**STRATEGIA NETHERLANDS, INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION**

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**COURSE: ONLINE -POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA**

**IN**

**WATER, HYGIENE AND SANITATION**

**YEAR: 2019**

Question for assignment 7

1. Describe the particular challenges of providing WASH services in urban settings arising from each of the following factors.

* + - * 1. Increasing population size
        2. The diverse nature of the urban community
        3. Infrastructure required for WASH services
        4. Governance, in particular the process through which resources for improving WASH services are allocated and utilized.

2. What are the major health risks from?

* + - * 1. open defecation
        2. allowing food waste and litter to accumulate in a ditch
        3. Not washing hands before eating.

Briefly explain how these risks could be reduced.

3. Describe three specific challenges posed by peri-urban areas and slums for improving access and utilization of WASH services.

4. Explain three challenges associated with engaging stakeholders in planning and implementing urban WASH projects.

I have been sick!

Questions and Answers for Assignment 7

1. Describe the particular challenges of providing WASH services in urban settings arising from each of the following factors.

Water sanitation and hygiene services include supply and distribution of clean water, promotion and implementation of environmental sanitation and promotion of safe hygiene practices to communities.

But provision of such services in the urban setting has proved to be very difficult as noted below.

1. Increasing population size

Migration from rural to urban areas has increased in the recent decades. In developing countries, most rural poor always come to urban areas in search for better jobs and other opportunities, and “ improved living standards’ which are not usually there in their former place of residence. However this comes with lots of challenges that hinder the effective and efficient provision of WASH services because the urban areas are not always prepared to meet the rapid population increase. While in the urban areas, households, especially those in the slums, end up using unsafe methods of wastes disposal that block the drainage and sewerage lines. It’s also hard for the urban authorities to expand their services since there are no access roads in such slums. It should be noted that even the existing systems will be worn out since there are so many people sharing the few available ones.

1. The diverse nature of the urban community

Many people from different walks of life and cultural backgrounds end in many urban areas in developing countries. In Uganda, many people, including disadvantaged children (commonly known as streets kids) from Kamamoja sub regions have ended up in Kampala. The major challenge is that most of these people don’t believe in the use of latrines and better hygiene practices. The second challenge is that they are not always settled in one place, making it hard to pass health education / awareness.

Some people who are poorly brought, or who have evil motives will always break and take away most water pipes, meters etc especially the ones in open places. This at the end costs the urban authority and the neighboring households because the broken pipes or meters have to be replaced.

1. Infrastructure required for WASH services

In many developing countries such as Uganda, Water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructures are stressed and the infrastructure investments cannot meet the rapid urbanization. It is hard to provide better infrastructures such as landfills, wastes disposal and transportation, treatment reservoirs and plant in urban setting, due un planned population increase in most of these urban setting. Besides, heavy population reduces space for the construction of better infrastructures such as access roads, treatment plants. It is very hard to construct water supply systems and pipes in densely populated urban slums because these slums are not planned.

Unplanned or sudden increase in urban population makes it hard to mobilize funds to build and supply adequate WASH infrastructures to meet the ever increasing needs.

(d)Governance, in particular the process through which resources for improving WASH services are allocated and utilized.

In developing countries, most young people leave rural areas for urban centers in search for jobs and easy life. However due to economic hardships, they are unable to buy water or pay for WASH services. This is worst because many of the WASH services are being run by the private companies who are after the profits. In Uganda, especially in big towns, many households are not covered, because they cannot pay the bills or fees for most of these services; hence many of them defecate and dispose their wastes in open grounds.

Still under governance, most of the service providers are just profit oriented; therefore most of them don’t want to improve their services, even when clients complain. This in the long run makes people to lose interest in such services, hence posing major health risks to most dwellers.

2. What are the major health risks from?

(a) Open defecation

Open defecation is the practice of disposing or dumping faeces in an open ground, instead of a latrine. In this practice is common in urban areas mostly among the urban poor, because most of them don’t have alternative or even space to dig pit latrines. This practice is also common among communities with primitive cultural values attached to it.

Faeces contain pathogens that cause diseases such as acute diarrhea, dysentery and cholera among others. Therefore open defecation leaves out faeces exposed, thus making it easy to get in to contact with people food and water through flies and floods respectively. In some big slums, most poor families use flying toilets where faeces are thrown along the drainage challenges and sometimes into rivers, and this eventually comes into contact with human beings who are at the recreational bitches swimming or washing vehicles.

1. Allowing food waste and litter to accumulate in a ditch

In Uganda wastes are left unattended to in ditches for long; they get rotten up and some begin to flood incase of heavy running water reaching water sources especially in peri urban settings. This ends up contaminating water sources, and food thus causing acute diarrhea, dysentery and cholera among others. Leaving solid wastes unattended encourages flies and rodents to breed and eventually begin to transmit diseases. On another note, most people who live near those ditches are the urban poor, who are in most cases employed to carry, collect and transport those wastes. This directly exposes them the acute respiratory diseases in the long run.

1. Not washing hands before eating.

There are serious health risks associated to failure to wash hands before eating. In Uganda most people are farmers who carrying out farming using rudimentary tools. They do weeding, collecting firewood using their bare hands; most households don’t have anal cleaning materials and hence they use sticks, leaves, leaving their hands to get in to contact with faeces. Therefore because of the above scenarios, failing to wash hands before eating directing make one to ingest pathogens that cause diarrhea, typhoid, cholera and dysentery both in adults and children.

