

# CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN WATER SNAPSHOTS



ZAMBIA

Kalingalinga Sanitation  
Project, Lusaka



LWSC engineer conducting a community meeting to discuss connections

## CONTEXT

In rapidly urbanizing Lusaka, infrastructure and services are lagging far behind growing new demand. This requires innovation and exploring new approaches from the Lusaka Water and Sewerage Company (LWSC) and its stakeholders, such as an innovative Condominial Sewerage pilot launched in the Kalingalinga area. Condominial sewerage is an application of simplified sewerage coupled with targeted community engagement and ongoing interactions between users and agencies during planning and implementation. Funded by the Zambian Government and supported by World Bank technical assistance<sup>1</sup>, it aimed at learning lessons on citizen-focused sanitation marketing and hygiene promotion to inform peri-urban services across the city. The project's achievements and challenges both offer important lessons on citizen engagement.

## INTRODUCING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

From the onset, the LWSC engaged the local community in Kalingalinga. They started in the preparatory stages with a stakeholders' workshop, then an official launch, and several consultative and sensitization meetings as the project progressed. At the first planning meeting the utility agreed with the community to utilize locally available resources wherever possible, such as recruiting and training thirty youths for research and to collect data for the baseline survey, and the contractor recruiting unskilled local workers to help with construction.

The point of entry for citizen engagement was the Ward Development Committee (WDC), set up by the Lusaka City Council to facilitate development projects. Early on, the WDC helped LWSC establish a task force of local residents from various zones in the project area, which the company used whenever an activity required citizen engagement, such as in negotiating with affected landlords the way of passage for construction of the network. This secured acceptance of the project early on, as that the contractor did not face land disputes, and no household along the entire sewer line refused to allow excavation. Construction works were executed within the scheduled time.

However, the process of connecting people to the sewer network slowed down due to shortcomings in engaging citizens. Residents were able to request connections at a local zonal office; however, LWSC the customer services team was not prepared in handling the registration process, with staff at the counters not fully oriented to deal with people who have not been used to open such accounts. Later, LWSC created clusters<sup>2</sup> of households along the network and asked communities to appoint cluster leaders to facilitate citizen engagement on getting more households connected, but this community focus was not quite the same as one targeting specific households as *customers*, which continued to slow down the uptake. Connecting regained some momentum when cluster leaders were asked to recruit households within their cluster to get connected, bringing almost 50% of the targeted new

<sup>1</sup> Managed by the World Bank Water and Sanitation Program (WSP)

<sup>2</sup> Zoning of households based on localized sewer network coverage

sewer connections onto the network. The LWSC Zonal office is now contemplating extending cluster leaders' role to help ensure maintenance of the toilets and the network.

### LESSONS FROM THE KALINGALINGA PILOT PROJECT

The Kalingalinga project has become a source of learning for the broader Lusaka Sanitation Project (LSP) – financed by the World Bank, the Germans Development Bank (KfW), African Development Bank and the European Investment Bank – and other efforts to extend sanitation services in peri-urban areas. It has also led to citizens in the area and elsewhere, demanding more on sanitation service delivery, and has created awareness that there is a package of sanitation options. Now, citizens are engaged also when other options are considered, such as in the LSP's wider selection of onsite options. Lessons learned in this process include:

#### ***Inform the public: package a consistent message to avoid misinformation***

LWSC has recognized the importance of transparent and accurate communication to avoid mixed messages confusing citizens. For example, the Kalingalinga project encouraged households to build and connect their own toilets. But when in other parts of Lusaka other projects rebuilt entire networks and fully funded connections, this news trickled to Kalingalinga, where households were unhappy about being treated differently.



In similar vein, LWSC has learned the importance of being clear from the beginning on **who** is going to finance **what** between the company and customers. Initially some customers thought that toilet facilities were free, so when a loan for purchasing materials was introduced towards the end of the project, the momentum was slowed down further, even for those who could have connected on their own. LWSC believes that it should have offered discounts upfront on connection fees to encourage households to put up toilet structures that could be connected. Whatever the financing approach, the rules of the game have to be clear.

#### **Communication - a key ingredient**

One of key lessons learned from the project is the importance of early and continuous communication with the public, to communicate benefits of connections, but also explain the process and connection cost, to help manage people's expectations.

#### ***It is always important to consider citizens' expectations***

Most households were expecting LWSC to do toilet construction and connection, and then charge them. LWSC says that reciprocal investment from residents would have strengthened the project, and that in future it hopes to provide a clearer sense of benefits and obligations upfront to the citizens.

#### ***Dedicate a team to work with the community***

LWSC has learned that a dedicated manager or team responsible for project deliverables brought continuity in implementation and offered customers a permanent human face for the project. In fact, it would have wanted to be even less reliant on other departments.

### CONCLUSION

The ultimate goal of the project was to get households connected to the sewer network. This required citizen engagement and service delivery to go hand in hand, involving local leaders and some citizens to help improve the uptake of connections. It is also important to achieve and then build on early success stories – in Kalingalinga, the first 20 plus customers drove the process and others followed, and the company believes it could have capitalized more on these positive developments to get more people interested in connecting faster.

#### **Sources and additional information:**

<http://projects.worldbank.org/P149091?lang=en>

Note prepared based on inputs from consultant Nduwa Tambulani Chunga and Chris Heymans, Senior Water and Sanitation Specialist.

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#### **Project Snapshot #4. June 2017**

Social Inclusion in Water Program

<http://inclusioninwater>

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