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**TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE  
AND RESILIENT WASH SERVICES**

## **Synergy and complementarity for sustainability of WASH programmes: the case of WASH Alliance Kenya**

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*In order to achieve the sustainable development goals, all stakeholders need to work together. Each stakeholder needs to understand their roles and responsibility in ensuring universal access to WASH for all by 2030. Systems need to change and more people need to be reached with the limited available resources within a short time. Stakeholders need to complement each other and not compete in providing communities with WASH services. NGOs and the private sector and Government need to work together supporting the government in implementing its strategies in providing WASH services to the communities using the limited available resources hence giving comprehensive WASH to households making them enjoy full access to WASH services. Partners working together get value for money by reaching more people with less resources, increased impact of their activities, strong partnerships and there is a good track record from the past experience of other partners.*

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### **Introduction**

The focus of the Sustainable Development Goal 6 is on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (UN, 2015). The universal access of WASH for all means that for every country to achieve this goal, there will be need to accelerate WASH so as to spend less money, reaching more people in a shorter period of time. For this to happen stakeholders need to come together and ensure that the systems work as they are required to (<https://wash-alliance.org/about/accelerating-wash/>). From the past, despite the many efforts by the government and its partners to accelerate access to sustainable WASH for all, the progress in Kenya is still slow which is compounded in areas of unequitable coverage of WASH services. WASH partners in the country often implement in silos with disregard to the plans of the local governments and not paying a lot of attention to sustainability of the projects. Cross learning among partners in the sector is limited while documentation and scaling up of best practices is minimal.

WASH Alliance Kenya was formed and registered as a non-state actor whose mandate is to stimulate linkages and strategic partnership among Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) stakeholders enhancing their response towards the WASH needs of poor and marginalized Kenyans. All the members of the Alliance are guided by the following principles:

- Focusing on sustainable WASH coverage in specific geographic regions.
- Working closely with governments to place communities at the centre.
- Supporting the relevant service authorities (water and sanitation and hygiene/health departments) in advocacy at county and national level for an enabling environment.
- Using monitoring, evaluation and learning to improve service delivery.

### **Accelerating WASH coverage**

Accelerating WASH focus on changing how systems work hence ensuring exponential growth of sustainable access to WASH. It is a way of thinking about scale and at the same time reducing costs of offering the service per person. The approach involves standardisation of products and services, cost efficiency and using multi stakeholder techniques for lobbying the government, community mobilisation and

demand generation. For acceleration to work all stakeholders should be able to understand their roles and responsibilities in contributing to universal access to WASH services for all.

The WASH Alliance, brings sector partners mainly the government, International and Local NGOs together with a similar goal of increasing access to improved water sources and improved sanitation and hygiene services. The partners use the limited resources and implement comprehensive WASH within the same communities where households benefit with the interventions. A good example is the one ward approach most of the alliance partners implemented different components of WASH jointly to ensure the communities enjoy full coverage of WASH services. Water provision was being implemented by Neighbours initiative Alliance and SASOL foundation through building of sad dams which is environmental friendly and ensures that there is ground water recharge hence greening of the environment, Sanitation services through Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) was implemented by Amref Health Africa, school WASH was implemented by NOSIM women organisation, Rights to WASH by Kenya Water and Health Organisation (KWAHO), Advocacy by Kenya Water and Sanitation Civil Society Network (KEWASNET), WASH fund loans by Practical Action and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) by Netwas International.

Working together has enabled the WASH alliance partners to spend less money when doing programmes especially community mobilisation. Partners use other partner's community presence and also coordinate and call for a single community meeting to communicate and agree with the communities on the progress and the next steps in the projects implementation. Replication of activities has reduced to a very large extent and also repeating past mistakes and strategies that do not work with similar activities has reduced. Enhancing the best practices in implementation has improved ensuring that project objective are met within timelines.

