

Heineken Africa Foundation programme – Monthly Update

Country: Nigeria

Reporting period covered: October, 2020

Report Prepared By: Nanen Gangese

Contributors to the report are:

Date submitted: 28th October 2020

Location	SECTION 1 Key highlights over the last three months – please choose your top 4 programme highlights
Benue State	<p>1. Advocacies Visits to Stakeholders: First Step’s engagement with key relevant stakeholders for advocacy visits continued in the month of October to demand for stakeholders’ contribution and action for increased access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services and increased awareness about COVID-19 in Benue state. The following stakeholders were engaged and their commitments noted;</p> <p>a. Advocacy meeting with the Benue State leadership of Christian Association of Nigeria This meeting was held on Monday 5th October, 2020 at the State Secretariat of the Association in Makurdi. During the meeting, the Program Officer of HAF Hygiene Scale-up Project for First Step gave a background of the project while explaining its intended impact among the beneficiaries in the state.</p> <p>● Response and Commitment from the Chairman, CAN Benue State While responding, the State Chairman of CAN, Reverend Dr. Akpen Leva appreciated First Step and WaterAid for considering CAN as an important partner to contribute towards increasing awareness among the people concerning issues of hygiene and COVID-19 pandemic with the aim of curtailing the spread of the disease and other infectious diseases in the state. He mentioned the efforts the church has made in the wake of COVID-19 in the state such as awareness creation among Christians in the state and provision of handwashing stations in churches. The State Chairman of CAN also remarked that the meeting provided another opportunity for the</p>

Association to further reflect on the need to increase and sustain its awareness creation drive among her worshippers explaining that it was indeed a great learning opportunity. He promised to convey the message to other church leaders in the state to increase awareness creation among their church members and sustain the practice of regular handwashing with soap and water. This according to the CAN Chairman will include making more provisions of handwashing stations in worship centers to increase access to and the practice of handwashing with soap under running water.

b. Advocacy meeting with Sarkin Muslumi in Benue State

Advocacy meeting was held with the leader of Muslim Community in Benue State (Sarkin Muslumi) on the 8th October, 2020. During the advocacy visit, the Program Officer of HAF Hygiene Scale-up Project for First Step, Nanen Gangese gave a background of the project and explained its intended impact among the beneficiaries in the state. He called for support from the stakeholders to contribute to increasing awareness among their subjects on regular practice of handwashing and provision of handwashing stations in worship centers and households for improved practice of handwashing with soap and running water including observance of COVID-19 protocol.

• Response and Commitment from Sarkin Muslumi, Benue State

Responding, the Sarkin Muslumi, Ahaji Garba Baba, thanked First Step Team for engaging them for advocacy visit and promised to contribute their quota to enhancing improved practice of regular handwashing with soap and running water and observance of COVID-19 protocols to help curtail the spread of the pandemic in the state. The Sarkin Muslumi promised to liaise with Imams of Mosques in the state to increase awareness among worshipers on regular handwashing with soap and running water including measures to curtail the spread of COVID-19. He also promised to help ensure that all the mosques in the state are provided with handwashing stations to encourage the practice of handwashing with soap under running water.

c. Advocacy Visits to Ter Buruku and Ter Gboko

Advocacy visits to Ter Buruku and Ter Gboko, both of them second-class Chiefs in Benue state, and other Chiefs in their Councils were held separately on the 10th and 12th October, 2020. The HAF Program Officer who led all the advocacy visits gave a background of the project initiative which seeks to enhance increased access to handwashing facilities and awareness on the importance of adopting best hygiene practices especially in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic in the state. He also solicited on behalf of the organization the support of

the traditional rulers to achieve this.

- **Response and Commitment from the Ter Buruku and Ter Gboko**

While responding in separate occasions, Ter Buruku, HRH Chief Moses Ihomver Hanior and Ter Gboko, HRH Chief Gabriel Gbanongun Shosum all noted the relevance of WASH projects implemented in communities within their LGAs. They remarked that while so much progress has been made in the construction and use of toilets in the rural communities, more still needs to be done in the area of regular handwashing with soap and under running water even as much sensitization has been carried out by different stakeholders such as UNICEF and United Purpose in this regard. They all decried very low access to clean and safe water especially in the rural communities which has forced many people to drink from unsafe water sources. They however recognized the efforts of the government and development partners such as UNICEF and WaterAid in the provision of hand pump boreholes in communities, but complained that most of the boreholes constructed in the rural communities are no longer functional. They called on relevant authorities and development partners to help in providing clean and safe water to the people to ameliorate the hardship their people face.

