Improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene in rural schools and communities through capacity development

Improving capacity of national, sub-national and community institutions for sustainable WASH services in rural areas

The EU-UNICEF funded Action is designed to build capacity of local government institutions and communities in managing water supply, sanitation and hygiene services in rural areas.

“They explained to us that they could provide technical support to design the water system and provide some of the materials, but the community would need to provide labour and local materials. So we told them that we were ready to build our water supply system, and we created a community action plan of what we could contribute – labour and local materials.”

Mr. Jacob de Jesus, Water System Management Group vice-president of Poeana village in Suco Humboe, Ermera District.

Context

Timor-Leste is off-track from achieving the MDG target for sanitation, but on track for safe drinking water. However, in both instances, rural areas fall far behind urban areas. Nationally, 69% of Timorese use improved water source and only 39% have improved sanitation (rural 60% access water and only 27% sanitation). About 54% of primary schools are without access to improved water and 35% have no latrines in the compound. The local capacity to plan and manage the implementation is low and repair and maintenance is a major challenge.

Objectives

- Main overall objective is to reduce the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation in Timor Leste. The specific objective is to enhance the capacity of national and district water and sanitation personnel and community groups to achieve and sustain equitable access to, and use of, improved drinking water and basic sanitation and adoption of improved hygiene practices.
- Local authorities, particularly District WASH Committees (Tim BeSi) are better able to lead and support WASH activities in five districts, supported by national authorities, policies and guidelines.
- Target sub-villages and primary schools have improved water sources and are able to manage and maintain their water systems.
- Target sub-villages and primary schools have improved sanitation and demonstrate measurable improvement in knowledge and attitude relating to improved hygiene and sanitation.

Impact

- 38 communities have trained water System Management Groups which engage in Community Action Plan (CAP) preparation, construction management and ensuring sustainability of water system through timely maintenance.
- 32 water systems and 22 point source protections completed (out of the planned target of 34 systems) and benefiting 12 198 people.
A total of 3,448 families from 51 communities live in the open defecation free environment as a result of community led total sanitation initiative of the Action.

- WASH facilities installed and hygiene promotion activities implemented in 17 Primary Schools (out of planned target 23) benefitting 3,160 children.
- Supported government partners in developing the final draft of two WASH guidelines: Inter-ministry coordination Guidelines and WASH in School guidelines.

**Testimony**

**Ms Anita dos Santos, coordinator, Mautoba Primary school, Fahisohi, Aileu District**

*I am very happy because today my school has a sanitary toilet, handwashing stand and running water. Many thanks to NGO AMAR and UNICEF for their support. This is very useful for the students. In the past, students had to go to the bush for toilet because the school did not have one. Or sometimes, the students did not come to the school because they felt uncomfortable. They felt not safe in the school in the past. It was also very difficult for teachers, especially female staff. But, today, I can see from the face of the students, they are all happy. I am also personally very happy as it also serves me. School toilet is provided with water and it makes so easy for children to wash hands after using toilet, it's a healthy habit.*