Through support from Water Supply and Sanitation Collaboration Council (WSSCC), WASH Alliance Kenya (WAK) has been key in contributing to stakeholders' forums with the national and the county governments. WAK is also a co-convenor of the hygiene promotion technical working group (TWG) where partners working in hygiene come together and lobby for policy formulation and an enabling environment for private sector and the civil societies to be able to support the government in meeting its mandate to the citizens for example through the TWG Kenya has managed to develop the menstrual hygiene management policy and strategy. The TWG is also very vibrant and during the meetings, agencies deliberate and share knowledge and practises in hygiene. WAK has also been instrumental and supported the setting up of some of the County WASH coordinating mechanisms i.e in Kajiado, Nakuru and Nyeri County. The County forums usually meet to discuss the progress of WASH implementation, challenges and lessons from each other. This has enabled better coordination within partners working in the counties and hence reduces duplication of activities. For sustainability, WAK is continually supporting and capacitating the local County government to take up the lead role by chairing and convening these coordination forums

### **Motivators to a successful alliance**

Several factors have motivated alliance partners to stay in the alliance and at the same time share lessons, complement each other and also work in synergy. Alliance members have to feel compatible with each other in that they have a shared vision and mission. The members feel the benefits to the beneficiaries and at the same time, to the alliance and above all to their individual organisation. The factors that motivated the partners to remain in the alliance in achieving results are; the Complementary Factor (the extent to which there is complementarities of skills and competencies among members); Fairness Factor (the extent to which members perceive that WAK decisions are fair); Value Factor (extent to which members perceive there is value in being part of the alliance); Growth Factor (extent to which members feel the alliance is helping them grow and meet their goals as individual organisations and as alliance members); Performance Factor (extent to which strategy implementation meets individual organisations goal and the alliance goals); Membership Factor (extent to which there is a strong, committed membership base); Resource Factor (extent to which the strategies are aligned with financial and human resources, and); Credibility/Reputational Risk Factor (extent to which stakeholders can trust and have confidence in WAK).

Among this factors that are very critical and important for partnerships to work and be successful. The main factors are the complementarity factor, Resource factor, performance factor, and value factor. For example, partners feel comfortable working with each other in projects as they see the value addition in working together as it helps in achievement of results and gives the individual organisations mileage and identification.

### **A case study: one ward implementation approach**

One ward implementation approach meant that all the Alliance members in the same Ward so that the communities get to achieve comprehensive WASH services. The Comprehensive WASH services delivery was implemented in Kajiado County, Kajiado Central sub county, Delaletuk Ward. The approach called for all the partners to work in collaboration. In this approach we had Amref Health Africa in Kenya offering sanitation services to the community where they carried out CLTS sensitization. Neighbours Initiative alliance and Sasol Foundation who have expertise in water supply, offered the community with water through sad dams which would help with water recharge and greening of the environment. NOSIM women Organisation, also a member of the alliance did School WASH interventions in the schools in Delaletuk ward. The school WASH interventions included sensitizing children and giving them sanitation messages that they could take home to emphasise on the CLTS messages that were given during the CLTS sensitization meeting carried out by Amref Health Africa. To ensure that the communities living in the ward understood that water and sanitation was their right and the duty bearer is the County government, Kenya Water and health Organisation sensitized the communities on the right to water and sanitation. The WASH Alliance Kenya Secretariat took up the role of advocating for better working environment from the National government and the local government. The alliance also helped in creating linkages between the government and the partners for sustainability of our programmes. The linkages were also supported by a different programme where the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council supported with Strategic engagement with the National Government and some County governments. This ensured that there was formation and strengthening of WASH forums within the different levels of government. This contributed to the development of policies and strategies that supported the implementation of the programmes within the Counties.

### **Lessons learnt (what has worked)**

One of the lessons we have learnt from the collaborations within implementing partners is that opportunities for mutual learning increase with sharing, partners are able to identify appropriate development initiatives that work for given communities basing it on the experiences of the other organisations, there has been increased opportunities for generating learning resources, partners are able to work with the guidance of the local and national governments hence improvement in coordination and cooperation, harmonization of approaches for development, scale up and sustainability of programmes. Taking advantage of the strength in numbers, there has been evidence of effective and efficient advocacy to the governments.

