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# REAL IMPACT: KENYA

## AFRICAN CITIES FOR THE FUTURE

USAID’s **Real Impact** series highlights examples of water sector projects around the world. Each case example provides from-the-field insights about successful approaches, challenges faced, and lessons learned.

### CHALLENGE

The majority of Kenya’s urban population lives in informal settlements – densely packed temporary housing with poor municipal services. Less than a quarter of these residents have household water connections. Most rely on private vendors, paying up to 14 times more for water than those with a formal connection serviced by the local water utility. Much of the piped water supplied to informal settlements is “lost” through leaks, theft, or metering inaccuracies; this non-revenue water accounts for almost all of the water there and results in service gaps, increased prices, and reduced water quality for residents.

Sanitation is also a challenge. In Nairobi’s informal settlements, less than one quarter of the population have

household latrines, resulting in 50 to 150 people sharing each communal latrine. Six percent have no access to facilities at all and are forced to resort to makeshift solutions such as defecating into plastic bags, which leads to contamination of food and water sources.

This leads to water-borne diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and diarrhea. Diarrhea is one of the leading causes of death in children under 5 in Kenya. In the Kibera neighborhood of Nairobi, one of Africa’s largest informal settlements, more than 18 percent of children die before they reach their 5th birthday. In Nairobi’s Embakasi settlement, that number is greater than 25 percent.

As USAID set out to face this growing health crisis, it encountered several obstacles. The majority of its WASH experience was in rural areas, which

present different challenges than urban areas. The sheer scale of urban environments means that there are more stakeholders to coordinate with and that there is less accountability

**ACF**



**LOCATION:** Kenya  
**DURATION:** 2009-2014  
**FUNDING:** \$5.27 million  
**IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:**  
 Water & Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP)

than in rural areas. The rapid rate of urbanization – much of it concentrated in informal settlements – also makes working in cities difficult. In Nairobi, more than 60 percent of the population lives in informal settlements, and these populations are projected to double within the next 15 years.

## APPROACH

To increase its capacity to work in urban environments, USAID turned to the international non-profit community and local partners and stakeholders for ideas on how best to improve services in Africa's informal settlements. USAID sought a project design that builds on-the-ground capacity, is sustainable, and markets improved hygiene in order to serve the needs of the urban poor. In 2009, USAID chose to fund Water & Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP), a United Kingdom-based non-profit, and their proposed five-year African Cities for the Future (ACF) program. ACF worked to improve urban WASH in six of Africa's fastest growing cities: Nairobi and Naivasha, Kenya; Kumasi, Ghana; Antananarivo, Madagascar; Bamako, Mali; and Maputo,

Mozambique. WSUP is a multi-sector partnership that brings together the private sector, NGOs, and academia and focuses on bringing WASH to low-income urban populations.

### Partnerships to Build Capacity:

When implementing ACF, WSUP forged partnerships and provided training to utilities, local governments, landlords, community-based organizations, schools, and community members to ensure their WASH interventions were both sustainable and effective. WSUP documented its approaches, successes, challenges, and best practices while implementing ACF, to enable local stakeholders and international donors to replicate and build upon its work in the future.

In Nairobi, ACF worked with the local utility Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company (NCWSC), to build its capacity to better serve poor populations in informal settlements. It started by working with the utility to create the Nairobi Water Action Group to improve the process of liaising with consumers and by creating an anti-corruption committee. It then sponsored knowledge-sharing

workshops, meetings, and learning visits to Brazil and Uganda to help NCWSC staff learn how to serve poor communities in a commercially and socially viable way. It also taught the utility to reduce non-revenue water through leakage detection teams and with pre-paid water dispensers for informal settlements.

In Naivasha, ACF worked with the local utility, private companies, and community members to ensure increased access to safe water. It piloted a delegated management model to ensure affordable, quality water services by formalizing partnerships between the water utility, small-scale water providers, and community Water User Associations. Under this model, the small-scale providers purchase water from the utility and manage its distribution to households and water kiosks. The Water User Associations serve as a liaison between customers and the utility to ensure that the poor are being adequately and consistently served. These associations receive 2.5 percent of revenues to ensure they can sustain their activities.

### Community Buy-In for Sustainability:

Community engagement was crucial to ACF's work to improve and sustain sanitation in Kenya. The program invested in a low-cost sewerage system to serve several settlements within the Kibera neighborhood, built new latrines, and worked with stakeholders to upgrade existing latrines. ACF met with landlords to promote the benefits of self-financing upgrades to existing latrines, converting them to pour-flush toilets connected to the ACF-funded sewer.

