

FACT SHEET

Water, sanitation and hygiene in Nigeria

Updated October 2009

The situation

In Nigeria, more than 70 million people do not have access to water that is safe to use. Nearly 100 million people have no access to improved sanitation like latrines or toilets, and a large population practices open defecation. It is not sufficient to provide communities with a supply of safe water and latrines, however: hygiene promotion is crucial if people are to use facilities properly and avoid water- and sanitation-related diseases. By adopting basic hygiene practices such as handwashing at critical times, for example, families can reduce diarrhoeal diseases in children by 44 percent.

The inadequacy of improved water and sanitation facilities is revealed by the prevalence of water- and sanitation-related diseases such as Guinea worm, cholera, diarrhoea, and dysentery. Diarrhoea is the second biggest killer of children in Nigeria, responsible for about 16 percent of child deaths every year.

Lack of water and sanitation is not just a health issue; it affects girls' education and security. Women and girls are the major haulers of water, especially in rural areas, walking long distances and encountering associated security hazards. In most rural households, women and girls spend more than one hour per day fetching water for their families' needs. This can result in girls missing school while boys are free to attend their classes.

In addition, girls who are able to enroll in school are not always able to complete primary or secondary school as they mature, due to the lack of sanitation facilities provided at the school.

Data

Improved drinking water supply

The 2008 report of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation estimated that 47 percent of the population had access to improved drinking water supply, down from 50 percent in 1990. In rural areas, only 30 percent of the population had access to a supply of improved drinking water compared with 34 percent in 1990. The drop was more marked in urban areas, falling 15 percent from 80 percent in 1990 to 65 percent in 2006. Improved water sources include household connections, public standpipes, boreholes, protected dug wells, protected springs, and rainwater

collections. Unimproved water sources are unprotected wells, unprotected springs, vendor-provided water, bottled water (due to uncertain quality) and tanker truck-provided water. With the Nigerian population at some 140 million, this represents about 63 million people without access to improved drinking water—a situation that may be attributed to inadequate investments in the sector, natural population growth and lack of operation and maintenance systems.

Improved sanitation facilities

Similarly, less than a third of the population (30 percent) had access to improved sanitation facilities (technologies which provide a barrier between the faeces and human, animal and fly contact) in 2006, which is only marginally better than in 1990 when 26 percent had access. Improved sanitation facilities include connection to public sewers, connection to septic systems, pour-flush latrines, simple pit latrines and ventilated improved pit latrines. Not considered as improved sanitation are service or bucket latrines (where excreta are manually removed), public latrines and open latrines. The sanitation situation is worse in rural areas (25 percent) than in urban areas (35 percent). Altogether, 45 million people in urban areas and 53 million rural people had no access to improved sanitation facilities in 2006.

Nigeria is not on track to reach its MDG targets for water, sanitation and hygiene.

	Situation in Nigeria	MDG 7 target for 2015
Population with access to safe drinking water	47% (2008)	75%
Population with access to basic sanitation	30% (2006)	63%

UNICEF's Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) programme in Nigeria

UNICEF collaborates with governments at all levels to set standards for water and sanitation systems and supplies, and supports them with innovative approaches such as Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS), a no-subsidy approach to promoting improved household sanitation

(such as latrines). It also helps water authorities' improve provision of water facilities (boreholes and protected hand-dug wells depending on geology of the area) to schools and rural communities. One of UNICEF's priorities is to encourage governments to expand these systems so that more Nigerians have access to sanitation and safe water.

At the same time, UNICEF works with all stakeholders to inculcate good hygiene practices among children, their care-givers and teachers to learn and adapt hygiene practices.

Children themselves can contribute to the effective management of water and sanitation facilities both in the schools and within the community, and so UNICEF helps schools set up and run environmental health clubs. UNICEF trains the children along with members of community water and environmental sanitation committees on water and sanitation systems—why they are important, how they work, how to maintain them, and how to encourage their proper use—so the systems keep working and everyone in the community uses them. More than 25 percent of the members of these committees are women.

