

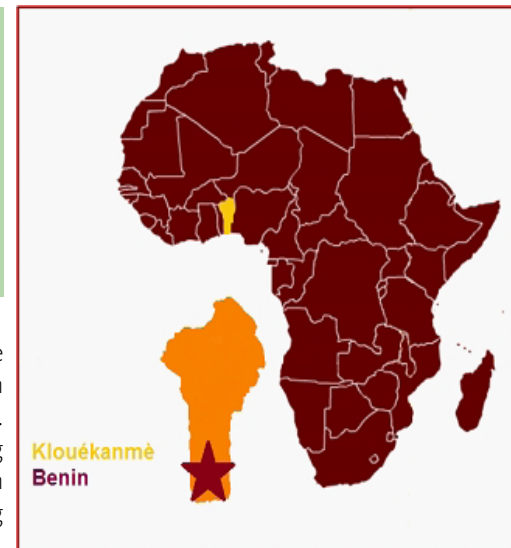
Commune de Klouékanmè, Benin

Mobilising political will as a driver in local planning for improved service delivery

The local leadership in the commune of Klouékanmè, Benin has recognised the importance of improving sanitation service delivery and hygiene at the local level. The development of local sector specific development plans has enabled the strategic allocation of funding to address key priorities within the sector, while software (such as radio presentations and audio-visual materials) approaches have also been implemented to raise awareness and improve education in respect to sanitation and hygiene good practice at the community level. Overall, this has contributed to the improved health and well-being of local residents and provides a model which can be upscaled to other local authorities in the country.

Awareness raising and education are essential to encourage the adoption of appropriate sanitation behaviour and improved sanitation practices. However, such approaches are often overlooked in developing countries in favour of a focus only on infrastructure development. This comes at the expense of sustainability of the action because if there is no corresponding behaviour change long-term maintenance of the systems are compromised. The local sanitation and hygiene planning process undertaken in Benin clearly highlights the benefits of embedding awareness and education in local processes.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that the baseline sanitation analysis developed as the first step in the local planning process, will inform the actions needed for improved operation and maintenance of infrastructure within the commune.



Population: 93,324

Land area: 394 km²

The importance of the issue

Benin embarked on the process of decentralization in 2003, following which communes were given the mandate for provision of basic services such as water and sanitation. Devolution required communes to develop commune development plans (CDPs) for all sectors under the commune's responsibility. However, in when the MDPs were developed insufficient resources were allocated to sanitation and hygiene, as these were not given priority by either national or local government.

To redress this issue and improve sanitation and hygiene services and practices, a number of communes sought technical and fiscal assistance from development agencies to develop their own local sanitation and hygiene plans.

These plans provided a robust assessment of the local sanitation and hygiene landscape, facilities, condition, gaps and the challenges to be addressed. The results informed the identification and formulation of tailor-made key priorities for the commune, and the strategic allocation of both technical and fiscal resources (commune, national and donor agencies).

Part financed by the European Commission and running from December 2009 to November 2012, ACCESSanitation is working directly with cities in India and the Philippines to tackle inadequate urban sanitation. In addition, the project is also promoting sustainable sanitation on a larger scale through the transfer of good practice elsewhere in the target countries as well as from and to cities in Sub-Saharan Africa. ACCESSanitation is coordinated by the ICLEI European Secretariat located in Freiburg, Germany.

For more information visit: www.accessanitation.org

Local context

Klouékanmè is located in south-eastern Benin. Agriculture is the primary source of income, constituting approximately 75% of the local economy.

The political and technical staff within the commune recognized the need to improve sanitation service provision and hygiene at the local level and developed a local sector-specific action plan to drive the process. The first step of the local sanitation and hygiene plan was the undertaking of a robust baseline assessment, which indicated that in 2010 sanitation coverage (latrines) in the commune was less than 6%. Furthermore, 75% of households were consuming water that was below regulatory standards for potable water.

As such there was a need to improve service delivery and good practice of sanitation and hygiene within the commune.

