GFA Consulting Group

water news

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Editorial

Providing access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation is an indispensable keystone for sustainable development. The Millennium Development Goals demand to halve the proportion of people without access to these services by 2015. However, official figures in many developing countries do not reflect the real situation. Consequently, targeted measures may be misguided.

GFA has gained substantial experience in providing consulting services in the field of pro-poor service provision, financing and regulation in the water sector. We have conducted several baseline and socio-economic surveys for different donor organizations to identify service gaps and to provide reliable and comprehensive data and information on the socio-economic situation of the target populations and their access to water supply and sanitation services.

The first article in this newsletter presents two of the studies carried out by GFA in Tanzania and Jordan. The second article addresses informal water provision.

We believe that respect and the protection of human rights are the foundation for the democratic, economic and cultural development of every country. Therefore, we help our partners implement the human right to water and sanitation and assist them in implementing water management based on the provision of value-based consulting services.

Katrin Brübach
Director
Water & Sanitation Department
GFA Consulting Group

Baselines Studies – A Tool for Needs-based Planning, Budgeting, and Monitoring

Planning for change requires more than a vision for the future. It takes a critical situation analysis to develop realistic and feasible goals and ways to achieve them. In the water sector, providing access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation for all is the key objective. The gap between vision and reality is identified through baseline studies, based on which tangible plans for service improvement can be drafted.

Implementation phases

Comprehensive, reliable, and up-to-date data provide a basis for planning and prioritizing measures and target areas, fund allocation as well as impact monitoring. Baseline studies in the water sector deliver detailed information on the target groups' socio-economic situation and their access to water supply and sanitation services – a prerequisite for poverty orientation of interventions.

A variety of tools and research methods is available to obtain the required quantitative and qualitative data. Implementation usually follows several phases: preparation, training and piloting, data collection, processing and analysis, reporting and dissemination. Based on the specific objectives, tailored data collection approaches and tools are developed. Baseline studies often consist of a household survey, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and mapping exercises. Data collection, processing and analysis are time consuming and labor intense activities. All primary data are checked, coded, and processed using suitable software and stored in a study database. Reports and findings of the survey are presented at dissemination workshops and in form of comprehensive reports and publications.

Close working relations with all relevant stakeholders on site are a determining factor in terms of quality and sustainability. Local partners will be supported in taking ownership of the study and its results from the outset. Thus, they can effectively use the generated results and tools. Coordination with public utilities, licensed service providers, relevant statistical offices, line ministries and other sector institutions, the donor community, local administrations, community leaders and the public is a crucial success factor. Therefore, participation and capacity development are key principles in guiding the relations with stakeholders.

Yard tap in Tanzania

Baseline Studies (continued from page 1)

Socio-economic survey in Jordan

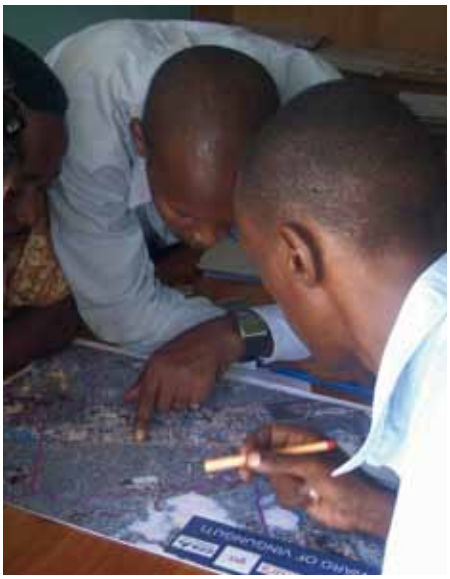
In 2007 and 2008, GFA conducted a Socio-economic Baseline Survey in the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector in the Middle Governorates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for KfW Entwicklungsbank and the Water Authority of Jordan, under the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. The study aimed at providing detailed information on the area's demographic, socio-economic, water supply and sanitation situation to prepare a multi-million Euro investment project and to ensure its poverty orientation.

The survey identified future intervention areas and provided input data for the conceptual design of the investment program. It supplied necessary information to adapt the project concept to the needs of the target population, and provided information on water-related health problems and gender aspects. In addition, GFA experts prepared a monitoring framework, including baselines against which the project achievements can be measured in the future. The study comprised a household survey, a qualitative survey and a price survey. About 1,500 households in ten selected sub-districts were interviewed on water consumption habits, water supply and storage, billing and payment, sanitation, waste disposal and health issues. Focus group discussions and key informant interviews as part of the qualitative survey covered aspects of water, sanitation, hygiene, poverty, gender equality, conflicts, community participation, as well as migration. The price survey allowed a rough assessment of poverty levels in the target areas established on the basis of a Basic Needs Basket and the target population's ability to pay for improved water supply and sewerage services. All primary data was processed using statistical software and analyzed accordingly. The data were stored in a database to be used as a result and impact monitoring instrument. Respective indicators were defined. The database allows for consultation and easy updating.

