I-WASH Case

Interview with Kebbi RUWASSA

# Transcript

Interviewer

Good afternoon engineer. My name is Interviewer. I'm a xx at xx University and I'm conducting a PhD and investigating the I-wash project you had with GHI in your position. Then, as the General Manager (GM) of Kebbi state, RUWASSA and the USAID and the Kebbi State government. So maybe please if we can start with you introducing yourself.

Speaker 15R

Thank you. My name is. Speaker 15R. Former General Manager, (Kebbi) rural water supply and sanitation agency.

Interviewer

Please can you tell us what was the WASH situation maybe in Kebbi State or in the target locations I-WASH worked before the interventions.

Speaker 15R

Before the intervention, honestly wash in those areas or in Kebbi State. It's relatively... It's not as it is after the intervention. Because after the intervention, the communities. Or the local government involved are even now. Going to claim to be OD (open defecation) free. Because of the intervention, water, Say awareness of WASH Interventions by GHI. And other related other NGOs like UNICEF. I think they have achieved a remarkable success in bringing those communities to OD free. In terms of hygiene, water a good source of drinking water. Practicing hand washing building. Household in the communities are building toilets in their houses, of which it is not like that before intervention. Infact, there is a community whereby even the chief of that Community has no toilet. But for the intervention, Communities now, each and every household has a toilet. And practice this handwash. And therefore the full wash implementation is successful by GHI.

Interviewer

What about the health situation in these locations or in Kebbi state before the intervention?

Speaker 15R

If we talk about Health, you find the PHCs that are around In the communities where this intervention, the history is not the same now. The way that people troop into their hospitals. It's not the same because all strategies that I-wash has taken intervention of wash in these communities have reduced drastically, the appearance of disease and break out especially this cholera that used to come up almost everywhere because of poor sanitation and hygiene. For two years now or three years I can see after intervention there is no case of this outbreak anymore in those intervention communities. So, therefore you can see that the diseases have drastically reduced to minimum. That way we can even say in those communities that the intervention hardly you find all these diseases of resulting from poor sanitation and bad water that has been contaminated.

Interviewer

Yeah, please can you clarify what role RUWASSA specifically played in this I-WASH project?

Speaker 15R

Yes. RUWASSA has played an important role as an implementing partner of which all the stages of the work has been supervised by RUWASSA. It was actually to know all what is happening. Give advices where necessary. For the success of the I-wash Intervention in this state. So then you can see the lead state agency for the implementation of I-wash in Kebbi State.

Interviewer

Can you think about something that will be very difficult for USAID or GHI to do without the participation or the role RUWASSA will play in This I-wash?

Speaker 15R

To go hand in…?

Interviewer

Assuming GHI and USAID decide to just go and do this 100% without RUWASSA, can you assume maybe some of the things they might find challenging to do without your participation?

Speaker 15R

Yeah, I think. You will miss some other things because joining hands with RUWASSA Project. At least we'll enhance a quick intervention and development of the I-wash because of the vast experience they (RUWASSA) have in WASH. Because that was its (RUWASSA) aim, provision of water and sanitation in all communities and so liaising with with RUWASSA will help the GHI or any other NGO coming for wash or at least have a very good start and finish to be success.

Interviewer

OK. And in terms of maybe? I know you started mentioning about the impacts the I-wash has brought. Maybe were there others we shall impacts or economic impacts of I-wash?

Speaker 15R

Yes, we have success in wash, we must have success in eradicating diseases which will bring income to the Community people instead of spending money to go to hospital now. They will use it in another way and as I have told you, even agriculturally. It is. It is when you have the energy that you go to farm. So now they are drinking good potable water and all diseases, not this waterborne water. Water wash diseases that cannot render them not to be productive themselves, but now most of them are productive.

So at least now economically. There is a change from the time they are not. They don't have all these facilities and what have you. With the time now. Yeah. If you go to those villages, you will see how life is going on, yeah.

Interviewer

OK. And maybe coming back to your relations with GHI and USAID and how was the collaboration? Like I know you said you participated in all of the project activities, especially maybe how did you come to trust each other to continue the journey of two years together?

Speaker 15R

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, because. The collaboration between RUWASSA and GHI s very cordial. Very, very cordial because we interact to see that the project is successful and therefore the GHI are doing the best we can for the interaction between the two agencies, I mean between the GHI and RUWASSA and there is a good rapport and good understanding of the job between the two.

