



# Evaluation Study of the Plateau State Water Board Community Consultation Forums



***March 2007<sup>1</sup>***

---

<sup>1</sup> The Bread of Life Development Foundation, Lagos, Nigeria conducted this research for WaterAid Nigeria.

## Evaluation Study on the Plateau State Water Board Community Consultation Forums

### Introduction

In 2000, all United Nations states pledged to meet eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>2</sup> within a time frame of 15 years. The seventh goal relates to environmental sustainability and contains a target to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water by 2015. A further target, to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to adequate sanitation, was added two years later. Seven years into the MDGs, about 1.1 billion people worldwide do not have access to safe and sufficient water for domestic use. The inhabitants of Jos and Bukuru, a mountainous area in Plateau State in Northern Nigeria are part of the 1.1 billion people stated above who do not have safe and sufficient water for domestic use. Both the rich and poor of Jos and Bukuru metropolis depend mainly on water supplies from the Plateau State Water Board for domestic use, as it is difficult and expensive to sink boreholes or dug wells in the rocky terrain. Though most parts of Jos metropolis and Bukuru are connected to the public waters mains, water supply is irregular.

The Plateau State Water Board (PSWB) is a State Water Agency (SWA) established by Edict No. 4 of 1991 and its statutory responsibilities include the following:

- a) *To establish, control, manage, extend and develop such new water works and to extend and develop such existing ones as the Board may consider necessary for the purpose of providing water in order to meet the requirements of the general public, agriculture, trade and industry in the state;*
- b) *To ensure that water is supplied to the consumers thereof at reasonable charges and in potable quality and adequate quantity.*

The failure of the PSWB to efficiently deliver its services is caused by several factors such as lack of funds to finance rehabilitation works and new investments, poor billing and collection system, unstable power supply and political interference in its management. To address these shortcomings and in line with the National Water and Sanitation Policy adopted at the Federal level in 2002, the Plateau State Government directed the PSWB to commence a reform programme in 2002. The immediate implication of this was that the PSWB became an autonomous government agency, and was required to generate revenues internally to maintain its operational costs. Consequently, the PSWB initiated a Citizens Action Project known as “*Community Consultation Forums*” in 2002 to increase public understanding of the reform programme, to inform the public on its shortcomings, and also to enable the PSWB get feedbacks on customer concerns and priorities. Several of such consultations were held in Jos and Bukuru metropolis with individual water users, corporate water users, water vendors and the general public between 2002- 2006.

WaterAid Nigeria in continuation of its work to strengthen all stakeholders in the water sector commissioned ‘The Bread of Life Development Foundation’, a civil society organization to conduct an evaluation study on the Community Consultative Forums organized by Plateau State Water Board since 2002.

---

<sup>2</sup> See [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

# Evaluation Study on the Plateau State Water Board Community Consultation Forums

## Aims and Objectives of this Study

The aim of the evaluation study is to assess the implementation of the Citizens Action Project by the PSWB in Jos to draw on lessons learnt and challenges, and to build on that. Specific objectives of the evaluation study are:

*To assess the awareness of consumers of the Community Consultation Forums and the opportunity it provided to engage with the PSWB; to analyze the Community Consultation Forums components with a view to identifying its strengths and/or shortcomings in relation to pro poor programming examining the implication for project focus and service delivery system; to document if Plateau State Water Board have appropriate knowledge on customers' needs and priorities and if this informed decisions by the Board resulting in improved performances and transparency and adoption to customer's preferences; to assess citizens involvement and perception of the value of the Community Consultation Forums and if they felt that enhanced their ability to engage with the utility; to document lessons learnt from civil society engagement and citizens feedback on service, performance and future improvement; to assess the extent to which the utility is open to public involvement and the attitude of its staff to the Citizen's Action Project; to assess the roles in the citizens' engagement of the various stakeholders, including (but not limited) to PSWB, LGA, civil society groups; and To make recommendations for further Citizens Action methodology in urban settings based on lessons from the Community Consultation Forums.*

## Methodologies

The Bread of Life Development Foundation used five methodologies to conduct this research. They are: **Review of secondary data** (reports, documents, audio and still pictures) on the Community Consultation Forums organized by the Plateau State Water Board. **Key informant interviews** were held with officials of the Plateau State Water Board, citizens and community leaders in Jos who participated in the Community Consultation Forums in order to source information on their experiences. **Opinion Surveys** were also conducted with 69 consumers within the 10 Zonal offices/19 Business service offices of the Plateau State Water Board. **Focus Group Discussions** were held in six communities where the Consultation Forums took place. Lastly, several **Field visits** were conducted to assess the water situation in low and high-income areas of the Jos metropolis.

## Contents of the Report

**Chapter one** of this study is introductory and states the background to the report. Existing literature on Citizens Action Projects is reviewed in **Chapter two**. This includes the UNDP HDI 2006<sup>3</sup> which outlines four ways through which the MDG targets for the water and sanitation sector could be met. One of the ways is by making *water a human right—and mean it, and developing a global action plan*.

