

**LOCATION:
ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA**

A Fair Price for Water

www.slgpnigeria.org



In Enugu, in the south-east of Nigeria, communities in rural areas have suffered from poor water supply for a number of years due to funding and organisational inefficiencies. The DFID-funded State and Local Government Programme (SLGP) has been working with the Enugu State Government to reform water policy and the structures around water delivery in rural areas to ensure a high quality water supply for many years to come.



Eze Augustina lives in Akimaoghe, in Enugu State. This area used to be supplied with water by a scheme on the outskirts of the town. Water was free. A number of years ago the scheme failed and fell into disrepair due to a lack of funds. Since then, Eze, like all residents of Akimaoghe, has had to rely on the visiting roadside tankers for water for her family. Eze tells of tankers travelling from up to 90 miles away to deliver water to the community. "People used to collect water in containers and you see them transport it in wheelbarrows". Eze says that the quality of this water is unreliable and sometimes causes illness. Two of Eze's four children still live at home and have had bouts of illness, which she attributes to unclean water. Sickness and stomach cramps are common in the community.

People in the rural communities also harvest rainwater during the wet season, but as Eze says, "even this isn't clean and causes illness".

The story is similar across many rural areas of Enugu, a state in the south-east of Nigeria. The population of Enugu is 3,300,000, and the most recent figures suggest that 53 percent of the rural population do not have access to safe drinking water.

According to Enugu's State Water Company, of the 98 rural water schemes 50 are not functioning. A lack of funds and an overemphasis on capital projects rather than ensuring adequate financing for recurrent costs such as maintenance has led to almost 50% of the rural water schemes reaching a state of malfunction.

DFID's State and Local Government Programme (SLGP) has taken on the issue of rural water supply in Enugu as one of its 'issue-based projects' that link governance reform with actual physical improvements in service delivery. SLGP has assisted in the rehabilitation of twelve rural water schemes in Enugu, including that in Akimaoghe. This has enabled local communities to access clean water for the first time in many years.



Throughout the process of rehabilitating the selected sites, SLGP worked with the State Government and local communities to ensure that the rehabilitated sites are sustainable and don't fall into disrepair again.

At the community level, Water Management Committees have been set up to oversee the water supply. These committees are representative of all sections of the beneficiary community, and selected by the community itself. A key component of ensuring the sustainability of the water supply is empowering the communities, through the Water Management Committee, to generate their own income for the upkeep and maintenance of the equipment. Each committee has developed their own pricing structure, following key government guidelines. The money is expected to cover maintenance and security costs for the supply. Through this, communities themselves can take an active role in water supply in their towns and villages.

In Umunko-Diogbe, one of the other sites where the water scheme has been rehabilitated with SLGP support, the Water Management Committee is working well. The money collected has enabled the community to start to repay the money owing to the Water Board. Soon the community will be free of debt and will be able to invest further in the water system.

As Mr Kevin of the Umunko-Diogbe Water Management Committee explains, the committee "takes care of taps, pipelines, and manages the sale of water to the community". The Committee is also responsible for setting the price of the water. In this area, the charge is 10 Naira (approximately 4 pence) for 4 gallons or 100 Naira (40 pence) for a drum. As Mr Kevin goes on to say, before the rehabilitation of the water scheme, people "[were] drinking from tankers – [people] don't know where they [vendors] get the water from". The water from the tankers would cost 200-300 Naira (80 pence to £1.20) per drum.

As intended, the rehabilitation of these few rural water schemes in Enugu has acted as a catalyst for greater government reform. Following the issues which came to light during discussions around the water schemes, SLGP has assisted the restructuring of the government institutions responsible for water delivery to citizens. Formerly, the state water and sanitation ministry had responsibility for all water delivery in the state. The Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASSA), however, was responsible for water delivery in rural areas. These conflicting authorities led to duplications of activities and an inefficient structure. Following a full review and recommendations by SLGP, a new water ministry has been set up, independent from sanitation, and is now responsible for water delivery in urban areas. RUWASSA now has full

responsibility for water delivery in rural areas. This clarification of roles has enabled both organisations to focus on their area of remit and provide the highest possible service to Enugu's citizens.

In addition, SLGP has assisted in the development of a new Water Policy for Enugu. This policy includes clear guidelines for the management of rural water schemes. The key service delivery aims are laid out, as well as the responsibilities of each governing organisation, providing transparency and clarity in the provision of water in Enugu State.



LOCATION: ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA



In Umunko-Diogbe they are certainly feeling the benefits of the new management of rural water. As Mr Kevin explains, “things are very much better for us now. You cannot compare tap water to any other source”.

Back in Akimaoghe, Eze also praises the new set-up. “When the tap isn’t working, we just tell the committee and they will fix it”. Eze reflects that life is a lot better with the new water supply. She says she is “very, very impressed” with the new water supply and is keen to see the supply continue. “Clean tap water is the most important thing to our community”. With the improvement in supply, Eze explains, “everyone is happy to pay. It is a fair price”.

The reform of the governing institutions around water supply in Enugu has enabled a new focus to develop within those organisations. The new water policy, once passed, will also help ensure a greater focus on service delivery in the future.

Photography courtesy of Afolabi Sotunde.

Contact: SLGP

40 Mississippi Street, Maitama,
PO Box 9673, Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: +234 (0) 9 413 4523-4
Fax: +234 (0) 9 413 4525
Email: slgp.national@gmail.com

DFID Nigeria

British High Commission,
Plot 607 Bobo Street, off Gana
Street, Maitama, Abuja, Nigeria.
Tel: +234 (0) 9 413 7710-19
Fax: +234 (0) 9 413 7396
Email: nigeria-enquiries@dfid.gov.uk