Baseline survey in Tanzania

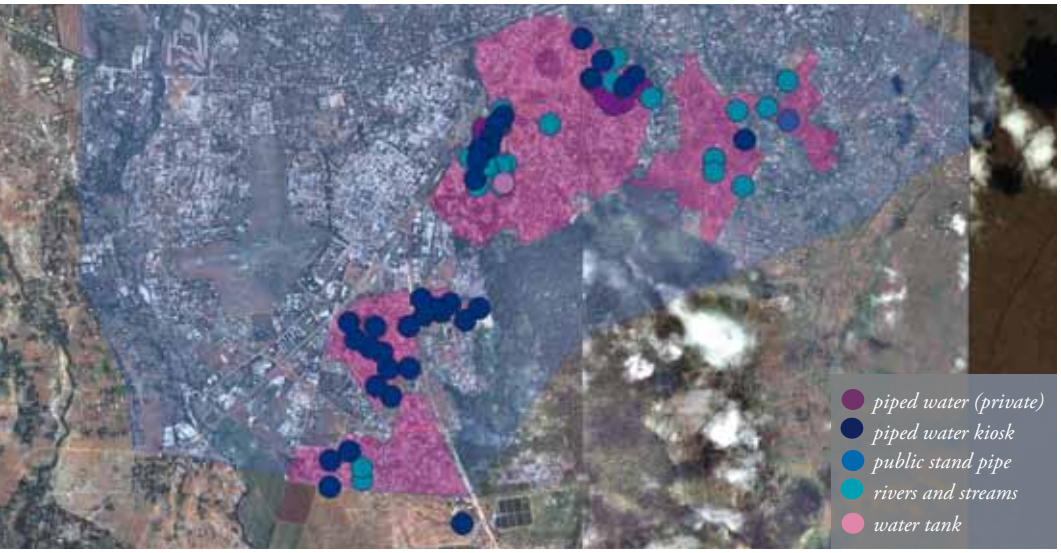
Between November 2009 and October 2011, GFA carried out a comprehensive baseline survey in Tanzania. The study was commissioned by the Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority (EWURA) and the Ministry of Water (MoW), and was financed by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). A team of more than 50 people collected and analyzed data related to water and sanitation service provision in all urban low-income areas (LIAs) in 20 urban centers of Tanzania.

The objective of the study was to provide high quality, reliable information on water supply and sanitation service levels in LIAs. This should enable EWURA and MoW to increase poverty orientation in the sector, and to develop an adequate regulatory approach to enhance sector performance. As a substantial part of the study, over 500 LIAs were identified and mapped using satellite images. More than 700,000 plots were counted and more than 31,000 household interviews conducted. About 600 focus group discussions were carried out and more than 2,000 informal water service providers were interviewed. The data were checked and verified on-site in the field and entered into a user-friendly SQL-database and geographic information system at the Dar es Salaam project office.



Mapping exercise

For the first time, the findings of the baseline study enable sector professionals and politicians to assess the role and impact of informal service providers in LIAs in Tanzania (see page 3). Figures for coverage were calculated according to definitions of sustainable access to safe water and basic sanitation in the urban setting issued by the regulator. Only those household connections, water kiosks and public stand posts of licensed service providers were counted where the quality of water and tariffs are monitored, service hours are known and financial sustainability is likely to progress towards cost recovery. The result was an eye opener: In 2010, the coverage for water in the urban setting had to be revised downwards from 83% as reported by EWURA to 43%.



Location of domestic water sources in low-income areas as presented in the GIS

Contact Katrin Brübach
katrin.bruebach@gfa-group.de

Informal Service Provision in the Water Sector

The majority of people living in poor urban areas and informal settlements around the world do not have access to adequate water and sanitation services. Formal service providers often only serve a small fraction of the population living in their service area. Who fills the gap?

The main reasons for low coverage rates of formal service providers in developing countries are rapid urbanization, weak management and insufficient investments in network extension and infrastructure rehabilitation. In addition, only parts of the urban population living in areas where water networks are available can afford a domestic connection. Especially in fast growing urban areas informal service providers (ISPs) have stepped in and supply water to people not served by the public utility.

Mobile vendors in Buguruni, Dar es Salaam

ISPs in Tanzania

As a case in point, the GIZ-funded baseline study carried out by GFA in LIAs in Tanzania (see page 2) revealed that at least 70% of the residents living in these areas rely on unregulated ISP services for their drinking water supply. Data indicate that ISPs can differ largely in size, organizational form, source of water and service delivery mode.

Most ISPs are individuals running small water selling businesses. A household with a domestic water connection that sells water to neighbors is the most common type of ISP in Tanzania – 31% of the LIA households receive their drinking water from neighbors. Private-run schemes come second, supplying water to 24% of the LIA population nationwide and to 44% in Dar es Salaam. Other types of ISPs are pushcart vendors, water tankers, and water schemes run by non-government or community-based organizations (NGOs/CBOs). Some sector professionals regard ISPs as central players in the water sector since they are in many cases the only water suppliers for poor strata of the population. Others argue that a vital service such as the provision of drinking water should not be left to non-accountable ISPs but that consumers need to be protected regarding water quality and tariffs. The data from Tanzania show that the urban poor depending on ISPs pay up to 13 times more for drinking water than households with domestic water connection. Moreover, ISP water quality is rarely tested and therefore remains a serious risk to public health.