Interviewer

What did you think trust played in this?

Speaker 15R

And that is that, yeah. Is one of the major trust, because if there is no trust then the relationship will not be cordial as I mentioned. So there is trust also in implementing the WASH Activity in this community to train the GHI and RUWASSA.

Interviewer

Did you work with USAID before? Before you said the I-wash project.

Speaker 15R

Before the before the I-wash project?

Interviewer

Or is it the first time you were working with USAID?

Speaker 15R

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. That is the only time. Now I understand, maybe they will approve another package for the state again to continue with the WASH. Because presently two of the local governments, they are walking toward them to see they reach ODF within short possible times in sha Allah.

Interviewer

And how did you think about the social relations? I know you mentioned the relations between you and the other partners is cordial but maybe even the relationships on the ground in the communities with with all of you (the different organisations) visiting and how did you think the partnership influenced any kind of relations with this community?

Speaker 15R

Yes, the. I think what what what you are saying is about the...how RUWASSA and the communities are in really the interaction, as I've told you, the interaction is good between the RUWASSA People and the communities because the communities using all the strategies the community embrace us because of what the GHI or RUWASSA people are doing, so today they always send their…What do I say…Greetings and what have you for having I-wash facilities in place in their communities because of the the successful implementation. What can I say? They are. In fact, the effect of what the achievement they have presently. Before, and when it is, all those facilities are in place now. So the even life standard and what have you. For the success of the project and they are happy to even have us anytime in their communities, yeah.

Interviewer

How do you think about if you do a project as you say, you go alone and when you do a project together with partners like GHI, USAID and you go to the communities, is the reception different from the communities when you go alone as RUWASSA or when you go with partners like GHI and USAID?

Speaker 15R

No, it is same.

Interviewer

The reception the community gives you?

Speaker 15R

It is the same thing.

Speaker 15R

With the GHI or any other NGO that will go together, they will they will give us a good reception.

Interviewer

I was discussing with some of the community members and I think I was asking them, how did they come to trust these organizations and some of them mentioned maybe if this was a government work because they have seen different experiences of government jobs, that they will come and tell them they will do something, but then they never hear from there as so they don't come to trust government. But if it's a foreign agency, they know that donor funded programs should always deliver and that's why they trust them, even when they see these foreign agencies. So, I don't know how you will respond to that.

Speaker 15R

Yes, just what you say is the same thing. Honestly, they even want to see RUWASSA. People and their communities, and to say these are agent of government going there, I mean from other ministries who go there and just tell them that we will do this, we will do that and at the end they will not do, but once they see RUWASSA and any other NGO's, they know that they are sure of getting that.

Interviewer

So RUWASSA maybe has a different reception than other state government agencies. And why do you think this is so?

Speaker 15R

Agents exactly. Because what whatever was promised to them will be fulfilled.

It is trust, so they have trust on Us. Once a project is started in their community, definitely they are sure of getting that project done.

Unlike what some people tell you about government work.

Interviewer

And how do you think maybe the culture? The tradition, the religions of the communities that you work are affect the project with I-WASH.

Interviewer

Maybe positively and negatively.

Speaker 15R

No, it's Positive because it helped them …because they also. ..and…I can say it gives them more opportunity to practice even their religion well. Because the Community when there is no water, how can they even do the religion,tradition or what have you in in a cleaner, good way. But we solve this prohibition at least religiously. I can say they have even improved in terms of sanitation.

Interviewer

But maybe the religion and the culture of the people. Did you think it has had any influence on how do you collaborate with you and how? If assuming maybe in the different communities, some are Hausas and Fulanis, how did the different cultures affect your interactions and I-wash projects?

Speaker 15R

Well, I can say…

Speaker 15R

It is not the traditional religion. The effect is very it…on which by… after sensitization everything will be OK with them. So we don't have much difficulties in traditional way, all these religious factors to affect the I-wash intervention or eyewash projects within that community.

Speaker 15R

What?

Interviewer

Yeah, sorry. Go ahead.

Speaker 15R

What I'm saying is when we have done all the awareness and what have you once, they agree, they agree. Without any, any further hindrance in the implementation. Right.

Interviewer

I think the reason why I'm asking this is I was speaking to some Washcom Members and I was asking maybe how all of that has supported their work and they mentioned that the religion actually had a positive influence because purification and taking care of your environment is part of their religion. So they found it also easy to communicate with people. It's not really a different message, but it's really a religious message to take care of your environment. So in that way, religion has played a positive role in the project.

