

The Role of the Media in Water Governance

Babatope Babalobi

Chair- WASH Media Network, Nigeria

General Secretary- West Africa WASH Media Journalists

babalobi@yahoo.com 08035897435

Defining key words

- Media
- Water
- Governance

Media

- **Traditional Media-** Print- Newspapers and Magazines, Electronic (TV/Radio)
- **Traditional media** as channels of Communications and Media Practitioners as Agents of Communication
- **New Media** platforms- Facebook, Twitter, and social networking sites, web pages, forums, Blogs, Youtube, itunnes, Internet Radios
- **New Media** tools- Mobile phones, Smart phones, ipads, ipods
- **New Media-Citizen Journalists**

Water or WASH?

- Water resources governance?
- Drinking Water Supply Governance?
- Drinking Water supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Governance.

Governance

Academic

‘How the institutions, rules and systems of the state – the executive, legislature, judiciary and military – operate at central and local level and how the state relates to individual citizens, civil society and private sector’ (DFID)

Non-academic

‘Processes which determine who gets what, when and how’

Sector specific

‘Policy and institutional processes by which decisions affecting WASH sector development are made and implemented’

Note that contemporary governance processes:

- operate at multiple different levels (global-national-local)
- increasingly extend beyond government (multiple stakeholders)
- are shaped by both formal and informal rules (profoundly political)

2009

WaterAid Urban workshop Nepal July

Importance of Governance

Growing interest in governance

- Beyond the technical fix
- More money alone will not solve the problem
- Biggest obstacles often political and institutional
- Attention to policy and institutional processes
- Focus on performance and accountability
- Beyond the project, beyond the sector
= understanding the bigger picture

Dimensions

Dimension	Definition	General e.g.	WASH specific e.g.
Capability	Extent to which leaders and governments are able to get things done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Finance/revenue (capex & opex) -Capacity and human resources -Institutional arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Taxes, tariffs and subsidies -Skills, knowledge, behaviour -Regulation & decentralisation
Accountability	Ability of citizens, civil society and private sector to hold them to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Access to info and decisions -Inclusive decision making -Capable and active CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Scrutiny in media, parliament, watchdog -Multi-stakeholder participation -Voice and social accountability
Responsiveness	Whether public policies and institutions respond to the needs of citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rights and pro-poor policies -Corruption and integrity -Equity concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Defining rights and legal standards -Monitoring service level/quality -Targeting unserved

Principles

General principles of 'good' governance

- **Participation** = all stakeholders involved in planning, design and delivery of WASH services
- **Inclusion** = all members of society benefit, particularly poor and marginalised groups
- **Transparency** = openness in terms of access to information and decision making processes
- **Accountability** = answerability for decisions taken and implemented including operational performance and quality of services
- **Equity** = access to WASH services for all, with priority to those currently unserved
- **Efficiency** = best use of available resources for maximum benefit of society
- **Responsiveness** = WASH services reflect the needs and priorities of consumers
- **Sustainability** = efficient and responsible use of water resources and the environment

(EC 2003; UN, 2003)

WASH Governance

In summary, sector governance is about the interplay between three essential functions to satisfy citizens needs

- Policy making
- Service delivery
- Oversight

Roles of 'Media' in WASH Governance

key fact: Media has constitutional mandate to uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people

Section 22 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, which states that: *“ The Press, Radio, Television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this constitution and accountability of the government to the people’*

1. Amplifying the voices of the poor that lack access to WASH services most. Working with communities rather than Government agencies alone *UNDP HDI 2006 report noted:*

“The crisis in water and sanitation is—above all— a crisis for the poor. Almost two in three people lacking access to clean water survive on less than \$2 a day, with one in three living on less than \$1 a day. More than 660 million people without sanitation live on less than \$2 a day, and more than 385 million on less than \$1 a day.”

