



Eau et Assainissement pour l'Afrique

EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL SANITATION AND VILLAGE SANITATION PROGRAMME (EVA PROGRAMME)

Executive Summary

Prepared by WSA for the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Agence Intergouvernementale Panafricaine

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0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

0.1. INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) initiated in 2006 the School Sanitation and Village Sanitation (EVA) Programme led by the ministries responsible for health and education, with support from UNICEF, DFID, USAID, JICA, some NGOs and Local Committees. The overall objective of the EVA Programme in the 11 provinces where it is implemented in the DRC is "*Ensure the survival and development of children by increasing the rate of access to clean water, improved sanitation and hygiene education*". This involves (i) improving access to clean water, adequate sanitation, good hygiene practices and a healthy environment in the target communities and in schools, (ii) capacity building for government state stakeholders in charge of education, health, water and sanitation, and finally, (iii) improving the national and local policy and governance of the sector to a better control of the strategies developed following the implementation of the program.

The objectives of this evaluation of the EVA Programme (2008 - 2011) sponsored by UNICEF – DRC was to analyse (i) the monitoring and evaluation used, (ii) the management structure, and finally (iii) programmatic and technical tasks, taking into account the principles of equity, sustainability and complementarity. The evaluation intended to formulate appropriate recommendations to (i) improve the 2013-2017 programming cycle of the programme, (ii) optimize the intervention strategies, and (iii) undertake evidence-based advocacy actions with partners.

The methodology used for the conduct of field activities include three phases, namely: (I) the preliminary phase consisted in compiling the literary review, developing and validating with UNICEF the tools to be used on the ground by the evaluation team; (ii) the field phase consisted in surveys with households and students, semi-structured interviews and focus groups with various stakeholders of the programme, and finally direct observations of the achievements in the field; (iii) in the analysis phase, the data collected were analysed, interpreted, and synthesized to produce the report.

The evaluation took place in four of the 11 provinces that make up the DRC. These provinces of the sample (Bas Congo, East, South Kivu, and Katanga) were selected based on three key criteria namely (i) the existence in the province of both villages and schools involved in the programme, (ii) the geographical representativeness of the sample, and finally (iii) the level of progress of the programme in the province between 2006 and 2011.

The size of the sample was about 60 schools, 800 households and 550 students.

0.2. THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM OF THE PROGRAMME

The monitoring and evaluation system used in the implementation the EVA programme is operational, functional and suitable for this programme. The operation of the system follows the programme implementation chain: from the planning to the final reporting.

The evaluation shows that this M&E system has an "informal" nature, as there is no specific manual to guide the stakeholders involved in this programme. The analyses highlight the existence of some programme reference materials to better understand the strategy of implementation. That "informal" character suggests to limitations in the reliability of the monitoring operation. Despite these potential limitations, most of the programme beneficiaries are moderately or completely satisfied with the monitoring system of the programme. The assessment highlights favourable and unfavourable opinions on the programme. It also points out the strengths and weaknesses of the system. For example, the strengths identified in the evaluation include the presence of focal points for outreach action, capacity building, the effectiveness of consultation meetings, the clear roles of each partner, the existence of a database management system with a possibility of access via the Internet, etc. Among the weaknesses, the study notes, inter alia, the absence of a reference document for M&E, the low involvement of beneficiaries, the lack of assurance, the low quality of the achievement, the low level of expertise of the monitoring staff, the irregular payment of fees, etc.

This part of the evaluation study concludes with the presentation of three major lessons that emerge from the analysis : the lack of alignment of the geographic areas of the two sub-programs (school sanitation (EA) and village sanitation (VA)), the low level of understanding of data management tools by the BCZs, and finally the irregular or fragmented involvement of certain stakeholders of the EA programme.

0.3. THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

The evaluation shows that the management structure of the EVA programme is well articulated in the various levels of government: the national level, the Region, the Province, down to the local level. The level of organization in the village determines the decision stakeholders: almost all villages have a traditional structure; the village chief and the members of the Village Committees have been the most influential in making the decision to involve the village in the programme, and the requirements of the two sub-programs have been fulfilled. The beneficiaries are involved in the other stages of the process, in terms of financial or material contribution, in the supervision of the works, in the maintenance of the facilities, etc.

For the VA programme, the evaluation has noted with satisfaction the capacity building sessions for key stakeholders (SEA, CA, MCZ), which have allowed the effective implementation of the VA programme. In addition, the advocacy with government authorities and traditional chiefs has also facilitated the involvement of the recipient communities. Finally, the awareness campaigns have generated behavioural changes among communities and the adoption of good practices resulting in the cleanliness of the villages, households and schoolyards. However, the evaluation has noted a 48% achievement rate for the results of the study period; there have been quite positive changes, with a village coverage rate of about 124% between 2010 and 2011. The evaluation noted that apart from the material contributions of partner NGO , no system has been put in place to empower committee members for the making the actions sustainable. In addition, the delays in paying incentives and fuel costs limited the follow-up activities the SEA AC.