According to them, traditional rulers in their respective LGAs have contributed immensely to WASH programs implemented in their LGAs particularly in the area of awareness creation and community support and promised to do more to help enhance improved practice of regular handwashing with soap and running water and observance of COVID-19 protocols to curtail the spread of the pandemic in the state.

- d. **Advocacy Visit to Och’Idoma, HRH Agabaidu Chief Elaise Ekoyi Obekpa (The Paramount Ruler of Idoma Worldwide)**

The Team carried out advocacy visit to Och’Idoma, HRH Chief Elaise Ekoyi Obekpa, in his Palace in Otukpo, Benue state on Wednesday 14th October, 2020. During the visit, the HAF Program Officer for First Step explained the purpose for the visit which was to seek the support of all traditional rulers in the Idoma-speaking areas of the state in the area of awareness creation concerning issues of regular handwashing with soap and water as well as observance of all COVID-19 protocol. The Program Officer also solicited support of the Och’Idoma in influencing *well-to-do* sons and daughters including political office holders from the area both within the state and at the national level to implement water, sanitation and hygiene related projects in their LGAs to help increase access to WASH in the state.

- **Response and Commitment from the Och’Idoma**

In his response, the Och’Idoma, HRH Chief Elaise Ekoyi Obekpa thanked First Step Team for the visit while recognizing the relevance of practice of regular handwashing with soap and water which His Royal Highness mentioned was essential to the health and wellbeing of all, especially in times of an epidemic or pandemic such the current COVID-19 disease. He promised to task all his traditional rulers to increase awareness creation among their subjects in their respective domains to help boost the practice of regular handwashing with soap and water as one of the most important practices to curtail the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in the state.

- e. **Advocacy Visit to Benue State Local Government Service Commission (LGSC)**

On Thursday 15th October, 2020, First Step Team on the HAF Hygiene Scale-up Project again visited the Chairman of Local Government Service Commission, Dr Bem Meladu at the Commission’s’ headquarters in Makurdi. The Chairman of the Commission was represented by the Permanent Secretary of the Commission, Mrs Judith Hiinyam who gave rapt attention to the Team. Also in attendance were the Director of Administration and Finance in the Commission, Mr Akaa Nyam and Recorder/Training Officer of the Commission, Mr Simon Anzembe.

The HAF Program Officer for First Step after explaining the purpose of the visit gave an elaborate justification for the transformation of WASH units into WASH Departments at the LGA level. According to him, in spite of huge tasks WASH units in various LGAs have in the implementation of different WASH programs, they still exist as appendages to other Departments at the LGA level such as Health and in some LGAs Department of Education. This often leads to non-prioritization of WASH activities for budgetary allocations thereby adversely affecting sustainability of WASH activities in the LGA. He therefore called for the support of the Commission in the transformation of the present structure of WASH unit to WASH Departments in the state.

- **Response from the Permanent Secretary and Commitment of the LGSC**

Responding on behalf of the Chairman of the Commission, The Permanent Secretary, Mrs Judith Hiinyam thanked First Step for considering the Commission as a key stakeholder for this engagement and promised to brief the Chairman of the Commission as soon he returned from his official engagement. She also promised to present the demand of the Team to be considered as a top priority agenda of the Commission having expressed conviction from the justification for the transformation of WASH units to WASH Departments at the LGAs in

the state as explained by Nanen Gangese.

f. Advocacy Visit to The Ministry of Health and Human Services

The advocacy visit to the Ministry of Health and Human Services took place on Friday 16th October, 2020 at the office of the Honourable Commissioner of the Ministry. After the Program Officer on the HAF Project for First Step, Nanen Gangese, gave a brief background of the project in the state, he proceeded to make two important requests from the Commissioner. While explaining the relevance of access to WASH in healthcare facilities, the Program Officer requested for more budgetary provisions for implementation of WASH activities in healthcare centers of the state including training and retraining of health officers on hygiene promotion in health facilities. This was as a result of available data from BERWASSA which show very low access to WASH facilities in healthcare centers in the state, especially primary healthcare centers. Besides, considering the important role the Honourable Commissioner for Health plays as Secretary of the state's COVID-19 Response Team, the Program Officer also solicited the contribution of the Commissioner towards the domestication of the National WASH sector guidelines to COVID-19 response in the state.