Speaker 15R

They say cleanliness is part of the religion and said we have all the necessary things for the intervention of I-WASH. If not, it's not the same before the intervention. The community. We are all believing witness the first time to visit your community and after the I-WASH project. When you visit, the difference is clear.

Interviewer

But I know we are talking about so many positives of the project, don't you think there was any unintended negative impacts of the projects?

Speaker 15R

In terms of implementation, I don't think there is.

Interviewer

What about in terms of disempowering? So maybe, like Masu ruwa (Wheel barrow water sellers), who will do business with them and now there is water, then you disempower them?

Speaker 15R

This is. No, this is where. We live in.

Speaker 15R

All these communities that have, even if they don't have those, that will take care of it, or maybe that can take care of the facility. They can appoint somebody. Who can be taken care of the facilities at the end of the day, maybe from the water gate. They will have some money, then they will. He will be paid for whatever. So that means. Take care of with their facilities all what you people have place in the community and is going on together with the work.

Interviewer

Maybe I'm talking about Masu Baro (wheel barrow water sellers). Wouldn't they think maybe their business is cut short with the provision of a lot of water facilities?

Speaker 15R

No, no, no. Still, they can still go to the fetching point, take what and also and sell it. While there they pay.

Speaker 15R

At that rate so their business is still on.

Interviewer

So it even helps their business more?

Speaker 15R

Yeah. Those that cannot, maybe their wife or themselves to go to wash to the facility and fetch water, they come. Used in your bottle.

Interviewer

So, but what about the disempowering effects on RUWASSA? Because you mentioned this is your mandate as an agency. So how do you feel about GHI, USAID, and different NGO's coming to do some of the work that you are supposed to do.

Speaker 15R

We join hands to do it. We collaborate with each other as if we were doing it because it's for the development of the state.

Interviewer

So you don't think in any way it is disempowering RUWASSA to execute their mandate?

Speaker 15R

No, no it's not. While you are executing your job, I think we were collaborating with UNICEF, also we are implementing I-WASH while you are implementing that anyone stop one another.

Speaker 15R

No, and we still work together.

Interviewer

And how? True. But what about how you feel about how responsible you feel if you have so many partners doing all of this work, do you feel more responsible or even less responsible where you have so many collaborations?

Speaker 15R

(when) You have so many collaboration, you feel more responsible.

Interviewer

How, Sir?

Speaker 15R

Yeah, because. They will come first. To your organization because it's a state organization that control the wash activity in the state. It is collaborating with them, so they have to… at least RUWASSA will be even happy that NGO's are coming in the state for development of WASH so I think. Oh. It is even a pride for them, OK? don’t you see in that way?

Interviewer

Yes, you know it is, but I don't want to assume anything.

Speaker 15R

But well. Correct.

Speaker 15R

You know, sometimes we have other people thinking otherwise. I think when there's a need you for me, they will think that they are working. Going to be taking away all that challenge is just within the state. It happened only in this state. But with the NGO, I think we're helping each other to see that we bring development into the state.

Interviewer

Engineer with the recent memory of our history of colonization in Nigeria, how do you think that now you have…

Speaker 15R

Toh!

Interviewer

Still, foreign agencies participating in your development affairs. I don't know if you were born when we had the colonial rule, but I mean, we still have the recent history still less than 70 years or so when we just gaining independence. How do you think about the participation of foreign agencies?

Speaker 15R

If you want me to talk, and that is better but. When is the only problem in this is how the governments implement their responsibility. What is before is not what is happening now. Honestly. It is what the government can do what the NGOs are coming to do in their state, it is what they are supposed to have done.

Speaker 15R

I don't want to speak too much on that because it is not a good thing. The from the 30 years back…And you see how government work? It's not the same thing now.

Interviewer

So in any...

Speaker 15R

There are so many factors that that and you know, I don't want to say it in the distance so that…

Interviewer

Hmm.

Speaker 15R

But there is little problem...

Speaker 15R

Was 60 years now 60 this 53 years and 2024, but still still we are still underdeveloped. Until the foreigners have come to do what is necessary for us to give to our people. It's not encouraging. We that have been in the system. We always speak that especially. Throughout my stay, I don't think. We don’t have contact with foreigners, you say? OK, I will give. You skills today. You bring that well, I will give you 70 you bring 30. I'll give you skills. You bring 40 or 70, bring 30 40 80 30. And still, it is your people that are going to enjoy. what behavior is that? In fact To me it is not something one can carry go home.

