The Magic of Open Access WASH Data

The capacity development programme on sustainable urban water and sanitation services (ITP SUWAS), funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and implemented by Niras and WaterAid, provides participants with knowledge, perspectives and tools to improve organisational effectiveness in managing WASH services.

A 'change' project provides participants with an opportunity to apply new ideas and concepts in real situations and make a difference to their organisations and communities.

This report presents a case of how to improve access to WASH data and how this in turn improves public services. The system was developed by the six participants in the ITP SUWAS programme, all working in Temeke, Dar es Salaam, representing Dar es Salaam's water utility (DAWASA), Temeke Municipal Council and several NGOs.

Context

Temeke Municipal is one of the five districts in the fast-growing city of Dar es Salaam, housing a population of over 1.4 million people. The city's utility – Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority (DAWASA) – is responsible for proving communities with access to clean water. Other stakeholders, such as Temeke Municipal Council (TMC), NGOs like WaterAid and Sawa, and various international donors, also carry out water projects and interventions in the area. The area has many unplanned settlements, and access to basic services, including water, sanitation and hygiene remains a significant challenge.

A problem faced by all engaged in the WASH sector in Dar es Salaam has been the lack of coordination among key stakeholders and a lack of easily accessible and accurate data. In Temeke Municipality, there are many actors having the same role – trying to improve water and sanitation services. They all have similar agendas, but implement according to different plans, budgets, frameworks and technical approaches. There is little information on what water and sanitation services that exist (and not), actors engaged, and plans being made.

Mr Charles Kauyza, IT Manager at DAWASA, describes the situation:

'In the past, there was poor coordination and communication among stakeholders in Temeke. You could find that NGO's, or the Municipal Council would begin a new

water project which involved drilling a borehole, when the piped water network was just close by and could have been extended."

In the group, the participants agreed that they needed a system in place to enable improved coordination and to use their resources more efficiently. They saw that having access to more WASH data would be an effective way to do this.

It was decided to develop a GIS-based regional WASH web platform. It should contain up-to-date data on WASH services in the district. This platform, which was launched in October 2018, is available to the key WASH stakeholder in Dar es Salaam, including NGOs, the Municipal Council and the Ministry of Water.

It engaged all programme participants, working together as a group - collecting data, conducting meetings, defining what the website should offer, arranging funding, and ensuring access to IT-competence. Today the website is being used for communication, planning, decision-making and monitoring and evaluation processes.

Data on water, sanitation and hygiene is fundamental in planning WASH projects. The website has so far improved information sharing between different departments in DAWASA, between DAWASA and TMC, which is critical, and among all others engaged in Temeke's WASH sector. In the past DAWASA and TMC worked in silos, separated, and often efforts to improve the water coverage were duplicated, wasting time and resources.

On the site there is information about water, sanitation and hygiene in Temeke. It looks at how many people have access to water, the number of boreholes (public/private), and sewerage coverage. It also looks at the utility performance – how much water is produced from plants and boreholes and how much of that is used. This is updated daily, collected from DAWASA systems.

The website took around nine months to design and build. It is made in java.

Today, the website improves coordination and helps the planning process through building a common understanding of what the current situation is and where it needs to be improved.

As an already experienced example, the website shows the current coverage of water supply in Temeke. With this, DAWASA and TMC were able to analyse the number of boreholes and the amount of people living in a particular areas, where most non-revenue

water is lost, and thus see which areas were most in need. From this, DAWASA have created new plans to extend the piped network of water to these water scarce areas.

Furthermore, DAWASA is currently using the website to complete planning for the next financial year. By using the GIS map, they are hoping to extend the network of piped water to areas where is has not yet reached. The utility is aiming to use GIS for other municipalities, as it has improved their ways of working.

The benefits that this project can deliver to communities in Temeke is considerable. The ITP SUWAS programmes has helped to demonstrate that by using the available resources efficiently, and improving coordination among stakeholders, WASH conditions can be improved across the city. Capital is important, however, small changes in the way of working can have a significant impact in reaching more people with water and sanitation.

Looking back, the success of the project was driven by the apparent lack of coordinated work and WASH data in Temeke. Through study visits to a water utility and a research center in Sweden, facilitated by staff belonging to WaterAid in Dar es Salaam, the participants were inspired by what they had learnt, and saw ways to implement similar initiatives in Tanzania. When a diverse, competent and enthusiastic group of WASH professionals come together to share knowledge and experience, big things can be achieved.

The challenge in coming years is to ensure that the new website is maintained and updated, and the service is sustained. Many appreciates and use the service – but it is not obvious how it should be paid for.

To end with the words of DAWASA's IT manager Mr Charles Kauyza:

"My dream is for this website to cover the whole of the country. Right now we are starting at the district level, I want to cover the region, and then eventually all of Tanzania. We will be working with the Ministry of Water to try and make this happen."

Charles Kauyza, stands out the DAWASA office in Dar es Salaam. They are currently running a campaign: 'Mama tua ndoo ya maji kichwani' which translates into 'Women, remove the bucket of water from your head.' By improving access to water, we are reducing the burden on women, who often are the ones that have to collect it.

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