• Response and commitment of the Commissioner for Health and Human Services

The Honourable Commissioner for Health and Human services appreciated the efforts of WaterAid for bringing the Hygiene Scale-up Initiative to Benue state and First Step for considering the Ministry as important stakeholder to engage. He promised increased budgetary allocations to WASH-related activities in the Ministry's budget going forward. He also said he would liaise with other relevant colleagues such as the Commissioner for Water Resources and Environment to ensure the domestication of the National guideline to WASH Sector response to COVID-19 in Benue state.

g. Advocacy Visit to Benue State Primary Healthcare Board (BSPHCB)

The First Step Team also visited the management of the Benue State Primary Healthcare Board to seek for increased budgetary provisions for implementation of WASH projects and activities in primary healthcare facilities across the state. While speaking, the HAF Hygiene project officer, Nanen Gangese explained the need for increased budgetary provision for the implementation of WASH in primary healthcare facilities across the state. He noted that based on available data from the Benue State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (BERWASSA), 49% of the 991 Primary Healthcare Centers (PHCs) in the State have an improved toilet, which

leaves a gap of 562 PHCs without an improved toilet including handwashing facilities. He finally tasked the management of the BSPHCB to act swiftly in order to close this gap.

- **Response and commitment of the Executive Secretary, BSPHCB**

The Executive Secretary, Dr Bem Ageda, on behalf of the management of the Board commended WaterAid for considering Benue state as one of the states to implement the Hygiene Scale-up initiative and appreciated First Step for engaging with the BSPHCB. While acknowledging the importance of increased access to WASH in healthcare facilities, the Executive Secretary promised to make more budgetary provisions for WASH in healthcare facilities across the state. He however lamented that since the 2021 budget estimate of the Board has already been submitted to the state, the Board will increase budgetary allocation for WASH in primary healthcare centers in subsequent budgets but promised that if there was an opportunity to do so sooner than that, the Board will never hesitate. This visit took place on the 20th October, 2020.

- h. **Advocacy Visit to Ministry of Education**

The Ministry of Education was engaged on advocacy visit on the 23rd October, 2020. After explaining the HAF Hygiene Scale-up initiative and its intended impact in the state, the HAF Program Officer for First Step and Leader of the delegation, Nanen Gangese, requested for increased budgetary allocation for enhanced access to WASH in schools in the state. He reminded the Ministry that this was capable of improving academic performance especially for girls who sometimes miss school attendance because of lack of access to water and safe space particularly during their menstruation. In attendance at the meeting too were the Director of Administration and Finance, Mr Stephen Idu, Director of Special and Primary Education, Mr Matthew Idoko, Director of Secondary Education, Mrs Samo Sende, Director of Account and Finance, Mrs Margaret Galu and the Director for Technical Education, Mr Sunday Ohemu.

- **Response and commitment of the Commissioner of Education**

The Commissioner for Education, Prof. Dennis Tyavyar, who responded on behalf of the Ministry thanked WaterAid and First Step for their efforts at ensuring increased access to WASH in schools and communities. While acknowledging the immense contribution of improved access to WASH in schools as mentioned by the HAF Hygiene Scale-up Program Officer, the Commissioner promised to commit more budgetary provision for the implementation of WASH projects and other activities in schools to enhance academic performance.

i. Advocacy Visit to Bureau for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs (BLGCA)

The advocacy visit to Bureau for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs was carried out on the 22nd October, 2020. After explaining the purpose of the HAF Hygiene Scale-up project in Benue state, the Project Officer solicited the support of the Bureau in making sure WASH units are transformed into WASH Departments across all the LGAs in the state. The Program Officer went ahead to justify the needed change in this present structure which according to him was negatively affecting the implementation and sustainability of WASH interventions in the communities since the WASH units are presently being considered as appendages to other host Departments such as Health and Education thereby making impossible for WASH units to be considered for budgetary allocations.