As regards the EA programme, the study appreciates the very positive effect of the awareness campaigns for the members of COPAs and BSSEs on behaviour change vis-à-vis the youth, women, and students in targeted schools. This sub-programme also has a very significant level of achievements: 56% over the period, 98.3% between 2009 and 2010, and 70.2% between 2010 and 2011. Overall, over the period of the

study, the number of schools involved has increased in relative value by 205.7% between 2009 and 2010 and by 102.8% between 2010 and 2011. A major weakness identified is that the introduction of participatory communication methods applied to development in the curricula of institutions of higher education has not been implemented; the memorandum between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Higher Education is not yet operational.

On the evaluation period, the programme has mobilized more than 41 368 499 USD between 2009 and 2010, and the forecast for 2011 and 2012 is 60 630 080 USD. These funds are transferred to NGOs and other implementation stakeholders according to procedures that are consistent with those in force in the UN system, and in relation with the Master Plan of Operation, the PTAs, etc. As to the human resources, they come from the partners responsible for the implementation of the programme (Government, NGOs, communities, etc.). These human resources receive prior training. However, the evaluation has revealed, in many cases, a lack of programme management skills (reporting difficulties, for example).

Internal procedures are applied throughout the process of the implementation of the programme: draft procedures manuals have been produced for this purpose and describe the various accounting procedures. Official versions are under preparation and will be disseminated by the Ministry Health of the DRC. These versions detail the accounting and financial management tools used for each type of transaction (cash transactions, banking, payroll operations, and checks). As for the stakeholders responsible for the implementation of the programme, UNICEF generally conducts an evaluation of their risk level and defines the modalities for transferring funds. A questionnaire is administered to properly assess the risk level of the partner, its financial management and its capacity. To reduce risks, the management teams of partners are required to develop a good control environment.

Whenever procedures are inadequate, efforts are required to strengthen controls and procedures and ensure risk management. Compliance with administrative and financial procedures has improved the management of the projects initiated under the programme as well as relationships with donors. Besides, the evaluation of the governance structure, from the target communities (Village Committees, MCZ, SEA / CA, BSSE, COPA, etc.) to national level (SNHR, CNAEA, UNICEF, D9) shows that strategic guidance and the coordination of field operations are assured. Management rules and procedures are also respected. Instituted periodic meetings allow the parties involved to (i) inquire about the smooth running of the programme, (ii) take timely remedial steps, (iii) refocus activities, and (iv) correct the failures noted in the emergency phase or during the transition to development (early recovery). The development, distribution and approval of work plans and related budgets are done in a consensual manner with programme partners and according to a rigorous approach. However, the semi-structured interviews reveal some shortcomings in the involvement of some government partners at the level of arbitration and resource allocation. These shortcomings are the fact of poor communication and give the impression that budgets are "imposed". Besides, the analysis of the budget plans shows a lack of financial resources and low absorption of previous budgets.

Budgetary control, which occurs during the development, implementation, and revision of budgets, essentially examines possible variances between estimates and actual results. Budget monitoring is the responsibility of the Head of the WASH unit; it is done on a quarterly, biannual, and annual basis. Two types of audits (internal and external) are planned to examine the implementation of the programme and raise relevant issues, concerns and challenges in project implementation.

Inventory management is well documented and conducted, and the assets are secure. However, the inadequate monitoring of stocks and the lack of accounting on a quantity basis has caused inconsistencies

between physical inventory and book inventory. Risks relating to theft and fraud on equipment and materials have been reported here and there. Moreover, the evaluation has highlighted the lack of computerized systems concerning several partners responsible for implementing the programme in the field, resulting in questionable practices that are difficult to detect (cases where acceptance statements have been signed for inferior quantities). The management of fuel for the vehicles and motorcycles of the programme is done through loans recorded in logbooks that are unfortunately are not well kept or are not used at all in some cases. This may encourage abuse, such as the use of vehicles for purposes other than those of the programme, for instance. A positive point is that, thanks to the annual audits, there has been substantial progress in revising and keeping accounting records.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the programme have also been considered. The narrative reports indicate levels of achievement ranging from 48% to 56%, with acceptable costs. The analysis of the effectiveness of the stakeholders is interesting: almost all the institutions involved have played their respective roles relatively well.

