WASH in the informal sector

Experiences of women from West and Central Africa

Dr Blaise NGUENDO-YONGSI
IFORD – University of Yaounde II - Cameroon
I - POOR ACCESS TO WASH FACILITIES IN THE PUBLIC SPACE

Results presented here derive from a joint WSSCC/UN Women research under the framework of the Joint Programme on Gender, Hygiene and Sanitation implemented in 3 countries of West and Central Africa.

Investigated women are more involved in the informal economy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTOR</th>
<th>CAMEROON</th>
<th>NIGER</th>
<th>SENEGAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food and drinks</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food processing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office work</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In those countries; access to WASH facilities is a challenge.

Numbers of public toilets in Yaoundé and Maradi.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC PLACES</th>
<th>YAOUNDE/CAMEROON</th>
<th>MARADI/NIGER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Markets</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus station</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools/colleges/universities</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative offices</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II - STATE OF THE FACILITIES
(1/3)

- Latrines as most common used facilities
- Insufficient number of facilities
- Poor quality of materials
- Women resort mostly to non improved toilets

1. In Cameroon:
   ~ 25% of women have direct access to toilets; with up to 28 per toilet

2. In Niger:
   21% use toilets (whether improved or not) which means an open defecation rate of up to 79 %
   - 3 families (18 individuals) per toilet

3. In Senegal:
   about 62% resort to underground water; i.e wells
II – STATE OF THE FACILITIES
(2/3)

- Poorly managed facilities
- Irregularly cleaned (twice per week)
- Maintenance here relies only on little repairs

Level of functionality of the toilets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTOR</th>
<th>CAMEROON</th>
<th>NIGER</th>
<th>SENEGAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of soap</td>
<td>- - -</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of bins</td>
<td>- - -</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet cleaning</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chemical analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTOR</th>
<th>CAMEROON</th>
<th>NIGER</th>
<th>SENEGAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REPAIRS TO WALLS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPAIRS TO SLABS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPAIRS TO TARPAULINS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPAIRS TO ROOFS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANGING SANITARY FITTING /FAULTY PLUMBING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHERS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NIGER

- TAHOUA
- MARADI
- TILLABERI
- ZINDER
II – STATE OF THE FACILITIES (3/3)

- More toilets needed as well as better maintenance
- Menstrual waste management: an overlooked issue

**LIMITED SPACE**
- No locks on doors
- No lighting

**CAMEROON**
- No separation between men and women
- Built with precarious materials
- Risk of rape
- Unhealthyness
- No light

**NIGER**
- No separation between men and women
- Built with precarious materials
- Risk of rape
- Unhealthyness
- No light

**SENEGAL**
- No separation between men and women
- Built with precarious materials
- Risk of rape
- Unhealthyness
- No light
According to studies carried out in Cameroon/Niger/Senegal among women, results show that during their menstruations and due to lack of/unsafe toilets:

A majority of women fail to go about their day-to-day activities during menstruation.

The number of days they fail to run their businesses is somehow higher: up to 3 days.

Branch activities:

- Economic activities:
  - Cameroon: 52%
  - Niger: 51%
  - Senegal: 51%

- Administrative activities:
  - Cameroon: 35%
  - Niger: 11%
  - Senegal: 11%

- Domestic activities:
  - Cameroon: 24%
  - Niger: 20%
  - Senegal: 20%

- School attendance:
  - Cameroon: 56%
  - Niger: 45%
  - Senegal: 45%
III - GOOD PRACTICES IN NIGER (1/2)

Use of disposable sanitary napkin

Hand washing after changing

Wearing of underwears during menstruation

Disposal of sanitary napkins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cameroon</th>
<th>Niger</th>
<th>Senegal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of disposable sanitary napkin</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand washing after changing</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearing of underwears during menstruation</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposal of sanitary napkins</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV - GOOD PRACTICES IN NIGER (2/2)

At the community level:
- Separate toilets in bus stations, Zinder
- Improved toilets in markets, Tillabéri
- Healthy toilets in schools, Maradi

At the normative level:
- High level commitments for a better inclusion of women and girls’ sanitation rights into the country development strategies
- 2 MHM related indicators introduced in Niger sanitation policy document PROSEHA
(i) Increase the amount of WASH infrastructure in communities and households, and strengthen measures for the cleaning and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

(ii) Develop the construction of gender separated latrines in educational establishments and public places, especially those frequented by economically active women, most of whom work in the informal sector.

Raise awareness of the negative consequences of poor waste management on health and the environment.

Develop waste management systems at the local level and facilitate access to water, sanitation and waste disposal for women and girls, specially in rural areas.

Involve women in the design of sanitation and waste management structures to ensure menstrual waste-related needs for disposal, collection and treatment are taken into account.
Thank you for your kind attention