

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH WATER FOR SANITATION INTERVENTIONS IN THE LAKE VICTORIA REGIONS OF EAST AFRICA

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WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION
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THE INGREDIENTS

- Sanitation is a powerful tool to initiate behaviour change in the communities
- Recognizing and working with existing social structure generates ownership and sustainability in development programs
- Working with pre-existing community based groups to leverage resources and empower vulnerable groups through targeted capacity building on WASH

THE NEED

- Limited access to safe potable water around the Lake Victoria region is related to frequent cholera outbreaks, especially among the vulnerable groups in the communities
- Preparing the ground for community driven sanitation interventions that will lead to Open Defecation Free environments

THE PROCESS

- A small grant was given to vulnerable groups (who were women) in CBOs in the rural setting. The CBOs designed interventions that addressed increased access to sanitation and safe potable water that would facilitate communities to be open defecation free.
- The funds were disbursed through a National NGO that had more technical and financial experience, as an executing agent. The CBOs were not the regular WASH entities but social groups formed to deal with other community issues such as HIV, Health and livelihoods.
- Funds disbursed to existing women groups and others
- Capacity building on integrating WASH into ongoing community efforts
- Focus on hygiene promotion, especially handwashing
- Technical support provided on financial management for WASH

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OUTCOMES

- The capacity building by the national NGO executing the funds, ensured that the women groups were able to initiate, manage and integrate WASH programs into other livelihood programs such as HIV, orphan, widow and livelihood programs.
- The program implementation led to the women groups being able to use WASH programs as a business model to expand their business viability, by working as sanitation masons, water supply contractors with the water board & utility companies
- The demand created by the program enabled the women groups to make WASH a business in their communities through sanitation entrepreneurship, creating a supply chain of sanitation equipment, products and services.
- The women were able to access “soft” loans out of the table banking model of VICOBA (Village Community Banking) to enable women access financing for sanitation investments as households or as a business at low interest rates due to the demand created for improved sanitation facilities.
- Direct contribution to SDG 1,2,3,4,5,8,10



LESSONS LEARNT

- Working through already established communal women groups is effective
- Integrating WASH in to other livelihood projects has far reaching impacts on women's economic empowerment
- Capacity building presents opportunities to widen development interventions undertaken by women groups
- Working in collaboration across sectors ensures that WASH is everyone's concern
- Facilitating innovate intersectionality ensures development of sustainable strategies