However, some major deficiencies have been identified with each of them. In many cases, communities have low operational capacity, insufficient understanding of their roles; as a result, the ownership of the issue addressed by the programme is low. Primary and Secondary Education authorities do not have sufficient skills to monitor the construction of sanitation works. This gap has been filled by the capacity building for inspectors carried out by partners NGOs. Providers have shown failures in the distribution of building materials in the villages, which causes delays in the implementation of activities here and there and mainly in South Kivu).

In the cost structure of the works, the study has noted changes related to the transportation costs of materials, inter alia. There are important differences between the towns of BDD and CAB (59% difference) or between CAB and Idjwi (47%). This variation can also be justified by the diversity of partners involved and using different approaches, tools and plans.

Regarding procurement procedures, a study commissioned by UNICEF shows that the programme has complied with these procedures. The major shortcoming observed in this area is the late delivery of materials by some suppliers.

One of the positive factors are the capacity building sessions for all stakeholders i.e. NGOs, representatives of government agencies (SEA / AC, ESP, B9, etc. Another positive factor is the commitment of the State to contribute to funding the programme: this contribution varies from 1.04 to 1.07% of the programme's budget in 2010 and 2011. This commitment of the government should lead to the approval of the performance agreement.

Obstacles and constraints to the smooth functioning of the programme have been given special attention during this evaluation. We can mention the important geographical dispersion of activities, the inadequate human, material and financial resources allocated to monitoring, the failure to comply strictly with the steps, the absence of a formal system to empower committee members for the sustainability of the actions, the delays in disbursements, and finally the lack of harmonization in the approaches of the various implementation stakeholders.

0.4. THE APPROACHES AND ACTIONS OF THE PROGRAMME

The evaluation of the EVA programme has made it possible to study the dynamics involved, the mobilization approaches, the level of technical achievement and the ownership of the actions by beneficiaries.

At the programmatic level, the national EVA programme is very ambitious, as reflected by the number of beneficiaries that will be involved by the end of 2012. As a matter of fact, the project intends to guarantee the right of access to sustainable water and sanitation services to 3 million people living in 4 500 villages and to 500 000 students attending in 1 000 schools by the end of 2012 in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This represents a significant contribution to achieving the MDGs in the country.

This programme is implemented using a participatory and bottom-up approach; at the first level, we have community representatives elected democratically (chiefs, members of village committees) that get involved in monitoring the implementation of the actions on the ground and in the process leading to the certification. This bottom-up and participatory dynamics is also present at the second level with the involvement of representatives of government structures at all levels of administrative and political decision making (SEA / AC, health workers, MCZ, B9, D9), associative institutions (partner NGOs), private formal or informal stakeholders (trained masons, local service providers, etc.). However, the analysis of the process has led to the identification of gaps in the control of the participatory process and in the observance of the principles that govern it; one example is the low involvement of beneficiaries who actually are the agents of change ; a second example the inadequacy of the training provided to community stakeholders (masons, members of BSSEs, COPAs and committee members) , which can affect the quality of the achievements on the ground and the compliance with standards and contractual deadlines.

In terms of capacity building, the programme itself is a learning, awareness and training process for community stakeholders. Several capacity-building documents have been developed and are real sources of support and guidance for the programme. These documents include the training modules for the KAP survey and those for facilitators (SEA - AC - NGOs). The training sessions are recognized as having a positive effect on human health; they contribute to the strengthening of the achievement of the programme. However, the participation in the training sessions is rather poor. Some weaknesses were identified on quality assurance and post-training. For the village sanitation sub-programme, the weakness is the disparity in training modules of the members of the village committees and facilitators, the absence of modules on participatory, management and post-certification monitoring, the lack of knowledge about the statutes and the missions assigned to the committees, and finally the lack of masons trained in many localities. Concerning the school sanitation sub-programme, the major weak points are the absence of specific modules for the COPAs and BSSEs, the absence of module for the post-certification component, the lack of appropriate technologies in schools, and the weak participatory approaches in the modules.

The communication and information campaigns have enabled beneficiaries to understand the merits of the sanctions that may be taken when there is a breach of contract or poor monitoring of field activities. These information, education and communication campaigns were focused on topics directly related to the actions and good practices for the reduction of diarrhoeal diseases. More than 8 out of 10 people found the campaigns satisfactory or excellent, and point out their contribution to behaviour change on water, hygiene and sanitation. The evaluation process has shown that behaviour change is discernible in communities that have gained knowledge about the need to wash hands, have become aware of health risks and the importance to keep the village and the school environment clean.