Community artisans receive UNICEF-funded training in operating and maintaining water supply systems, so they know how to keep the sources working in the long term. UNICEF has also designed a village-level operation and management system that helps communities and schools manage their water systems well.

The WASH programme boosts child survival and development by providing a safer environment and reducing waterborne and sanitation-related diseases. It protects the health of pregnant and older women, whilst freeing up young girls to attend school. It also relieves women and children of some of the drudgery and work associated with collecting household water, which is traditionally their responsibility.

WASH targets for 2012

- A 5 percent increase in the proportion of the population that has access to and uses improved water sources (2007 baseline) in the 13 high-burden states
- A 3.5 percent increase in the proportion of the population that has access to and uses improved sanitary and hygiene facilities in the 13 high-burden states (2007 baseline)
- To equip an additional 800 schools with safe water sources and sanitation facilities
- For 2000 communities to have permanently adopted good hygiene and sanitation practices
- For Nigeria to be certified Guinea worm-free.

WASH achievements in 2008

- 1.6 million people in 32 states who previously had no source of safe water have access to improved water from 248 motorized boreholes, 835 hand pump

equipped boreholes, 340 rain water harvesters and 375 rehabilitated sources with UNICEF support.

- 163,740 people who did not have access to sanitation facilities before now have access to improved sanitation facilities provided with support from UNICEF. This includes school children that have also benefited from WASH facilities in their schools, which, coupled with activities of a Environmental Health Club involving teachers and students, acts as a catalyst for promoting hygiene behavior change both in the school and in the surrounding communities.
- UNICEF helped 122,710 pupils get improved sanitation facilities at their schools, with separate facilities for boys and girls. Included in this number are disabled children in four states who gained access to specially adapted latrines
- More than 2 million people received hygiene and sanitation messages through hand-washing campaigns and rallies UNICEF helped organize throughout the country.
- UNICEF supported hygiene promotion activities in 222 primary schools in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory
- 20,135 pupils in school environmental health clubs learned to promote hygiene messages and manage WASH facilities at their school and in their community.

Guinea worm eradication

A major success of UNICEF WASH programme is its contribution to the eradication of Guinea worm in Nigeria. In 1988, a total of 653,620 cases were recorded, and almost all the states of Nigeria were affected. In 2009, no cases of Guinea worm were reported anywhere in the country, and if this trend is sustained, Nigeria is on the way to being certified Guinea worm-free.

UNICEF's activities in communities where Guinea worm was endemic included

- providing or rehabilitating safe water sources, particularly hand pump boreholes;
- developing springs and dug wells;
- supporting advocacy and community mobilization activities as well as providing supervision, surveillance, monitoring, and documentation of interventions to increase access to improved water supply;
- capacity building and training at all levels of programme implementation;
- developing materials and supporting local governments' WASH units/departments to deliver hygiene education and promotion programmes at community level
- providing vehicles (pick-up vehicles and motorbikes) to increase mobility of partners at all levels for programme supervision and monitoring;
- producing and distributing straw filters;

- ensuring case containment and management (where a case of guinea worm is reported, actions are taken to isolate the case in the person(s) from the community's water source, thus preventing the spread of the disease to others);
- providing bicycles, hygiene materials and filters (straw and material) to community-based workers.

Funding and donors

- The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) was a major donor to the UNICEF WASH programme from 2002 to July 2009. Its contribution of US\$32.2 million funded a six-year programme of interventions in eight states: Benue, Enugu, Ekiti, Jigawa, Ebonyi, Kwara, Zamfara, Borno. A new contribution of £20 million is being finalized for a WASH programme for 2009–2014.
- The European Commission (EC) has allocated €30 million (over US\$ 38 million) to UNICEF in support of the Rural Water and Sanitation Project. The project will provide safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities to over 2 million Nigerians in 1,400 communities in six states (Cross River, Osun, Anambra, Kano, Jigawa and Yobe).
- UNICEF Nigeria channels resources provided by
- United States Fund for UNICEF to the National Onchocerciasis Control Programme in 10 states.

For further information

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