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**EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE WASH SERVICES:
FUTURE CHALLENGES IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD**

Water point sustainability study: Yobe and Borno states, Nigeria

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REFERENCE NO. 3253

Overview

Action Against Hunger (AAH) is operational in Nigeria since 2010 and has responded to different emergencies in Northern Nigeria through an integrated programming approach that addresses the Nutrition and health, WASH, social protection, and food security and livelihood concerns of internal displaced persons (IDPs), and host communities. To improve access to safe water for IDPs, returnees and host communities, AAH was rehabilitating and drilling new boreholes. They were equipped with Indian mark II hand pumps, solar pumping system or submersible pumps powered through generators to uplift the water from boreholes. More than 300 water points were constructed during the project period. To ensure sustainability of the water point, Action Against Hunger works with the community and the local and state government and creates the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committees in Yobe state and the Water Users Committees in Borno state, to operate and maintain the facilities. A study was conducted to assess the sustainability of water points implemented in Nigeria, both new drills and rehabilitations, and find out information regarding technical problems and challenges encountered by communities, committees, NGOs and government agencies in order to learn appropriate methodologies and good practices.

Method

The study aimed to assess the sustainability of water points constructed or rehabilitated by Action Against Hunger for vulnerable population in Yobe and Borno state. This study used a mixed methods approach, including desk research, secondary data review, community visits for focus group discussions (FGDs), water point observation and water quality analysis, and key informant interviews (KIIs) with different stakeholders. During the study, the field teams visited 208 communities. In each community, three Focus Group Discussions were carried out, two different ones for men and women and another one for WASHCOM members. The FGDs assessed information regarding acceptance and preferences, awareness of responsibilities, interaction between community, WASHCOM and local government, challenges encountered and inquires/suggestions to improve the water point and its management. In order to find out which system is more reliable and sustainable, technical problems and better design to decrease the risk of contamination, the water check list and sanitary survey was included with an Open Data Kit (ODK) system.

And depending on the results of the sanitary survey, which gives the risk of contamination of the water, Water Quality Test was carried out to analyze presence of fecal contamination. The Key Informant Interviews aimed to develop a deeper understanding on the relation between stakeholders, followed procedures and good practices on water point implementation.

Key findings

Communities in general are very positive feedback about Action Against Hunger intervention. However 65% in Yobe and 90% in Borno request for improvements, mostly regarding with an increase in the availability of

water. Explanation of the differences between states can be given to the amount of beneficiaries of the water points, with an average of 302 households in Yobe and 532 in Borno, where IDP movements are more present. Solar system is the most preferred by communities due to the easiness and low cost of operation. Few communities prefer the generator with a better running time, not depending on sunlight, but fuel availability is a major challenge for its operation. Handpumps are also preferred by few communities as it is cheap and easy to maintain, relying less on external support.

There is a good relation between the community members and their water user committees, and communities feel grateful for their volunteer help managing the water point. However, they ask for more coordination for sanitation activities and hygiene promotion, and more dedication and motivation of the members, whose performance quality decreases along time. Water user committees accepted that they were very well trained and 96% has a positive opinion. All of them declare to know the responsibilities and follow the guidelines; however, it is common to find careless water points with stagnant water, trash and cattle feces. Financing of the water points is mostly done by a contribution system, which can be a collection of money when need arises or a weekly contribution set by the community. When asking about challenges; spare parts availability, security and crowd control, mostly in Borno, are the most common. Not functional drainage system are worth to mention as usual complaint. And regarding improvements proposed by the committees for sustainability, security and facilities upgrade, along with an increase of availability of spare parts and mechanics, and community awareness and contribution are the most important.

There is a water point functionality rate of 84%. Common problems given are fuel availability for motorized boreholes; spare parts and mechanic availability are very common, with higher rates in Yobe, where more projects have been implemented in rural areas. Community engagement and financial problems to face the expenses are also important. Stolen solar boreholes are worth to mention as the rate is increasing, and low yield, drainage systems and tank capacity are usual complaints from communities. Spare parts are one limitation for maintenance of water points. From FGDs, mechanic and spare parts availability is a general complain for the three type of water systems in Yobe. 59% of communities say they are not available, only 22% available, in the rest either one thing or another is difficult to get. On the other hand, in Borno, as most of the boreholes are in Maiduguri are accessible in the market and not expensive. 84% of the WASHCOMs FGDs in Borno declares their availability.

Conclusions

The sustainability study has given an overview about the water points in Yobe and Borno state and their general status. Sustainability rates are higher in handpumps due to availability of resources to overcome failures, although communities still need more initiative to address the challenges. Solar systems come next, after improving security to decrease vandalization, it is the best option after the handpump with the highest preference from communities, and finally generator as last choice with reliance on fuel and spare parts out of the state, making difficult both operation and maintenance activities.

Key words

Nigeria, Water Point Functionality, Satisfaction Survey, Sustainability.

Thematic area 4

Rural Water Supply.

Contact details

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