In terms of construction or concrete actions on the ground, the evaluation has shown that the EVA programme has several achievements, the most important ones being improved access to quality water (development of water sources, construction of standpipes, boreholes, etc.). Besides the clean water supply, households in the localities of the programme have received support for the construction of household latrines (Sanplat latrines, VIP latrine), and have received maintenance kits for continued operation. The availability and actual use of all these facilities is the subject of an evaluation for the healthy village certificate. Some weak points are worth noting, namely, (a) lack of trained masons in all localities, the lack of control and lack of implementation by the communities of the basic rules of service and regular maintenance of the latrines, and the under-sizing of certain latrines; (B) the inadequate development of certain water points, the non-observance of hygiene rules when fetching water, the lack of soap on nearly two-thirds of sampled schools; (C), the lack of control over organic waste composting techniques, and uncontrolled incineration practices that pose human and environmental health risks.

For more ownership of the process to ensure the sustainability of programme achievements, the study proposes several complementary approaches to maximize the benefits and the social dynamics around the programme. This will include a more effective involvement of beneficiaries throughout the process. The participatory approach will be strengthened through the implementation of the programme, including capacity development for taking informed decision based on evidence. The integrated approach will combine the actions of both sub-programmes when possible (existence of an EA sub-programme within a VA sub-programme, for example).

After comprehensively listing the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, the study concludes with the third part of the evaluation by making suggestions for improving the technical and programmatic aspects as well as the equity, sustainability and complementarity of the programme. The first proposal deals with the implementation system and advises a bottom-up approach (from village level to national level), the separation of the roles and responsibilities of community stakeholders, and the compliance with standards for improved technological appropriateness. The second proposal concerns the post-certification monitoring system at the level of cleaned up villages and schools. The third proposal focuses on the organization approaches of communities for a better ownership of the tools to achieve the expected sustainability of the achievements of the programme in certified villages and schools as well as in the villages and schools already involved.

0.5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above, we can conclude that:

- the monitoring and evaluation system of the EVA programme is broadly in line with progress monitoring and impact evaluation;
- the governance of the programme is well appreciated by all stakeholders with (i) a balance between the need for financial security and the need to maintain the pace of programme implementation and (ii) the putting in place of an operational and practical internal audit mechanism. However, one of the major weaknesses remains the fears about the post-programme sustainability of the achievement due to the weak mobilization of the community for all beneficiaries and especially for women. A specific recommendation is to place these beneficiaries and these women at the heart of the process in order to optimize the intervention strategies.

- The programmatic tool is polished up thanks to consultation and collaboration among stakeholders; however, roles should be clarified for better performance in the next programme cycle covering the period 2013 - 2017.
- The EVA programme can be considered an effective approach on which the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo should build to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs.

To reduce the potential adverse effects the weaknesses and constraints, the evaluation concludes by formulating some recommendations; the most important ones are the following, classified according to three components of the study:

- **Concerning the monitoring and evaluation system of the EVA programme**, the following measures should be taken as soon as possible:
 - produce the monitoring and evaluation manual with an operationalization plan
 - set up a chart for indicators
 - strengthen the capacity of community organizations representing the beneficiaries
 - harmonize the data collection campaigns by adopting the division into health units at an earlier stage
 - strengthen the capacity of BCZs on data management tools
 - Involved inspectors and principals more in the implementation of the activities related to the school sanitation sub-programme
- **Concerning the management structure of the programme**, the following should be considered:
 - strengthen the capacity of community organizations representing beneficiaries and the capacity of partner NGOs responsible for monitoring and evaluation
 - strengthen the support of the government for the implementation of the programme
 - encourage NGOs and partners to participate actively in the WASH Clusters to facilitate exchanges on the quality of technical services in the field
 - ensure compliance with specifications and a smooth execution of duties
 - involve communities in the behaviour change process
- **Concerning the programmatic system**, the following should be done to maximize the expected results in target localities :
 - harmonize the approaches used by the two EVA sub-programmes
 - improve the process for the setting up of local committees ;
 - complement the training modules for the different categories of stakeholders on the basic principles of participatory approaches and on the post-certification component
 - groups neighbouring committees for the training sessions
 - train the students that are members of the BSSE and spur them on through cultural and sporting activities allowing exchanges between schools, in order to promote behaviour change
 - encourage the leadership of women and schools in the programme

- in each locality, ensure the availability of a trained mason to extend the provision of support services regarding the construction and the maintenance of the facilities;
- organize refresher training for technicians from NGOs and/or the health sector on the construction of decent facilities (school or family latrines, washstands, water points), and build the capacity of these NGOs on participatory approaches
- restructure the supervision of the programme to improve the technical quality of the achievements
- extend the geographical area of the programme to the Health Area or Health Zone
- consider the involvement of students at university level (bachelor, master) in the programme
- allow children (whether they go to school or not) to participate in the village committees to drive home a community dynamics and increase the likelihood of change
- organized capacity building sessions for pools or groups of villages and for target groups
- strengthen the strategy for women's involvement and make the best of their solidarity and economic meetings in their respective communities.