- 2. Ensuring enhanced quality and flow of information** through publication of high quality information for the media that decision-makers and people view and hear.
- 3. Prominence to WASH** stories and reports get into the media
- 4. Citizen actions** by Citizen Journalists can give Utility managers get feedback from users and design appropriate tools to be more responsive and accountable to service users.

5. Production of compelling reports on WASH issues particularly as it affects the poor.
6. Marking of WASH milestones for increased attention-Global Hand washing Day, World Toilet Day, World Water Day, Local, National and International meetings
7. Capacity building of members to ensure better quality of reporting
8. Strategic partnership with WASH stakeholders for better reporting of the sector
9. Publication of stories on best practices of delivering Water Supply and Sanitation services

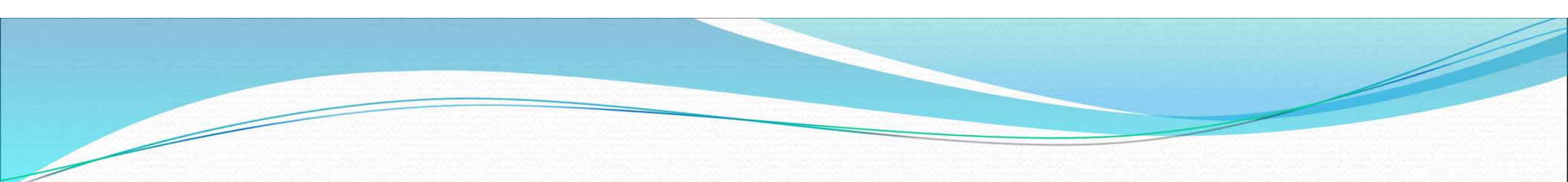
10. Working as Advocates, not just as Reporters, but media advocacy:

Advocacy Journalism is a genre of Journalism that intentionally and transparently adopts a non objective viewpoint, usually for some social or political purpose; and Journalists can reach decision makers and influence wider public opinion through articles and programmes in the Print and Electronic media”

What do people *need* to know?

How can we help improve the quality of life?

How can we save lives?



11. Ask questions: Why is Nigeria off track the WASH MDG goals and what could be done?

12. Through investigative reporting monitor and track WASH programmes of our national and local governments to ensure better transparency, accountability and better services delivery

13. Advocate for policies that will ensure community ownership, and management of WASH projects as well as increased sustainability.

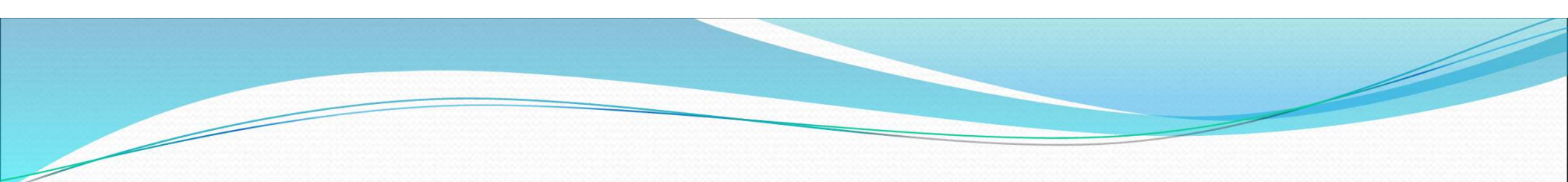
14. Advocate for guarantee of Water and Sanitation as a human right

15. Promote *Equity and Inclusion* in WASH-Articulate and defend interest of disabled groups.

16. Building community and Government capacity and knowledge on water and sanitation issues, including on rights and responsibilities, management and technical information

17. Monitoring Government Actions on WASH

18. Budget monitoring and Tracking



19. Working through the Governance structures to get information, ask questions-Regulatory Bodies,

20. Using the FOI ACT to ask questions

Challenges

- Poor and unstable pay
- Poor tools
- Low Skills
- Technical understanding of the sector
- Commercialisation of news
- WASH news not 'glamorous'



END