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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, WATER SUPPLY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

**Replicating WES in schools for education of girls in Sokoto State, Nigeria**

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*The water and sanitation sector in Nigeria has many donors as key contributors since water supply has linkages with many other development indicators. The donor funded programmes are usually on a small scale compared to the size of the country; therefore, replicating the tested models while scaling up is key to reaching the unserved populations. In Sokoto State (NorthWestern Nigeria), in an attempt to bridge the gap between girls and boys in primary schools, the 3-year Girl's Education Project (GEP) funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) is being implemented in partnership with UNICEF Nigeria and this includes cash contribution from the State Government. The Rural Water and Sanitation Project is utilizing this money to replicate the programme in other schools within the State simultaneously with the implementation in the GEP schools. This has been achieved because it fitted with Government priorities and ensured clarity among the stakeholders involved. This paper draws out the learning on replication from implementing the water and sanitation components of the GEP project in Sokoto State.*

**Background**

In Nigeria especially in the rural communities, less than 1 in two people have access to safe water and sanitation. A major challenge in the water, sanitation and hygiene programme implementation in a developing country like Nigeria is the replication of donor-funded programmes. The donor funded programmes are usually small scaled in comparison to the size of the country and the population and as such replication of tested models while scaling up is the key to increasing the coverage and reaching the unserved populations.

In Nigeria, the road to the Millennium Development Goals is a holistic journey. Whether working towards reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and guinea worm, or ensuring environmental stability, the water and sanitation sector is a key ingredient. This is most evident in UNICEF's efforts to promote girls' education.

By providing schools with safe water, separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls, and hygienic environments, UNICEF-supported local initiatives are attracting and keeping girls in the classroom. When schools are conducive to girls' participation, they are "child-friendly" – attractive to all students.

Sokoto State, one of the States in the Northwestern part of Nigeria falls into the region where education of girls is far from the desired picture and enrolment of girls in primary schools stands at 20% while completion rate is 37%

In attempt to engender equity and bridge the gap between girls and boys in primary schools, the 3-year Girl's Education Project (GEP) funded by the Department for International

Development (DFID) is being implemented in partnership with UNICEF Nigeria in the State. In the lifespan of the project, a total of 120 (one hundred and twenty) schools in the State would benefit from this funding. A major component of the GEP project is the construction of water and sanitation facilities in the schools as well as hygiene promotion. Generally, in the construction, the standard practice is a hand pump equipped borehole for water supply and 2 blocks of 3-compartment (variations can be made based on population of the school) Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrines providing separate blocks for males and females

UNICEF Nigeria implements rural water and sanitation projects in partnership with the Sokoto State Government through the Sokoto State Rural Water and Sanitation Project (a Government Parastatal). A key component of the projects is the School water and sanitation called "WES in schools".

This paper draws out the learning on replication from implementing the water and sanitation components of the GEP project in Sokoto State.

**The girl's education project (GEP)**

The GEP project is a three-year DFID funded project to support education of Girls through increased enrolment, retention and completion.

The Project covers 20 school communities in six Local Government Areas (LGAs) in six of the northern states (that is a total of 720 schools). Sokoto being one of this six Northern States has a total of 120 school communities benefiting from the project.

The Overarching assumption for the project is:

- Improved health, sanitation, mortality and lifestyle for

women will follow when girls and women have access to, and complete, quality education that includes both formal and health/sanitation components.

The purpose of GEP is to achieve “improved quality of life of girls in Nigeria through a collaborative, inter-sectoral approach to girls’ education”.

The project is implemented within the national school curriculum.

The project implementation is a complete package which includes teacher training, supply of school furniture, support for curriculum development and the provision of water and sanitation facilities.

The management of the programme is done at various levels from the national to the Local Government level. There is a GEP Manager at the National level and GEP Coordinators at the State and LGA levels.

The management structure is guided by a GEP National Steering Committee, which meets tri-annually presided over by the Honourable Minister of State for Education. At state level there are GEP Steering Committees, meeting quarterly and chaired by the Honourable Commissioners for Education. The LGA steering committees are chaired by the Local Government Chairpersons.

The steering committees are composed of various stakeholders such as the Ministries for Health, Education and Water, The Rural Water and Sanitation Agencies.

At the community level, there are the School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and the Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs).

The SBMCs have the responsibility for mobilizing the community to make sure all the children attend and complete schools. They also have the responsibility to monitor and maintain school physical facilities for safe environment for children, assist textbook/teaching material delivery, transmit skills, knowledge, values and traditions of the community, render annual statement of account, income and expenditure and to identify and support the needs of school staff.

