

Social inclusion and gender mainstreaming in non-sewered sanitation in Lusaka Water Supply and Sanitation Company, Zambia

Contributed by **Beatrice Chiwala Chibwe**, Lusaka Water
Supply and Sanitation Company Limited



Figure 1 – Source: LWSC

Summary

Lusaka Water Supply and Sanitation Company (LWSC), a Quasi-Government Limited Company, was formed in 1988 under a Company Act and started operating in 1990. The shareholders are the local authorities in Lusaka and satellite districts. The core mandate for LWSC is to supply water and sanitation services to Lusaka Province.

Lusaka Province has a population of approximately, 4.6million, of which 2.5 million reside in Lusaka city. Only 25% out of the 2.5 million people have access to improved sanitation (NWASCO, 2020). The majority of those without improved sanitation reside in informal settlements/peri-urban areas (GRZ, 2010).

Under CWIS, LWSC through the already developed Social and Gender Policy, embarked on creating an enabling environment to ensure it provides more socially inclusive and gender

responsive non-sewered sanitation (NSS) services. This involved building capacity among employees and stakeholders to be able to effectively identify and address social inclusion and gender issues across the entire sanitation service chain.

This case study is about showcasing LWSC's Social Inclusion and Gender Mainstreaming (SIGM) journey towards delivering NSS services that respond to the needs of various customer segments like the aged, disabled and women and ensure that their voices are heard and incorporated in decision making.

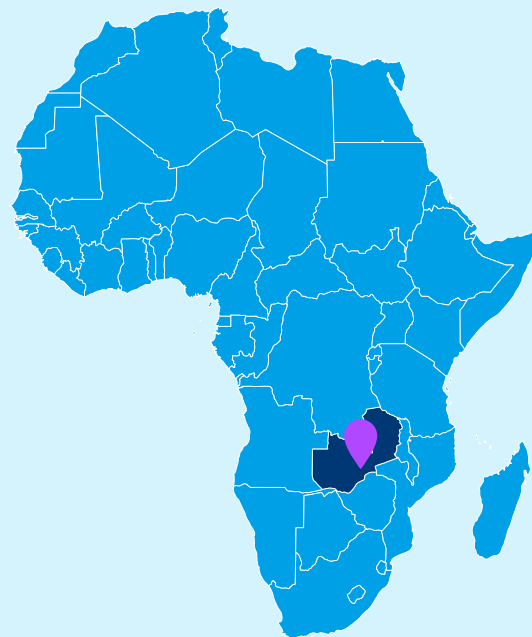
Overview

Geographical information

Country: Zambia

City: Lusaka

City population: 2,600,000



Problem

- Lack of an integrated and coordinated approach to SIGM implementation as it relates to one of the CWIS principle which promotes gender and social equity into planning, management and monitoring of NSS.

Solution

- Knowledge generation to assist LWSC generate critical information to be utilized in making informed decisions.

Problem

Though Zambia was part of the Beijing 1995 United Nations conference on women, domestication of the declarations has been a huge challenge. Despite Zambia having developed a National Gender Policy in 2014 and formulated several national legislations and protocols, and although it is heading in the right direction, a lot needs to be done.

The water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector in Zambia has undergone limited reforms to enable effective mainstreaming of social and gender issues in operations and service delivery. LWSC is aware of the gender inequalities and social exclusion that continue to persist in the sector and its negative impact on various vulnerable groups. This led to the revision/development of the Social and Gender Policy in 2018 which was accompanied by an Implementation Strategy/ Schedule and a Monitoring and Evaluation framework to guide SIGM implementation. There was also a critical shortage on knowledge and skills in SIGM within the institution since gender

was a new phenomenon mostly associated with the women's human rights movement. Gender stereotypes as a result of cultural beliefs made it even more difficult to break through and for stakeholders to begin to appreciate why gender was important in the WASH sector.

Therefore, it was recognized that for SIGM to be implemented effectively, there was need for a holistic approach that identified and addressed the various barriers within the institution and the service delivery chain.

Solution

LWSC approached SIGM from mainly four fronts, highlighted below under the CWIS project.