Briefly explain how these risks could be reduced.

Community members should be sensitized about the dangers of open defecation. This can be through community-led total sanitation, a behavioral change approach, where they are encouraged to dig pit latrines using locally available materials.

Secondly, by encouraging different households to use Three Rs, that is reduce, reuse and recycle the wastes. People should be encouraged to always reduce the quantities of wastes right from the household, private and institutional levels. This will help to directly reduce wastes that are always generated at the public wastes disposal sites. When wastes are reduced, it becomes easy to manage and maintain the public health hence reducing the risks of contamination and infection.

Community awareness, with emphasis on the values of washing hands, during five critical moments can help to solve these problems. People should always be told to wash their hands before eating food, after cleaning the baby’s bottom, after visiting the toilet, after work and before preparing food. This helps to reduce the chances of getting infected with pathogens that cause diseases such as diarrhea, dysentery and cholera.

Urban authority should always increase budget allocation on WASH department. The budget should be adequate enough to provide reliable transport recruit and pay more staff and construct better WASH infrastructure/ facilities.

3. Describe three specific challenges posed by peri-urban areas and slums for improving access and utilization of WASH services.

First of all WASH services are the systems that provide for the water, environmental sanitation and hygiene needs of the communities.

In Africa countries, say Uganda, although there are challenges in providing WASH services in rural areas, but the challenges are seem to be less compared to urban areas.

Insufficient water supply is the first challenge. Due to unplanned rural urban migration, it is always hard for the urban authorities to plan and supply enough water in time. It is very hard for a country like Uganda which has limited technical capacity to plan and cater for the surprise population increase in most of it urban and peri urban areas. To build enough water infrastructure needs much technical designs, financial and other supports; a process which is so bureaucratic- with legal constraints. Therefore, most urban authorities especially in developing countries are failing to supply enough water for their urban population because many youth are leaving rural areas in a very disorganized and unplanned manner.

Insufficient demand is yet another challenge. Most of the peri urban centres in Uganda are filled up with low income earners, and beside, most of these centres are used to drawing water from unsafe sources such as dug wells, nearby rivers among others. In addition most of them still dispose off wastes in very harmful manners. All these, including cultural or behavior tendency have negatively affected the demands for improved WASH services in peri urban centres even in places where WASH networks exist. Most people are not willing to pay for those services or they are literally unable to pay for those services. It should be noted that most of the urban WASH services are being privatized, therefore most private contractors are not willing to inject more money in WASH sector where is no demand. They are not willing to build improved WASH infrastructures/ facilities in places people still use poor systems of wastes disposal.

Institutional constraints (lack of coordination). Centralize supply solution may not be sustainable if there is no coordination with regional or district authorities. In Uganda, much budget is allocated towards water supplies, through dam construction and less budget given to sanitation and hygiene department. This has left urban authorities with much to do; there are too much wastes generated from households, hotels, and urban markets. The urban authorities cannot transport and dispose of the wastes in time.

All in all, lack of coordination in providing water, sanitation and hygiene services has affected the whole services. It is not sustainable and healthy to provide water, yet people have no toilets or latrines; when wastes dumped in the river and drainages. It is not healthy if people have latrines or toilets, yet people can afford to get adequate water for better hygiene practices.

4. Explain three challenges associated with engaging stakeholders in planning and implementing urban WASH projects.

First of all, stakeholders are people who have significant influence over a program or those who will significantly be impacted on by the program.

Involving all relevant stakeholders is very beneficial to the project planning and implementation by improving the decision making process and clear accountability for sustainability.

However, this requires mapping all the relevant stakeholders to ascertain their level of interest and the influence level of each stakeholder.

The beauty about involving relevant stakeholders is that vast and dynamic technical skills required will be tapped.

Lack of coordination between government and other agencies in the sector makes it hard to plan and implement effectively. Some organizations have been duplicating projects already funded by the government. Example, most nongovernmental organization don’t plan together with the government WASH departments because they fear that the government will account for the same project, hence affecting their accountability to the donors.

Another challenge is reaching to low income and disabled persons. Most of these people may be valuing different things; they only love to what they can eat today. Therefore, involving them in sanitation or better hygiene practices implementation may be hard, since they don’t see tangible outcome, while their family members are sleeping hungry. In addition, while discussing or planning to apply some improved systems or WASH technologies, the poor are seen as ignorant class of people.

Another challenge is working across disciplinary and sector boundaries present a big challenge; it is not easy to bring health officer, water engineers, social scientists, political leaders etc at the same sitting. Besides their work ethics vary, because they all fall under different ministries.

Personal interest is yet another challenge. Some stakeholders, example politicians may use the planning and implementation process to define their wish list. Political leaders or the local council leaders in Uganda are prone of doing that; and this has always discouraged people especially those that don’t subscribe to political parties of those leaders.

Another challenge is how to ignore some irrelevant inputs without disappointing the contributors. Not all opinions/ materials will influence and inform the planning and implantation decision. Some are diversionary, while others may be outdated, and yet everyone has to be valued. There it very hard to freely ignore such inputs without disappointing anyone.

References

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