

USAID WA-WASH CAPACITY BUILDING FORUM FOR THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The primary goal of the USAID West Africa Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (USAID WA-WASH) Program is to increase sustainable access to safe water and sanitation and improve hygiene in West Africa. The program strengthens the regional environment and builds the capacity of WASH stakeholders to achieve the WASH MDGs in West Africa. Creating an enabling environment and strengthening WASH institutions across the region is a core element of USAID WA-WASH Program as a means to promote sustainable development in the WASH service delivery. This objective is achieved through a strategic set of activities focused on institutional assessment and strengthening, capacity building, and knowledge management. First, the Program systematically assessed the capacity and potential of all regional institutions operating at various levels in the WASH sector. The capacity-building activities target institutions and organizations at various levels (local, national and regional), civil society organizations, and academic institutions.

The mechanisms to achieve the capacity building objectives include technical assistance, developing training materials, organizing training workshops, and training of trainers at academic institutions. This summary presents the key points of a capacity building forum organized by the USAID WA-WASH Program in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on July 16-18, 2012. Forty nine (49) participants took part in the forum including the Program implementing partners and the local organizations from the WASH sector in Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Niger. The goal of this forum was to identify capacity building gaps in the WASH sector and to define the contribution of the USAID WA-WASH Program to address those needs. The forum aimed to address the issues of sustainable approaches, methods, tools, and capacities. The forum began with a presentation by the International Water Association (IWA) of the report of the assessment of the human capacity needs/gaps in the intervention countries. Some of the assessment studies were funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the capacity building of local/national WASH NGOs/CBOs in Africa (Cap-WASH) program others were funded under the USAID WA-WASH. Each study assessed the human resources needs to provide water supply and sanitation services in each of the target countries. Specifically, the studies identified the available capacities and the gaps at the local and national level in each intervention country. Addressing the capacity gaps at the local and national level contributes to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and full coverage in the delivery of services in the WASH sector. The IWA studies showed evidence of numeric shortage and mismatch of staff and competences at various levels and in different WASH professions.

In Burkina Faso, the rate of access to drinking water supply and sanitation is estimated at 57% in rural areas and 75% in urban areas. However, access to sanitation is relatively low at 1% in rural areas and 14% in urban areas. Financial investment in human resources in the country in the water supply and sanitation services is limited. Burkina Faso has a severe human resources deficit at all levels of water supply and sanitation. The lack in both the numbers as well as the competencies of the human resources working in the WASH sector is directly linked to low financial capacity of organisations to recruit and retain staff. The human resources needs are acute in the rural areas where the population is relatively larger and sparsely distributed.

In Ghana, the human resource capacity is relatively higher in the water sector than in the sanitation sector. The human resource shortage is severe in the sanitation sector as exhibited by inadequate civil and sanitary engineers to construct the systems required to achieve the MDGs and full-service coverage. The newly developed degrees in Ghana such as health sciences and development studies are not yet fully recognized in the WASH sector. Consequently, the graduates do not progress in their career resulting in a brain-drain within the sanitation sector.

In Niger, the rate of access to drinking water supply in 2010 was estimated at 64.25% in rural areas and 73.75 % in urban areas. In terms of sanitation only 38.4% have improved sanitation facilities in the urban areas and 2.2% in the rural areas. The water and sanitation specific professionals in the technical fields get trained abroad due to lack of equipped institutions for practical lessons.

UNESCO-IHE presented a program to work with universities in the three USAID WA-WASH intervention countries focusing on the future generation of WASH professionals. The capacity building activities by UNESCO-IHE included selection of trainers to take part in the training on WASH education in three universities namely; the University of Development Studies in Ghana, the International Institute for Water and Environmental Engineering (2iE) in Burkina Faso, and the University of Niamey in Niger. Other activities are establishing a platform in each country comprising of governmental and non-governmental organizations and stakeholders in the WASH sector to develop and train professional use appropriate WASH modules.

FIU's capacity building activities within the USAID WA-WASH Program includes food security and climate change advocacy work at the national levels as well as thematic training at the community level. In addition, FIU activities will focus on WASH governance for WASH stakeholders at different levels including elected officials. The WASH governance program will be using the training materials developed under Cap-WASH. In addition, FIU will promote within the program the opportunity for West African students to intern at various levels for periods ranging from three to 12 months. Finally, scholarships will be provided to West African students with USAID WA-WASH funding. The graduate scholarship program for master s' courses will include research opportunities on thematic areas which are the focus of USAID WA-WASH. Other the capacity building efforts will include US study tours for water agency professionals from Burkina Faso and Ghana.

The local communities and governments capacity needs are addressed by the Program partners while implementing activities on the ground for example the IRC's Triple-S approach to support the municipalities to evaluate and manage drinking water supply services in the Sahel region.

The International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC) presented the progress on knowledge management and its links to capacity building. Further, IRC made a presentation of the desk research on learning and sharing platforms in the USAID WA-WASH Program. This was followed by a group discussion per country on learning and sharing and the capacity needs. Subsequently, the USAID WA-WASH program implementing partners presented their capacity building plans for each of the three countries. The presentations identified and discussed various options to deliver sustainable capacity building activities. The participants designed an initial capacity building framework for Burkina Faso and developed a strategy to expand USAID WA-WASH Program beneficiaries and deliver adapted capacity building activities. The final draft of the USAID WA-WASH capacity building framework for Burkina Faso was presented to the participants. Further, the participants held an open discussion session with the local stakeholders ranging from high level actors to community based organizations and academic institutions as a wrap-up to assess the capacity gaps in Burkina Faso. A round-table discussion covered the different strategic options envisaged by the USAID WA-WASH implementing partners.

The forum emphasized the use of existing country platforms for capacity building and to polish the capacity building agenda to maximize synergy between implementing the partners on the ground. Other recommendations included working on an internal USAID WA-WASH learning agenda for capacity building, establishing a learning platform, sharing of documents, integrating existing platforms at the national and local levels, involving local and regional actors in the learning platforms, defining dialogue principles and identifying key actors for sustainability of the capacity building efforts.

The full report is available (in English) upon request via our website. For more details about our program activities and other reports please visit <http://wawash.fiu.edu/>.