• Response and commitment of the Special Adviser to the Governor, BLGCA

The Special Adviser to the Governor, Bureau for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Barrister Kenneth Achabo, thanked First Step for finding the Bureau worthy of this engagement and promised to engage all the Local Government Chairmen in the state to discuss with them on the need to transform WASH units to WASH Departments and also solicit their support in achieving this.

j. Advocacy Visit to the Bishop of Methodist Church, Makurdi Diocese

The Bishop of Methodist Church of Nigeria, Makurdi Diocese was visited on the 23rd October, 2020. The Program Officer while explaining the expected impact of the HAF Hygiene Scale-up initiative in the state also solicited the support of the Bishop of the Methodist Church, Makurdi Diocese in the area of increased awareness creation among the faithful and provision of more handwashing stations in churches for increased access to handwashing facilities thereby enhancing the practice of regular handwashing with soap and clean water since this is considered as first line of action against the spread of COVID-19 disease all over the world.

• Response and commitment of the Bishop of Methodist Church, Makurdi Diocese

The Bishop appreciated First Step Team for considering the Church as a worthy partner in creating awareness on issues of hygiene and COVID-19 pandemic in the state. He remarked that though the church has been involved in awareness creation concerning regular handwashing with soap and clean water including COVID-19 protocols, the visit created another opportunity for the church to learn more on the benefits of hand hygiene in the wake of COVID-19 and prevention of other infectious diseases. The Bishop promised to task all Pastors

of the Church within Makurdi Diocese during their meeting which was to take place in few days, to increase awareness and make provision of more handwashing stations in all churches, especially where these handwashing stations were not provided.

k. Advocacy Visit to Benue State Planning Commission (BSPC)

The advocacy visit to the Benue State Planning Commission took place on the 27th October, 2020 in the office of the Director-General of the Commission. The Leader of the delegation, Nanen Gangese explained the purpose for the visit and briefed the management staff of the Commission about the HAF Hygiene Scale-up project in the state. He solicited support from the Director-General of the BSPC, as the coordinating agency for Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) on budget for increased budgetary allocation to the WASH sector in the state. In attendance also were the Director of Technical Cooperation, Iember Dagih, Information Officer of the Commission, Mrs Marian Hembra and the Desk Officer for WaterAid in the Commission, Mr Ade Michael.

• Response and commitment of the Director-General of Benue State Planning Commission

The Director-General of the BSPC thanked First Step Team for engaging with the Commission and introducing the HAF Hygiene Scale-up project to the Commission. In their separate remarks, the Director-General of the Commission and the Director of Technical Cooperation noted the importance of handwashing and its contribution to the prevention and reduction in infectious diseases including the COVID-19 pandemic around the world. The DG stated the commitment of the Benue state government in enhancing improved access to WASH in the state, as this was also demonstrated in the non-reduction of budgetary allocations for the implementation of WASH activities in the state in spite of a reduction of over 0.4 percent of the total budget for 2020. He promised increased budgetary allocations for WASH activities in the 2021 budget of the state.

l. Advocacy Visit to the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB)

The visit to the State Universal Basic Education Board was held on the 21st October, 2020. First Step Team was received by the Board Secretary of SUBEB, Mr Chia Kyuluke, since the Executive Chairman of the Board was indisposed due to ill health. In his speech the Program Officer introduced the HAF Hygiene Scale-up project in the state and its expected impact to the Board Secretary of SUBEB. He spoke extensively on the need for increased budgetary allocation to WASH in schools, while emphasizing on public primary schools which the

Board has oversight control.

- **Response and commitment of the Board Secretary, SUBEB**

The Secretary of the Board of SUBEB appreciated WaterAid for bringing the Hygiene Scale-up initiative to Benue state and thanked First Step for choosing to engage and partner with SUBEB for increased access to WASH in public primary schools in the state. He promised to understudy the budget of the Board to ascertain the extent to which provisions are made for WASH activities, and if this was not satisfactory, an additional budgetary request for WASH activities will be sent to the State House of Assembly for Assembly for approval.