Driving change from the ground up: local governments as drivers of enhanced service delivery at the local level

As part of a larger decentralization initiative, the mandate for water, sanitation and hygiene service delivery was devolved to the commune level in 2003. National government instituted the requirement for Commune Development Plans (CDPs) to inform sectoral development at the local level. However, due to the broad scope of these development plans, insufficient focus was placed on sanitation and hygiene. This resulted in the need for a more focused sector specific approach and the development of local sanitation and hygiene plans (PCHA-Plan Communal d'Hygiène et d'Assainissement).

The local PCHA for the commune of Klouékanmè was initiated under the leadership of the Mayor who had a strong commitment to addressing the concerns of sanitation and hygiene and recognized the need to improve service delivery and good practices within his jurisdiction.

While communes developed the local action plans independently of national government, the PCHAs were aligned closely with national policies and frameworks. The three guiding principles established to govern the development of the PCHA's were: 1) equity in access to sanitation and health services, 2) respect for the environment, and 3) sustainability of the sanitation system. Klouékanmè approached GiZ for technical and financial assistance in the development of their PCHA in 2010 and worked in close collaboration with a team of consultants throughout.

The first step in the planning process was the identification of the data collection tool to be utilized to undertake the baseline assessment. The planning process focused on a participatory approach with the commune's political and technical staff working closely with the consultants and development partners from the outset.

The tools identified for the baseline assessment included an interview guide, for capturing feedback from the commune's technical and administration team and key local actors within the sector. This served to highlight the knowledge gaps in respect to the current sanitation and hygiene conditions on the ground and allowed for the identification of existing projects and initiatives in order that they could be considered within the planning process. Household surveys were undertaken to assess the presence, functionality and condition of sanitation systems and to gauge the community's willingness to address the current sanitation challenges. In addition to the household surveys, an observation guide was developed to summarize the number of households with latrines, the functionality, state of construction and the sanitary practices employed by communities.

The baseline assessment was carried out by local villagers and municipal staff who volunteered as enumerators enabling the whole of the commune to be included within the assessment.

All results emerging from the baseline assessment were reviewed by the PCHA Steering committee established by the Mayor of Klouékanmè to ensure that the emerging plan was locally owned and adopted and that the strategic goals were in line with both the administration goals and community priorities.

Within the planning process, three platforms were established to focus on awareness raising and education at the local level. Funding for the initial meetings was restricted to the development stage of the local action plan. However, the platforms continued to operate when the funding expired and have since become embedded structures within the community. The village hygiene and sanitation committees regularly meet with the commune technical staff and village leaders to promote improved sanitation and hygiene practices within the community. School environmental clubs continue to promote handwashing and good hygiene practices and encourage the inclusion of these topics within the local curriculums. Finally, local radio stations were utilized during the planning phases to raise awareness within the community, and have subsequently internalized and championed this process, regularly updating the community in respect to key events within the sanitation and hygiene sector and reminding communities of the need to adopt good sanitation and hygiene practices to enhance the health and well-being of their families.



Community members benefitting from hygiene and sanitation good practice campaigns (T. Quayle)



Mayor of Klouékanmè, Hon. Christophe Megbedji driving sanitation improvement at the local level (Right) and Sègla Lihossou, Water and decentralization expert for the National Association of Councils of Benin (ANCB) (Left). (T. Quayle)

Results

Key results that emerged from the development of the Klouékanmè PCHA are currently under review by GiZ. However, evidence gathered from testimonials to date highlight the following:

- The commune placed a strong emphasis on the adoption of software approaches within the early development of the local action plans. The aim was to utilize these approaches to mobilise buy-in from the community and to highlight the key challenges in respect to sanitation service delivery and hygiene at the local level. To facilitate this aim, several platforms were developed within the framework of the local sanitation and hygiene plan, significantly contributing to raising awareness in respect to improved sanitation and hygiene practices, and the need to prioritize this issue at both the community and local government level. The platforms, namely village hygiene and sanitation committees, the formulation of school environmental clubs and the use of local media (predominately radio) served to ensure that sanitation and hygiene became, and has remained, a focal issue at the community level. It has further served to upscale problems observed at community level to the commune planning team ensuring that the local action plan remains relevant and that it targets key areas of concern. A positive result of the planning process is that the platforms established have remained operational in spite of initial funding for the hosting of such meetings having come to an end. In addition, both the community and the commune staff continue to actively participate in the public gatherings to discuss sanitation and hygiene practices and concerns.
- Behaviour change can have a significant impact on quality of life, irrespective of whether new sanitation facilities have been constructed. In Klouékanmè, following the introduction of commune wide awareness raising campaigns, there was a corresponding decrease in the incidence of diseases related to poor hygiene such as yellow fever and malaria, often associated with standing water and insufficient waste water management. While anecdotal at present, the aforementioned results suggest that with improved good practice in respect to sanitation and hygiene, the health and quality of life of the community is improving