Water tanker in Dar es Salaam

Approach to ISPs

The Tanzanian survey supports the argument that ISPs will not vanish anytime soon. Hence, the debate on the formalization and regulation of ISPs is prevailing and controversial. While ISPs are often associated with temporary services, customer exploitation and poor quality, they prove that LIAs constitute a market for water as long as creative and adapted service solutions can be offered. More and more utilities realize that the main reason for the growth of the informal sector is their own failure to provide adequate services. As a result, some utilities tolerate or even support independent water supply arrangements that aim at improving coverage in LIAs. The importance of ISPs, however, does not justify their formalization. They cannot be perceived as a lasting solution to overcome low coverage levels in LIAs. The formalization and regulation of the multitude of ISPs would result in a fractured water market in which the vital interests of urban citizens are difficult to protect. Instead, efforts should be directed towards strengthening licensed providers through pro-poor regulation and investment programs, capacity building, reorganization, and clustering. The extension and improvement of the formal water supply through innovative pro-poor approaches have proven much more sustainable and socially acceptable.

Contact David Jebens
david.jebens@gfa-group.de

Portrait

David Jebens

David Jebens started his carrier with GFA Consulting Group over two years ago as a young professional. Meanwhile, he is working as a consultant in the Water and Sanitation Department where he is responsible for project acquisition and back-stopping and carries out short-term assignments. His fields of expertise comprise informal service provision, pro-poor approaches to water supply, socio-economic studies, commercial management of water utilities, climate change and water footprint. David Jebens holds a Master´s degree in Public Policy and Management and has gained professional experience in Western and Eastern Africa as well as in the Middle East.

Added Value

In order to keep up with its steady growth of projects within the water and sanitation sector, GFA has been expanding its professional team. Two water and sanitation engineers joined the department's team in the first quarter of 2011. Rita Ferreira, a Portuguese national, has a M.Sc. in Regional and Urban Land Use Planning and holds a post-graduate degree in Sanitary Engineering. Her expertise is in the regulation of water services and sanitation providers, benchmarking and utility consultancy. Jens Götzenberger holds a M.Sc. in Environmental and Hygiene Technologies. His expertise focuses on urban, peri-urban and rural water supply and wastewater management with a special emphasis on decentralized sanitation concepts such as DEWATS or ecological sanitation. During a long-term assignment in India, he gained experience in institutional development. Capacity building and awareness raising are further relevant aspects in his career. He worked in Germany, Nicaragua, India and Zambia.

Water Footprint

GFA and One Sustainability conducted an in-depth Water Footprint Assessment for Kastner & Callwey Medien GmbH, a German printing company located close to Munich. Establishing and analyzing the Water Footprint is considered to be one of the most promising approaches to effective water management and related risk assessment. It is a comprehensive indicator providing detailed information on how much water is used for the production of a certain product or service. It takes into account water consumption along the entire supply-chain of a product or service differentiating between green (rain water), blue (ground and surface water), and grey water (polluted water). It also considers spatial and seasonal information. In addition, indirect and direct water consumption is distinguished. The Water Footprint can be applied on a global, regional and local scale referring to products, services or entire institutions. It can also be used for the impact analysis of water consumption and can be integrated into corporate social responsibility strategies.

Zambia Water Sector Reform

As of early 2011, GIZ contracted GFA together with AHT Group AG and Brian Colquhoun, Hugh O´Donnell and Partners Consulting Engineers Zambia (BCHOD) to improve the efficiency and transparency of the implementation of the National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme in Eastern Province, Zambia. The scope of services includes a situation analysis, support to institutional structures, improvement of operation and maintenance capacities as well as fostering management competencies. The project contributes to increased access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities in the rural areas of Eastern Province. Our international team leader Martha Preuss is supported by four national long-term experts and a multi-disciplinary pool of national and international short-term experts.

GFA Consulting Group GmbH
Water & Sanitation Department
Eulenkrugstrasse 82
22359 Hamburg, Germany
phone +494060306-251
fax +494060306-259
e-mail info@gfa-group.de
web www.gfa-group.de

GFA Consulting Group *is a growing consulting organization active in economic development. The main sectors of the company comprise agriculture & rural development, natural resources & certification, public sector & fund management, private sector development, water & sanitation, health & HIV/AIDS, financial systems development, labor markets & human resources, climate change & energy, and forest investment fund.*

GFA's Water and Sanitation Department *has significant international experience in water sector modernisation and utility management. The company's core competence lies in organizational development of water and sewerage utilities, commercialization, development and implementation of demand-oriented training measures as well as project management. This includes billing and accounting, monitoring and management information systems as well as personnel management software. Also, GFA provides consultancy services for sector reform measures and for developing institutional and legal frameworks.*

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