Capacity building activities

- **Staff SIGM training activities** – LWSC from 2019 to 2022 has received support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to train 600 members of staff on SIGM. Employees have been equipped with knowledge and skills to be able to identify and address social inclusion and gender issues in their various areas of operations.
- **Community gender training activities** – LWSC trained key community leadership stakeholders in CWIS target areas to assist with mainstreaming of social inclusion and gender issues in NSS at community level throughout the project cycle.
- **Knowledge generation** – LWSC in 2020/2021 engaged two consultants to generate knowledge to assist in making informed decisions. The first consultant assisted LWSC to conduct an Institutional Gender Audit to assess readiness to mainstream which became a baseline for future reference during periodic reviews. The second baseline was the Gender and Social Vulnerability Assessment which was conducted in the three CWIS target areas whose findings informed project implementation.
- **Revision and integration of gender aspect in all Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** – Policies, Processes and Procedures coupled with job descriptions and key performance indicators. Currently progress is 70% complete. LWSC recognizes that effective SIGM required a strong foundation that is anchored in the strong accountability systems that will place an obligation on every employee to mainstream social and gender issues at their level of operation. The 2023 to 2027 LWSC Strategic Plan will focus on operationalizing these systems to realize the benefits of SIGM both at organizational and community levels through improved service delivery and customized interventions.

SIGM interventions

LWSC also embarked on activities that complemented the capacity building, some of which are highlighted below:

- Introduction of flexible payment mechanisms for clients owing high bills and subsidies for construction of sanitation facilities.
- Promotion of variety sanitation facility designs to promote customer choice especially for

households with persons with disabilities and the aged.

- Conducted community engagement and awareness meetings with various customer segments to get insight into what their unique needs were besides passing on critical information to them.
- A call centre was established to enable speedy customer feedback and resolution of customer complaints.

Lessons learned

LWSC has picked up several lessons through this process.

- Sanitation service provision goes beyond the provision of infrastructure through construction of sewerage networks and on-site sanitation facilities. What LWSC has come to confirm is that focusing on the entire sanitation chain and ensuring that the SIGM strategy is employed at every level is critical to not only increasing uptake on one hand but sustainability of these services beyond project life.
- Gender and power still play a major role in accessing improved sanitation services. For example, whoever has the power, determines the pace, resources and type of toilet to be constructed. Therefore women, girls and other vulnerable households continue to lag behind in accessing these services due to lack of income and land tenure.
- Gender stereotypes continue to pose a barrier to sanitation service access and provision, inhibiting participation of women in the WASH sector.

Useful links

<https://www.lwsc.com.zm/projects/lusaka-sanitation>

Further reading and references

- Government of the Republic of Zambia. (2010). National Water Policy. Ministry of Energy and Water Development.
- Government of the Republic of Zambia (2020). National Water Supply and Sanitation Policy, Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection
- NWASCO. (2020). NWASCO Sector report 2020 available on <https://www.nwasco.org.zm/index.php/media-center/publications/urban-and-peri-urban-wss-sector-reports/category/12-urban-and-peri-urban-wss-sector-reports>.
- Schrecongost, A., Pedi, D., Rosenboom, J. W., Shrestha, R. and Ban, R. (2020). Citywide Inclusive Sanitation: A Public Service Approach for Reaching the Urban Sanitation SDGs. *Frontiers in Environmental Science*. 8. 10.3389/fenvs.2020.00019. Downloaded 18th July, 2022 from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339574688_Citywide_Inclusive

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- Lusaka Water Supply and Sanitation Company (2018). Social and Gender Policy.
- Lusaka Water Supply and Sanitation Company (2021). Gender Audit.
- Lusaka Water Supply and Sanitation Company (2021). Gender and Social Vulnerability Assessment.

About the author

Beatrice Chiwala Chibwe is a Gender Coordinator at LWSC in Zambia. Her main responsibilities are to develop and enhance systems for effective gender mainstreaming. She has a Master's Degree in Social Work and Human Rights from Gothenburg University in Sweden and a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from the University of Zambia.

About the institution / organisation

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www.lwsc.com.zm

About the IWA Inclusive Urban Sanitation Initiative

IWA's Inclusive Urban Sanitation initiative responds to a huge and growing public need - safe sanitation in combination with access to safe drinking water and hygiene underpins good health. The aim of this initiative is reshaping the global urban sanitation agenda by focusing on inclusive sanitation service goals--and the service systems required to achieve them - rather than the traditional singular focus on expanding sewer networks and treatment works. This forms part of IWA's larger agenda to promote inclusive, resilient, water-wise, and sanitation-secure cities.

About the Inclusive Urban Sanitation Stories

The Inclusive Urban Sanitation stories are documenting some of the policies, practices, and approaches that demonstrate how stakeholders especially those in urban areas (e.g., public sector, operators, academics, regulators, and other key actors) are taking part or contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 6 which require water and sanitation concepts and norms to look beyond technology and the usual focus on building infrastructure. Increased focus is on safety, inclusion, environment, public health, and multiple technology solutions tailored to different geographies and socio-economic contexts for building climate-resilient cities. The stories aim to inspire urban stakeholders to discuss ways for advancing inclusive urban sanitation, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

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