Speaker 15R

It has giving me headache…

Speaker 15R

I have tried all protocol ways to see that we get counterpart funded at least. To continue. Implementing I-WASH even after the foreigners have gone. It doesn't mean that. I have the money. Or the common problem. And that's the system that is the part of bad governance we have in place. If you talk on… independence…Uh. Corruption. Insecurity. There are places we wanted to reach with I-WASH, but because of insecurity…

Speaker 15R

Like Danko-Wasagu.

Speaker 15R

So. In the colonial era, I can easily trek to Yauri without any having problems. But today. It's not the same. You can be easily picked up and become a prey. Comparison between the colonial time and even some 20 years ago, comparable to your achievements. We are just going back. Instead of you know. Become developed so we are still under developing ourselves.

Interviewer

So what sort?

Speaker 15R

But Nigeria is rich.

Speaker 15R

We have resources. They know it the colonial masters. You know. But only that good governance is what we are lacking.

Interviewer

So engineer, then what sort of challenges also did you have with your I-WASH project.

Speaker 15R

But the challenge is we. Because as we have said earlier. Between the RUWASSA and NGOs, we don't have a problem between us in implementing. all the challenges for us is to continue from where the NGO stop. That's one of the big challenges and that's what I'm telling you because the RUWASSA I don't have money, so lack of money. From the government. But please finance the set project on wash not to continue from where the NGOs stop the problem.

Speaker 15R

So funds. From the state government. Is what is hindering to us.

Speaker 15R

Implementation of I-wash activities.

Interviewer

And even in terms of the meetings and interactions you have with GHI and the donor agency.

Speaker 15R

Yeah, they, they they are giving their own food 100% and they have completed their project and is successful. So. I don't think we have problem with them. Because in I don't think in any way that we have any dispute between RUWASSA and any of the NGOs. In terms of implementation or leaders, maybe. No, people have different thoughts. My thinking that they have fully take away our job. What I. Will not do. Our common problem is with the state government. It is the lack of funds. if they give us finds, we will just be like the NGO's. To just be competitive, there will be a great competition between the state and the NGOs and see who will deliver the best. If not, they just lack of funds from government. It is a serious issue and that's why. All in the wash and what have you. You can see I was at Maiyama just three days ago to site a borehole for them in the hospital so, I saw so many facilities in part of the hospital. They had been constructed and I was been seeing this from redcross, world bank, etc. . So I asked the person that working for the hospital, One of their Officers. What did (are) they (the facilities) established for malnutrition. Tamor. We produce all nutritious food in the state. Depends, Groundnut. What I will, but we will only pack it full and say that I will leave our children like that until when a foreigner come to tell us that our children are malnourished. And they are given the medicine or what have you. Is it an achievement to us? It's not. And that's why they are matching Kebbi State that one of the poorest states (in Nigeria).

Speaker 15R

Government are the one factor that made us poor.

Interviewer

OK, I think I have a few questions. Like maybe if I can ask you this one now on. What was innovative about the I-wash project?

Speaker 15R

There's a lot of innovations. Before, we found out our communities just have this thing of maintaining (their facilities). Therefore. What the system put in place for the continuous function of this system Is what makes the system working up to now. And it is an innovation, before they don't even know it. This caretaker system this when it breaks down to have a standard Water…

Interviewer

Social enterprise, right? WAMS.

Speaker 15R

Social enterprise. At least you will be there and the facility is functioning Continuously you will not have a time that will say, OK, there's no water.

Speaker 15R

That will take them back to their drinking the contaminated water in their pond. We don't have, so this has innovations that were in place. We see that this facility function.

Interviewer

OK. You know, I think my only last question is if there is anything that you wish to? Add to the conversation

Speaker 15R

You have the…

Interviewer

To add to… any last comment.

Speaker 15R

Well, what I can say is that honestly GHI has made a remarkable achievement in the state. And implementing the package for the wash, I-wash facilities in the communities. In which they have left a legacy in those communities.

Whenever… you are sure, Yes, a development has come to the places really. You are happy. Anywhere, the success. Not only the community, even the states appreciate the effort given by facilities.

Interviewer

Alright, thank you very much for that.

Speaker 15R

Thank you.