Other lessons that we have learnt through the coordination and collaboration is that it is easier to develop a movement to be able to solve some of the issues faced in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sector. For instance for us to be able to strengthen Equity and Inclusion in the implementation of Water and Sanitation programmes, we developed a pool of partners who are interested in advocating for Menstrual Hygiene Management inclusion in the water and sanitation programming. Through the partnership with the government and sector partners, and support from WSSCC, Kenya has managed to develop a Menstrual Hygiene Management Policy and Strategy towards the aim of reaching the last mile and ensuring that everybody working in the sector has to consciously think about women issues in their programming.

For sustainability, the government, whether the national Government or the local government should take the lead role in coordinating partners to work together. This is because the government has the mandate to provide its citizens with water and sanitation services hence any other partner working in the sector should be supporting the governments to deliver their mandate.

### **The benefits of working on an alliance/working in a partnership**

#### **Strong partnerships**

The secretariat and the partners work together with the public and private sector for sustained results. The partners of the alliance work together in implementation to ensure there is synergy, cohesion and coordination during implementation of all programs. Our partnership with the local government and national government is Cooperation has helped in providing an opportunity for building and strengthening an enabling environment for development of policies and institutional practices that facilitate scaling up, program effectiveness, and sustainability on national, county and community levels.

### **Value for money**

We seek to enhance efficiency, decreasing costs, building WASH services based on self-sustainability. Our projects are easily scalable, with each partner contributing specialised knowledge and expertise on aspects of sustainability.

### **Track record**

We have been learning and innovating as an Alliance to develop best practices over the last 6 years. We have even more years of experience in WASH as individual organisations with some of the organisations in the alliance having more than 50 years working in the sector. All members are able to tap into this experience.

### **Increased impact**

A multiplier effect as the value of working in a collaborative society is greater than the sum of working individually. Organizations working together are able to share lessons and best practices from programmes/projects that they have implemented in the past. This saves costs of repeating similar mistakes and also ensures that activities yielding best results are implemented. Members of the Alliance complement each other in implementation of projects through synergy hence achievement of comprehensive WASH is achieved.

### **Critical mass**

Alliance members form a critical mass of partners in lobbying and advocacy for policy influencing, with government.

### **Source of innovation and adaptation/ sharing with other WASH partners**

Innovative ideas and activities learnt in the Alliance are shared/ adopted by other WASH stakeholders, e.g. WASH financing concept using “community motivators”, CLTS application in semi-arid areas and with pastoralist communities.

### **Challenges**

Working in partnerships and ensuring that the government, the private sector and the NGOs work together in harmony has a share of its challenges. Bringing Non-Governmental organisations together to share their best practices and the lessons they learn from the implementation of their programmes is a challenge. Some of the challenges we have faced while doing coordination and collaborations activities are that it is hard to bring partners together and ensure that they buy in to the same agenda and strategy considering that each organisation has its own strategy and plans. This also affects the idea of organisations taking up similar approaches and choose a similar region/location for scalability and comprehensive service delivery.

Another challenge that an Alliance faces is the issue of funding, sharing of lessons, best practices and innovations as well as documentation. Without documentation of innovations it is hard to make informed choices in the sector on the best new approaches that work in specific identified communities to ensure there is scale of activities and sustainability. This challenge of sharing is coupled up with the limited trust between organisations.

For comprehensive WASH to continue being implemented, all the partners that work together need to have adequate and continuous funding. There has been a limited funding within organisations. For example, the funding on school WASH ended before 1 year before the funding on improving access to water and sanitation and hygiene promotion ended. In the year 2017, some organisations in the Alliance secured funding to do water and sanitation projects while others did not manage to secure the funding, this has made coordinating partners to continue working in one ward a challenge.

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### **References**

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