



Mass media to solve WASH challenges of the urban and rural poor in West Africa

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World Water Forum 2012
12 – 17 March 2012
Time for Solutions

The problem

- An estimated 300 million people in West Africa, about 2/3rds of the population, **lack access to improved drinking water supply and safe basic sanitation services** (WHO / UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation)
- Of these, the majority are poor, and belong to vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- They struggle to address these challenges as they:
 - Lack participation: their WASH voices are not easily expressed and seldom heard,
 - Unequitable prioritisation: their WASH challenges seldom discussed,
 - Lack of transparency: solutions to their WASH problems rarely comes to the agenda of by WASH policy makers, regulators and public and private service providers.

The methodology

- The network, formed in 2010 brings together WASH journalists from 14 West African countries - Ghana, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Mali, Benin, Togo, Cote D'Ivoire, Cameroon, Gambia, Senegal, Sierre Leone, Niger, Guinea Bissau and Liberia.
- The network journalists aims are to:
 - **Advocate** for the WASH rights of the poor,
 - **Voice** out their challenges, '**highlight**' their WASH needs,
 - '**X-ray** governance,
 - **Improve** transparency and accountability issues that limit access, and
 - **Amplify** solutions to their lack of access.
- The information and knowledge is shared through the outlets of our members - newspapers, television and radio stations. Online social media for Joint advocacy, learning and sharing (blog, facebook, twtter, youtube)

Challenges

> Access to information:

- > Information is not always readily available
- > Reporting on issues of corruption is not safe

> Lack of knowledge and skills of the journalists:

- > Poor sector knowledge of members
- > Unfamiliarity of journalists with new media tools.
- > Low reporting skills in writing investigate and compelling stories.

> Funding limitations:

- > Limited funding to support members in country
- > Activities mainly donor driven

> Network coordination and motivation

- > Language barriers- French, English, Portuguese among members
- > Coordination of WASH-JN's activities

Integrity/transparency impact

- **Transparency:** media allows information to be accessible and out in the open
 - WASH journalists expose poor sanitation conditions, e.g. Accra schools
- **Accountability:** by having the information available, stakeholders in WASH are more likely to feel responsible and thus less inclined to corruption
 - No toilet for over 2000 pupils in a Ghanaian school
 - Nigeria WASH Radio Campaign
 - Liberia: WASH Media Forum: Legislative, Presidential Candidates Hailed
 - Accountability Journalism: Reports on Water from West Africa
 - Hard talk- round-table with Ministers of Water in Africa @ 3rd AfricanSan in Kigali, on WASH commitments
 - Nigeria-Sanitation industry: Pitfalls of water roadmap, by stakeholders
- **Participation:** increased as voices of the water users, in particular of the poor, are shared
 - Partnership aims to promote coverage of water and sanitation issues in West Africa
 - Liberia's President signs WASH Compact
 - West African Journalists Tumble Down On Slums-WASH Communities

Key issues and recommendations

> **Capacity Building:**

- > WASH journalists require training on sector issues including Transparency and Accountability.

> **Replication:**

- > formation of WASH media networks in other regions

> **Funding:**

- > increase funding for national platforms to implement activities

> **Strategic partnership:**

- > between media and other stakeholders in the sector- CSOs and Donors.





Tool Cases Overview

National Water Integrity Study, Kenya

Sareen Mali, Transparency International Kenya

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Process Mapping Tools

Sonali Srivastava, Arghyam, India

Citizen Report Cards

Donal O'Leary, Transparency International

Budget Transparency in Nepal

Donal O'Leary, Transparency International

Water Management Transparency Index

Lucia De Stefano, TI Spain, University of Comptense, Spain

Media for increased transparency and accountability in WASH in West Africa

Babatope Babalobi, WASH Journalist Network, West Africa

Water Action Groups in Kenya,

Herbert Kassamani,
Water Service Regulatory Board, Kenya