs obtained from this consultation were used to finalize the situation analysis report.

Omitting issues raised by stakeholders during the informant interviews and field visits was a real pitfall. Yet a good analysis of the sector situation was key to developing good strategies.

Stage 3 involved the preparation of a Draft National Strategy based on the situation analysis report and incorporating and building on the best practices identified.

The situation analysis report created the input for the strategy outline. This stage involved constant stakeholder consultation, consensus building on the strategy outline, and key issues to tackle in the strategy. The most daunting task was the transformation of the issues/problems identified in the situation analysis into solutions/strategies. Due to the complexity of issues in the peri urban and informal settlements, reaching consensus on issues took much longer than planned.

In stage 4, the Draft National Strategy was critically reviewed and analyzed by stakeholders through a national workshop. Consensus was reached on the proposed strategy and its implementation plan.

The strategy workshop was attended by 39 participants representing key actors in urban water supply and sanitation who attended the situation analysis workshop (stage 2). Included this time were learning institutions and representatives of the Residents Development Committees. The workshop structure included opening sessions by Southern Province Permanent Secretary, presentation of draft strategy report, stakeholder review, analysis and consensus on goal, development objective, strategy and implementation plan.

Stage 5 was the finalization of the National Strategy and Action Plan and its presentation to the Government of the

Republic of Zambia for ratification and adaptation.

This stage entailed rewriting the report to ensure the quality was not compromised. The implementation plan crystallized thinking in the sector and may now be used to approach peri urban water supply and sanitation planning. The plan emphasizes policy, legal, institutional reviews and development of guidelines for community participation, ownership of community water supplies, financial systems and technology options for programme implementation.

The strategy has provided guidance into implementation of the CARE International Chipata Compound Water Supply pilot, the Malota water scheme, the expansion project by CARE International to 11 Lusaka peri urban areas, and the World Bank funded Urban Restructuring Water Supply Project Community Demonstration Component on the Copperbelt, involving 6 settlements.

Lessons learnt from the process

• Team building

The process contributed to team building. A multi-disciplinary team of local Zambian experts was assembled, to work closely with the Water Sector Reform Support Unit and the Peri Urban Working Group to guide the process of strategy development.

• Length of the process

The expectation on how long the process would take was far from reality. Initially planned to take 6 months, the process took 24 months to complete. There was need to have wide and extensive consultations with all stakeholders to build/promote ownership of the process and to keep all informed of what was happening at every stage.

• A learning experience

The whole process was a huge learning experience for the study team, the Reform Support Unit and the actors in peri urban areas. The Working Group meetings and workshops provided an opportunity for a structured process of discussing, analyzing sector issues, and consensus building.

The peri urban working group meetings provided an opportunity to increase in country learning in the sector.

• Reaching consensus

There is a complexity of issues in peri urban and informal settlements which makes reaching consensus take much longer. Hence the planned workshops were not enough. While 2 workshops were planned for, we ended up with 3 stakeholders' workshops and numerous smaller meetings.

• Understanding of issues

Issues and problems affecting service delivery in the peri urban and informal settlements were known and understood by the key actors in the sector. The Water and Sanitation Program and the Water Sector Reform Support Unit were, in this case, catalytic to the process of strategy development.

• Awareness creation

The process created awareness in the stakeholders on sector performance, restructuring and enhanced networking at various levels.

• Quality assurance

The Peri Urban Working Group, a small group of dedicated professionals, met often and followed through the development process. This gave focus and guidance to the study team through reviews of draft reports, which proved indispensable in providing policy direction, on-the-ground sector practices and quality assurance.

• Capacity building

Through the process, capacity of the study team and the sector professionals was built.

References

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CHIMWANG'A MASEKA, Water and Sanitation Program, Africa Region.