---

<sup>3</sup> Human Development report 2006. *Beyond Scarcity :Power, poverty and the global water crisis* Published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

## Evaluation Study on the Plateau State Water Board Community Consultation Forums

*The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses.*<sup>1</sup> The right to water was confirmed by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its General Comment No. 15 (GC 15)<sup>4</sup> in November 2002 thereby indicating that governments have the duty to respect, protect and work to achieve this right progressively.

A central feature of a rights-based approach is the notion of accountability, which in practice requires the development of adequate laws, policies, institutions, administrative procedures and mechanisms of redress. Civil society at the 2005 UN-Commission on Sustainable Development 13 called for downward reporting mechanisms to be established, so that citizens can monitor performance of efforts to deliver the right to water. The rights based approach encourages social dialogue between citizens and state in order to discover what people expect from governments on delivery of their right to water.

In 2005, WaterAid launched the “*Citizens’ Action*”<sup>5</sup>, as a major, inter-agency project, which WaterAid believes represents a new way of conducting work with communities who lack adequate access to water and sanitation. The basis of the *Citizens’ Action* project is the universal **right to water**, while its method will be to foster a **dialogue** between citizens and their governments and service providers. Each project’s first stage ensure that local people develop a fuller understanding of: *their entitlements to water and sanitation; their current water and sanitation service situation; and the range of responsibilities for policy and service delivery*. In a nutshell *Citizens’ Action* helps communities prepare to engage with service providers and government and then supports that engagement for as long as required. Local organisations facilitate the process, rather than mediate on behalf of citizens as is often the case.

**Chapter three** lists the tools and methodologies used in the study. The findings of this study discussed in **Chapter four** indicates that four various types of Community Consultations Forums were organized between 2002- 2006. They are: The 1<sup>st</sup> Consultative Forum held with Major Corporate and Individual Consumers in 2002; Community Consultative Forums held in the Business offices between 2003-2005; Consultations held with Water Vendors in 2006; and Water for Life Weekly Radio Programme broadcast on the Plateau State Radio. Also 65% of the consumers surveyed said that the main issue discussed in the forums was water users and consumers concerns, 24% of respondents said discussions were focused on the Plateau State Water Board programmes/policies on water, and 4% said the main issues discussed were mainly Citizens water rights.

**Table 1: Summary of discussions in the Community Consultation Forums**

Consumers Concerns	PSWB concerns	Action taken	Results
--------------------	---------------	--------------	---------

<sup>4</sup> General Comments provide interpretation of existing laws.

<sup>5</sup> Discussion paper *Citizens’ Action for water and sanitation Paper* written by: Peter Ryan, [www.wateraid.org/citizenaction](http://www.wateraid.org/citizenaction)

## Evaluation Study on the Plateau State Water Board Community Consultation Forums

Irregular Water Supply	Lack of equipments. Unstable power supplies; Lack of funds; Water leakages; and Low revenue	Increase in water tariffs.  Communities partnered with PSWB on revenue collection.	Increased water Supply; Improved water revenues; and Job creation
Water rationing	Illegal connections by water vendors decreased water supply to households; Transfer of water connections	Illegal connections by water vendors blocked.	Increased water supply
Water Vendors illegally connect to the water mains thereby decreasing water supplied to household consumers. Water Vendors sell PSWB at high prices	Pipe vandalisation by water vendors.  Need to formalize activities of water vendors.	Activities of water vendors regulated.  Water vendors unionized.	PSWB receives revenues from water vendors
Water leakages	Pipes vandalisation.	Communities acted as watchdogs of water pipes; Community reported pipe bursts/leakages; Community assisted in maintenance of water pipes.	Increased water supply
Low water pressure	Lack of funds Illegal connections Water leakages	Illegal connections by water vendors blocked; Leakages repaired	Increased water supply
Inefficient Billing	Lack of capacity to efficiency use ICTs to manage accounts.	Communities partnered with PSWB on revenue collection.	Increased revenue
Water related diseases	Water vendors sell water sourced from dug wells water to consumers under the pretext that it is PSWB Water; Pipe leakages pollute water supply	Dud wells through which water vendors access unsafe water closed down	Decrease in incidences of water related diseases
Extension of main lines to un served communities	Lack of funds	Communal fundraising to finance water extensions	Extension of water supply to previously un served areas.

**Chapter 4** recommends a new methodology for organizing the WANG Citizens Action Project in Jos and Bukuru. This is the formation and institution of a Water Parliament, a stakeholders body comprising Community leaders (District and Ward Heads), Chairmen of Ward Water Committees, Religious Leaders, key staff of the PSWB (management staff, Zonal Managers, and Heads of Business offices), civil activists, staff of the WANG Jos Field office, representatives of Women groups, major and individual water consumers. The Water Parliament will consider and adopt both its *Terms of Reference (based on WaterAid Citizens Action Programme methodology)*, and *Rules of Proceedings*, and also conduct interactive Public hearings to discuss water related issues.