Improved school sanitation facilities maintained in a hygienic state (T. Quayle)

Lessons learned

The development of the local sanitation and hygiene plan for the commune of Klouékanmè in Benin emerged as a result of the recognition by the Mayor Hon. Christophe Megbedji of the need to improve sanitation service delivery and contribute to improved hygiene practices within the community. His enthusiasm and that of his team of technical personnel has driven local awareness raising processes and ensured that the need to prioritize sanitation and hygiene is embedded within local government processes and at the community level. Lessons learned from Klouékanmè include the following:

- A receptive landscape is necessary when introducing new sanitation facilities. Awareness raising and education play a pivotal role in fostering the required improved behaviour change.
- Behaviour change in respect to sanitation and hygiene has a positive effect on communities, resulting in improved health even in the absence of the construction of new facilities.
- A strong baseline assessment of the local sanitation and hygiene situation serves to inform the commune of key priority actions that need to be undertaken, and further allows strategic allocation of funding to priority areas.
- Local ownership of sanitation and hygiene plans is instrumental in their success and for mobilizing support. In Klouékanmè, prioritization of sanitation and hygiene resulted in increased local funding being allocated to the sector.
- Champion local governments such as the commune of Klouékanmè can serve as role models, disseminating good practice in respect to sanitation and hygiene awareness raising activities and in respect to the development of local sanitation and hygiene and action plans. The need to establish such a local authority platform to facilitate dissemination has been widely recognized by communes and it is viewed as a means of enabling champion municipalities to encourage other communes to develop local plans.
- Establishment of local platforms such as village hygiene and sanitation committees and school environmental clubs resulted in successful and targeted awareness raising and education in respect to improved sanitation and hygiene practices, as well as serving as a monitoring and evaluation tool for the local sanitation and hygiene planning process. Key problems, observations and priorities were raised in the meetings and up-scaled to the planning team at the commune level. This ensured that timely action was taken to address the key issues and concerns raised.

Replication

The process of developing local sanitation and hygiene plans has been undertaken in 12 communes by GiZ, with a further 14 communes being supported by SNV, an international non-governmental organization active in the water and sanitation sector. Expanding in-country replication is only likely to be possible if additional funding is identified, as communes require both technical and financial support in the development of the local sanitation and hygiene plans.

Furthermore, it is likely that if the local plans prove successful in addressing sanitation and hygiene at the local level, it would provide a suitable platform from which to advocate for additional funding from national governments and select development partners.

The development of the local sanitation and hygiene plans allowed communes to identify key problem areas in respect to sanitation services at the local level. The formulation of strategic objectives and associated fiscal restructuring of the sector provides communes with the opportunity to approach donors with specific actions that they wish to undertake at the local level. Presenting informed and structured plans, with the associated budget for implementation, is likely to increase the likelihood of funding from donors and will serve to upscale activities at the local level.

Budget and finances

Development of the local commune sanitation and hygiene plan was undertaken with fiscal support from GiZ. Local consultants were recruited to develop the framework in collaboration with technical and political commune representatives, with fees amounting to USD 16,000. An additional USD 5,000 supported enumeration for the development of the baseline assessment, while the commune financed the local stakeholder meetings. Costs associated with the implementation of the local sanitation and hygiene plan, for a five-year period are estimated at USD 2.4 million. These resources will be sourced from the commune, national government and key financial partners.

Key contact

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References and sources

This summary was developed from the case study series produced within the 'Local Initiatives in the Promotion of the Attainment of the Water and Sanitation Millennium Development Goals'. Summarised from the case study 'Local Authorities driving sanitation and hygiene planning at the local level, the case of Klouékanmè, Benin' and based on interviews with key local stakeholders.

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