2. WASH Radio Discussion and Radio Phone-in Programme on Budget

The WASH Radio Discussion for the month of October, 2020 focused on the theme for this year's Global Handwashing Day, which is "**Hand Hygiene For All**". Discussants highlighted the significance of the theme for this year's celebration in line with COVID-19. The contribution of the HAF Hygiene Scale-up project in Benue state was also highlighted on the programme. Guests who were hosted on the programme were the Program Officer of HAF Hygiene Scale-up project for First Step, Nanen Gangese and The General Manager of Benue Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (BERWASSA). The clip of the Radio discussion will be shared separately. The Director-General of Benue State Planning Commission was engaged during advocacy visit to the Commission and he agreed to be hosted as guest on Radio Benue during the live phone-in programme on budget on Friday 30th October, 2020.

3. Follow-Up to Advocacy Visits to all Stakeholders engaged

The First Step's HAF Project Team is already carrying out follow-up visits to stakeholders engaged during advocacy visits. Follow-up visits to the Benue State COVID-19 Response Team is yielding results as they are already planning to converge a meeting of relevant stakeholders in order to domesticate the National Guidelines to WASH sector response to COVID-19 in the state.

Besides, as part of follow-up visits to the Bureau for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs (BLGCA) and Local Government Service Commission, First Step's HAF Project Team is developing a brief that justifies the transformation of WASH units to WASH Departments across all LGAs in the state to share with the

	government agencies mentioned above, who have already committed during advocacy visits to supporting this process. This brief will be shared with BERWASSA and the Ministry of Water Resources and Environment for their inputs before submission to the Chief Executives of the Government Agencies mentioned above to solicit their partnership to help influence the process of transformation of WASH units to WASH Departments.
Location	SECTION 2 Challenges – please highlight any challenges faced over the last month and mitigation plans
Benue State	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Difficulty to meet with Legislators at the Benue State House of Assembly for advocacy meetings. It was learnt that the Legislators have embarked on recess which will last till 29th October, 2020. The First Step HAF Project Team plans to engage with the Legislators as soon as they return from their recess. 2. Difficulty to meet with the Governor of Benue State. Engagement with high power interest groups and personalities is on-going to help influence our meeting with the Governor of Benue state
Location	SECTION 3 Photos - please include any photos of project activities or infrastructure here, with captions (plus case studies if feasible). Aim for 1-2 per month. Note that these do not need to be professional quality – photos on smart phones are adequate.

Benue State



First Step's Team in a group photo with Ter Buruku and other Chiefs during advocacy visit to Buruku Traditional Council in Buruku, Benue State



First Step's Team in a group photo with the management Benue State Primary Healthcare Board



First Step's Team in a group photo with the Commissioner for Health and Human Services during advocacy visit to the Ministry



First Step's Team in a group photo with the Commissioner for Education and Directors in the Ministry during advocacy visit to the Ministry in Makurdi, Benue state



First Step's Team in a discussion with the Special Adviser to the Governor of Benue State, Bureau for Local Gov't & Chieftaincy Affairs during advocacy visit to the Bureau in Makurdi, Benue State




First Step's Team in a group photo with the DG & mgt staff of Benue State Planning Commission during advocacy visit to the Commission in Makurdi Benue State



Nanan Gangese in a discussion with the Commissioner of Water Res. & Env't during advocacy visit to the Ministry in Makurdi, Benue State



Nanan Gangese addressing Ter Gboko, Chief Gabriel Gbanongun Shosum during advocacy visit to the Traditional Ruler in Gboko, Benue State

	<p>SECTION 4</p> <p>Communications – please provide highlights of press and broadcast coverage, and social media post clippings from the last three months</p>
	 <p>https://www.facebook.com/100002998788642/posts/3175115342598394/?app=fbl</p>
<p>Location</p>	<p>SECTION 5</p> <p>Looking ahead – please identify 2-3 key upcoming programmatic activities/communications milestones for the next three months</p>
<p>Benue State</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Third episodes of WASH radio discussion and radio phone-in programme on budget 2. Follow-up from advocacy visits to stakeholders

	3. Assessment of WASH provision and Monitoring of functionality of Hand Washing Stations
--	--