In order to ensure sanitation was appropriate for local conditions, existing capacities, resources, and gender preferences, ACF held toilet design clinics. These clinics were structured like focus groups but included engineers and project planners. ACF made sure to include



Photo Credit: Frederic Courbet, WSUP



underserved groups, such as women, schoolchildren, Muslims, the elderly, and disabled people, to ensure their needs would be adequately served by sanitation investments.

ACF worked with local community groups to ensure the sustainability and viability of their sanitation investments. The program helped latrine artisans in Naivasha to register as a Community-Based Organization and link up with construction material suppliers. The program also trained small local sanitation businesses to more efficiently empty pits, unblock sewer lines, maintain the sewerage system, and streamline and improve their business operations.

ACF established neighborhood committees in project areas to oversee WASH infrastructure management and decision-making.

**Hygiene Marketing:** ACF partnered with Unilever, a multinational corporation specializing in hygiene and personal care products, to promote improved WASH in poor schools in Kenya. They targeted children because of the conviction, supported by research, that children are “agents of change” who can spread messages learned in school to their families and communities.

Unilever conducted traditional market research on low-income students and found that their desires mirrored those of the general population. They conducted a hygiene promotion campaign based on these findings, which consisted of jingles, posters, and other advertising materials that portrayed handwashing with soap and other hygiene behaviors as clean, modern, and aspirational.

## KEYWORDS

Handwashing  
Hygiene  
Community  
Water

Urban  
Potable  
Sanitation  
Water Supply



## IMPACT

**Poor Better Served:** Due to ACF’s capacity building, Nairobi’s utility now has an Informal Settlements Department specifically devoted to providing low-income consumers with WASH services. In total, more than 315,000 people in Nairobi and 100,000 people in Naivasha benefited from ACF.

**Access to Safe Water Increased:** In Nairobi, ACF installed three water kiosks that provide water to up to 1,500 people and created a water leakage team to prevent losses, which saved enough water to provide additional hours of access for another 3,500 people. In Naivasha, ACF extended the water network so it served three informal peri-urban settlements, improving access for about 30,000 people. Kiosks with water filtering to prevent fluoride contamination were built into this network to improve quality of water and ease of access.

**Non-Revenue Water Reduced:** ACF’s non-revenue water reduction program led to a 20 percent decrease in water loss in one informal settlement. The program is now being replicated in other areas of Nairobi.

### Water More Affordable:

Increasing water supply and boosting the efficiency of water services led to sharp decreases in the price of available water. Nairobi saw the price of water from formalized vendors decrease by 40 percent, while Naivasha saw the price of a 20-liter jerry can of water decrease by 60 percent.

### Sanitation Access Increased:

ACF supported entrepreneurs to build more than 400 latrines in Kenya. They also convinced 160 landlords to self-finance upgrades to latrines. In total, 18,000 people in Nairobi and 10,000 people in Naivasha benefited from improved access to sanitation. An additional 40,000 residents of the Kibera settlement now have improved fecal sludge removal services.

**Hygiene Improved:** More than 135,000 schoolchildren in Nairobi and 60,000 in Naivasha were reached with hygiene messages about handwashing and other key hygiene behaviors. A study in Naivasha showed that 90 percent of children understood why it was necessary to wash their hands with soap after ACF’s hygiene intervention, as opposed to just 7 percent beforehand.



## LESSONS LEARNED

- ◆ Exposing decision-makers to alternative institutional arrangements and successful models of service delivery are effective ways to stimulate change.
- ◆ Fostering partnerships and establishing a framework to peacefully mediate conflicts between stakeholders helps to ensure sustainability.
- ◆ Sustaining long-term change is only possible when local institutions that have the mandate to provide WASH coverage are strengthened.
- ◆ Involving stakeholders from the beginning leads to a greater sense of ownership and a higher likelihood of sustained contributions.
- ◆ Holding toilet design clinics that include underserved populations is a cost-effective way to ensure sanitation investments meet community needs.



Photo Credit: Frederic Courbet, WSUP

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### ACF Website

<http://www.africancitiesforthefuture.wordpress.com/>

### WSUP Resource Library

<http://www.wsup.com/programme/resources/>

### ACF Article in USAID Global Waters Magazine

<http://www.usaid.gov/global-waters/november-2014/facing-urban-africa>

### USAID/Kenya

<http://www.usaid.gov/kenya>



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