As part of the implementation of the water and sanitation components of this project, there is construction of hand pump boreholes, Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrines and hygiene promotion.

The construction of the VIP latrines is done with considerations for gender. There are typically two blocks of 3-compartment latrines; separate blocks for boys and girls and facing different directions such that the girls are not exposed to the stare of other people while going into or coming out of latrines. This affords the girls not only the privacy they require during their menstrual periods but also provides a conducive environment for changing and disposing of sanitary towels and materials.

The hygiene promotion component is taken care of on the one hand by health and hygiene education which is included in the curriculum and on the other hand by hygiene promotion targeted at the school pupils through the establishment of School Environmental Health clubs (EHCs).

The Environmental Health clubs are sensitized to carry out

hygiene promotion using the Child-to-Child methodology among school and out of school children. Sometimes hygiene promotion is also carried out in the communities.

Part of the roles played by the EHC includes the management of the water and sanitation facilities in the school and ensuring that the school environment is kept clean and the facilities are used in a hygienic manner.

The PTAs are also sensitized to support the functioning of the EHCs

### Replication process

As part of the effort of the State Government to improve the quality of education in the State, a program “Operation Resuscitate primary Education” was launched. The programme involves:

- Construction of additional classrooms.
- Schools renovation
- Provision of furniture and teaching materials
- Training of teachers and improving their welfare.

The number of schools to be renovated is 1,600. Of this number, only 500 have latrine facilities of some sort which are in poor sanitary conditions but the design of the “operation” did not include water and sanitation facilities.

Every donor- funded intervention in the State requires some level of matching funding from the Government usually referred to as Government Cash Counterpart Contribution and this was no exception.

With the contribution guaranteed from the Government, the State Rural Water and Sanitation project decided to utilize this fund in replicating what was going in the schools benefiting from the donor funds earmarked for GEP in order to make an impact in the programme.

Officers of the project held a meeting and decided to link up the GEP schools programme with the Government Programme.

### Advocacy issues

Contracts for latrine constructions in the GEP schools were awarded by UNICEF and the State notified in writing. Having received letters from UNICEF, the State project officers used this as an advocacy tool to the State Governor through the Commissioner for Water Resources who plays a supervisory role over the rural water and sanitation project. The advocacy focused on the need to replicate the program in some of the non-GEP schools of the State using the counterpart contribution of the State.

The State Commissioner of Water Resources wrote a memo and got approval of N10, 000,000.00 (approximately \$78,125) for 10 non-GEP schools.

With the approval, the State Rural Water and Sanitation Project through direct labour started construction of VIP latrines in these schools. So far, 5 blocks of the latrines have been constructed while materials for 8 hand pumps boreholes have been procured for the schools. Drilling of the boreholes

in these schools is expected to commence soon.

### **Immediate outcomes/impact**

Output to Purpose Review (OPR) of the project conducted in April of this year showed that the main outputs that can reasonably be measured at this early stage include girls' increased enrolment and attendance. These are being achieved. As Girls' school enrolments are up by 10% or more, especially in P1 and P2; in the GEP schools actual girls' attendance is up by over 25% (with about 12 000 more girls regularly attending school than before), and gender gaps are about two-thirds of their previous levels.

Lessons:

- Achieving Girl's Education requires considerable cross sectoral approach to achieve especially as it concerns those outputs that relate to health, water and sanitation issues.
- Undoubtedly, there are direct links between school attendance by girls and the provision of water and sanitation in schools. Achieving Education of Girls therefore means achieving outputs and targets for water and sanitation.
- The dialogue between the various stakeholders at the onset of the programme intervention was vital to the understanding and the ease of replication.
- Coordinated approach to project implementation is key to its success. From this experience, the replication was relatively easy because it aligned with ongoing Government Programmes.

### **Conclusion**

Implementing effective water and sanitation Projects in schools no doubt has a positive impact on the attendance, retention and completion of girls.

However, replication of donor-funded water and sanitation programmes in Nigeria such as these has been a challenge in the sector. However, from the case study, some level of success is being achieved even though on a small scale for the time being. It is important that this programme be reviewed from time to time and lessons arising from it drawn so as share with a wider audience. This will further encourage similar practice.

The practice of replication and scaling up of donor-funded programmes by Government is usually not the case since Government usually has its programmes running in parallel with donor programmes. This is therefore a case that is worth documenting and deriving the lessons and best practice for dissemination.

### **References**

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