

Practical and institutional challenges to achieving improved water, sanitation and hygiene services for sub-Saharan Africa

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(a) Purpose of study or research hypothesis

Achieving improved access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) services has been at the center of several global campaigns most especially through the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and its latest Sustainable Development version (SDGs). Generally, significant interest has been focused on sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) whose WaSH sector performance is low compared to other regions of the world (of the global deaths, from the one billion people without access to treated drinking water and 2.5 billion lacking adequate sanitation, over 83% is concentrated in SSA), and progress toward achieving the goal and targets set out by the SDG by 2030 is less guaranteed

(b) Key issue(s) or problem(s) addressed

This presentation explores the WaSH sector dynamics in the sub-region emphasizing progress and practical challenges in key areas including the state of access to basic WaSH facilities and services, institutional capacities for WaSH services deliveries, knowledge interchange practices between scientists and policy makers and the impact of cultural and religious worldviews on WaSH sector policies and implementation practices, among several others.

(c) Methodology or approach used

We use workshops, interviews, observations and review of secondary documents in Nigeria and Malawi to draw some commonalities and differences as a way to understanding what works where and how.

(d) Results or conclusions derived from the project

Our preliminary findings indicate SSA is more likely to be left behind from achieving the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. We discuss our findings within the frameworks of political economy of service deliveries and cultural-religious worldviews of WaSH.

(e) Implications of the project relevant to congress themes

We argue, for instance, that conflict of worldviews and top-down policy practices frustrates common strategies possible for coordinating sector activities and addressing the WaSH sector problems.

Keywords : WaSH, Nexus, cultural-religious worldviews, political economy of service deliveries, SDGs, Nigeria and Malawi