



Briefing Note | September 2018

## About Watershed

Watershed empowering citizens programme is a strategic partnership between the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IRC, Simavi, Wetlands International and Akvo.

Watershed aims at delivering improvements in the governance and management of water, sanitation and hygiene services as well as of the water resources on which they draw.

Watershed is implemented in Kenya, Uganda, Mali, Ghana, Bangladesh and India.

The long-term objective of Watershed is improved governance for WASH and IWRM so that all citizens, including the most marginalised, can benefit from sustainable services.

The immediate goal is to enhance citizens' ability to obtain information so that civil society organisations (CSOs) can advocate for change based on reliable, accurate data.

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## IMPORTANCE OF GOOD COMMUNITY ENTRY TO BOOST SUSTAINABILITY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Numerous water projects in Kenya have failed due to poor community entry. According to the Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI), more than 34.4% of Kenyan households depend on point sources of water (springs, boreholes), while 64.3% live in the rural areas. A study carried out in Kenya showed that one-third of newly established community-managed water systems stop functioning within the first three years after completion, hence stalled or unsustainable projects (Kwena and Moronge, 2015).

Lack of stakeholder involvement in planning for the implementation of a project is the main reason behind the increase in unsustainable, poorly managed, and stalled community projects especially in the water sector. Neighbours Initiative Alliance (NIA) in partnership with Caritas Switzerland piloted the Integrity Management Toolbox model for Enkongu Enjore community water system in Kajiado County. This is a participatory change management process that addresses the management and sustainability of small water supply systems, to contribute to the realisation of the right to water for all, and improve services efficiency.

This briefing paper highlights lessons learnt on the importance of having good community entry strategies, during the implementation of the Integrity Management Tool, at Enkongu Enjore community water system, Maparasha location in Kajiado County.

## Briefing paper

### Introduction

Community entry is a process of initiating, nurturing, and sustaining a desirable relationship with the community, to secure and sustain the community's interest. It helps to gain support from the community leaders, establishing a good working relationship in all aspects of a programme. The mode of entry into a community determines the success or failure of the project. In the last three decades, development partners and the government have sunk boreholes, constructed dams in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs). Most of these projects were done without input from local communities. More often than not, organisations have assumed that they understand community problems, skipping the community entry process and starting at the implementation stage.

Little consideration was given to the cultural setting of the surrounding communities that are mostly pastoralists who move from one place to another in search of pastures for their livestock (NIA and CESPAD, 2017). The poor community entry strategies have contributed highly to the lack of ownership, and collapse of community water projects hindering the realisation of the right to clean adequate water and sanitation for communities.

The picture below illustrates a lack of project ownership due to lack of community involvement during community entry. An interview with household members revealed that the family preferred going into the bush rather than using the constructed facility. Beneficiaries do not take interest in the projects leading to the project decommissioning stage, Public Health, (2017).



Source: Department of Public health Kajiado County, 2017

### Key Facts and Background

The government of Kenya, and non-governmental organisations developing water and sanitation infrastructure in rural and marginalised areas, have tried different management models. The community management model has been the predominant model for many decades. However, these water systems are often characterised by low-level service provision and functionality issues.

Following the enactment of Kenya's Constitution (2010), responsibilities for water service delivery were devolved to the county governments. For commercially viable areas, this service delivery is devolved to county-owned Water Service Providers (WSPs). So far, the sector has improved good governance, service delivery and adhering to human rights standards in water and sanitation services delivery. This progress counts mainly for urban and commercially viable areas. Challenges remain especially in rural and marginalised areas, where service provision is non-commercially viable, and management is less clear. This is something that continues to define the living standards of Kajiado residents.

The Water Services Regulatory Board's (WASREB) regulation of the sector has been concentrated within 48% of mainly urban areas ignoring the majority of the sector with most people facing social exclusion. However, with the new strategic plan (2018-2022), WASREB moves to regulate water services in rural areas in collaboration with County Governments. This will ensure quality water services. It is therefore vital that proper management of water supply systems both in the rural and urban areas is taken as an integral issue if the right to clean and safe water for all is to be attained.

The Integrity Management Toolbox purposes to assist communities to work with integrity and selection of actions taken to address specific problems. It is anchored around three main phases; preparatory phase (community entry), the integrity management workshop, and implementation phase. However, for communities to embrace this process and attain successful implementation depends on the initial entry to the community and how the community is engaged throughout the process.



## Briefing paper

### Conducting Smooth Community Entry

Development partners and the government must understand that community entry is the process of initiating, nurturing and sustaining a desirable relationship, to secure and sustain the community's interest in all aspects of project implementation.

#### Lessons Learnt

- Principles and techniques of community mobilisation and participation must be employed and more often it requires influencing communities and individuals collectively to transform their values, attitudes and practices.
- Understanding community dynamics is very critical. This can be done through an interview with individuals, focus groups discussion, mapping, contacting opinion leaders, or house to house census.
- Involvement of all community groups and stakeholders that benefit from the water system or project will build relationships which will bridge gaps between barriers that become 'sticky subjects' for many.
- Provision of a brief background of the organisation that is implementing the project is necessary to provide openness, transparency and accountability, and also outlines clear roles and responsibilities.
- Agreement on group representation prevents over-concentration of some groups at the expense of others, thus ensuring consideration of all groups in the community.
- NIA identified vocal persons and community leaders within the community. This was very important because these persons influence, seek cooperation and support from the community or make decisions on behalf of the community thus enabling the project to succeed or fail.

#### Conclusion

With experiences drawn from Neighbours Initiative Alliance during the implementation of the IM toolbox, it was noted that planning and involving

communities from the onset of the project will lead to positive results. "Involving the community from the initial start of the project, understanding the community dynamics will ensure transparency leading to ownership and sustainability of the project by the community", states Mr Lengete, a community member. This will assist the implementer and the community to level their expectations and to develop a common understanding of a facilitated change process. The success of a facilitated change process is dependent on the relationship created during the entry process, therefore it is paramount that community entry should be carried out in a way that will maximise participation, reduce community conflict and enhance the sustainability of projects.

#### Recommendations

1. Identification of focal contacts in the community is key. This will help in bringing the community on board anytime there is a project that needs to be undertaken in their respective community.
2. Joint planning with the community at the community entry stage on how the implementation of the project will take place.
3. Direct community involvement should also be encouraged; for example, during the implementation of the project and some technocrats are needed, the organisation should consider utilising those existing in the said community instead of outsourcing.
4. Organisations that will be implementing projects in various communities, should kick start the process by letting the community understand who the organisation is, and share the project budget before they start implementation. This will ensure transparency, accountability and boost community support and ownership of the project.
5. Community consultations are also very important. For example, instead of imposing strategies on communities, suggestions of the best strategies come from the community. This is because the community understands its issues and most times have the best strategies to tackle the issues. The communities will also share what their priorities and needs are.

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