

LOCAL GOVERNANCE OF WATER AND SANITATION IN LUSAKA'S PERI-URBAN AREAS: LESSONS FROM THE GOOD CITIES STUDY

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POLICY BRIEF

LOCAL GOVERNANCE OF WATER AND SANITATION IN LUSAKA'S PERI-URBAN AREAS: LESSONS FROM THE GOOD CITIES STUDY

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KEY FINDINGS

- Chaisa and Kamulanga wards have different water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) governance models.-
- In both wards, community and young people's participation in WASH governance is low.
- Local participation in WASH projects and programmes could help find solutions to the two communities' WASH challenges.
- Young people desire to be heard and participate in the delivery and governance of WASH services.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To improve local governance and youth participation, there is a need for:

- Regular community engagement.
- A down-top and top-down approach to co-creation.
- Formalisation of informal actors to feed into the CBE.
- CBOs to work with young people.
- Awareness of current laws on WASH.

INTRODUCTION

The WASH problem in Lusaka reflects the shortfalls in the governance model. The current water and sanitation structures comprise centralised water and sanitation systems imported from the global north and ad hoc WASH systems. The problems of the current WASH system are attributed to various factors, including limited community participation. This policy brief looks at local governance and youth participation in Chaisa and Kamulanga wards of Lusaka. Its objectives are to (i) highlight the current systems of governance in the two wards; (ii) to explain the role of the young people in WASH governance, and (ii) to provide recommendations on how to improve the governance models and youth participation.

What is WASH Governance?

Governance is a mechanism for how a society manages and delivers various resources and services. It encompasses political, social, economic, and administrative systems that formally and informally control water resource development, management, and the provision of water and sanitation services. Good WASH governance encompasses equity, efficiency, participation, decentralisation, integration, transparency, and accountability.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CHAISA AND KAMULANGA

Chaisa

Chaisa is in (Ward 13 or Chaisa ward) of Mandevu constituency. Chaisa is densely populated and located about 6 kilometres north of the Lusaka City Central Business District (CBD) along the Great North Road. Its boundaries include Great North Road (west), Katima Mulilo Road (south), Ngwerere Stream (north) and the railway line (east). It shares boundaries with Emmasdale, Garden, Mandevu and Marapodi communities. The Chaisa Water Trust provides water to residents of Chaisa through individual household connections and kiosks. Nonetheless, residents also use water from alternative sources (i.e. shallow wells, drainages and the Ngwerere stream) to supplement their water needs. The community has a shortage of toilets – the water trust has been trying to mitigate the problem by building communal toilets. Solid waste is a visible challenge in the community.

Kamulanga

Kamulanga is a ward (Ward 9) in Kabwata constituency. It comprised of four sub-communities: Lusaka South, Lilayi, Gondwe and Jack compound. Kamulanga is bound by a railway line on the west, extending into farmlands on the south, into Lusaka south on the east and Jack compound on the north. The Southern part of Kamulanga is sparsely populated. The northern part (Jack compound) is densely populated and the Lusaka South/Lilayi area has sparsely distributed large modern houses. The study focused on Jack compound. The LWSC is responsible for the WASH infrastructure in the ward. LWSC provides water to residents of Jack compound using kiosks and individual household connections. However, some kiosks have been replaced with normal taps. Most of the community uses on-site sanitation (septic tanks and pit latrines). Solid waste is either burnt, dumped in pits at households, kept in bins or dumped in illegal dumpsites.

Local Governance of Water and Sanitation

The Lusaka Council City (LCC) is mandated to provide various public services (i.e. water and sanitation) to residents of Lusaka City. LCC is the largest shareholder in Lusaka Water and Sanitation Company (a commercial service company under LCC), with 41.5 per cent of shares. In Kamulanga, the LWSC does not service the entire ward. A part of the ward relies on informal private water sources (i.e. boreholes). The private borehole owners charge K35 to K50 per month (FGD, 2023). In Chaisa, the water trust provides water to the residents using two connections – individual household connections and communal taps (kiosks). The WT charges 50 Ngwee per 20 litres at the kiosks. The tariff is bundled with solid waste collection fees, 10 Ngwee for solid waste collection and 40 Ngwee for water. While households with water connections have either a metered or unmetered tap. In both communities, the market cooperatives are responsible for WASH at the local markets.

LCC contracts community-based enterprises (CBEs) to collect solid waste for solid waste management. In Chaisa, the charge for water at the kiosks for unconnected households is bundled with a fee for garbage collection. The WT remits the money collected for garbage collection to the CBE. Connected households and other entities pay K35-K50 directly to the CBE for garbage collection. The CBEs collect garbage from both those who paid directly and indirectly (FGD, 2023). When the truck the CBE uses is not working, the WT makes arrangements for garbage to be collected from unconnected households. Connected households have to make their own arrangements to have their garbage collected or wait for the CBE to fix its truck. The current system implemented in Chaisa is favourable for unconnected households (Community members – FGD, 2023). However, solid waste is still a visible problem in Chaisa. Some residents cannot afford to pay CBE, so they seek alternatives that involve engaging informal actors to collect garbage at a lower fee. These actors and residents who cannot afford their service, indiscriminately dispose of solid waste.

The CBE directly collects payments for garbage collection in Kamulanga. Kamulanga has two types of informal garbage collectors. The first group collects recyclable waste from households and other sources to sell to the CBE at the “waste depot” within the ward. The second group, known as the illegal dumpers, is paid by households to collect all household waste. The second group illegally disposes of the garbage at the waste depot or indiscriminately in the community. The operations of the illegal dumpers make the work of the CBE cumbersome. Since the sorters employed by the CBE have to also sort the waste disposed of by the illegal dumpers. The first group make the CBE’s work easier. This is because CBE only has to collect unrecyclable from the households to take to the Chunga landfill. Thus, the first group helps sort the garbage at the household level.

The CBE sells the recyclable waste (bought from the first group and separated by its sorters) at its depot to manufacturing and processing industries. The informal actors in both communities include young people. For the local market, the market chairperson collects levies for solid waste from the marketers and pays the CBE for collection (YPERs Diary, 2023).

The system in Kamulanga seems to be more effective than the one in Chaisa. The solid waste is sorted either at the source or at the depot, the recyclable waste provides the CBE with two sources of income (i) from the sale of the recycled waste and (ii) from the payments the household makes to them for garbage collection. In addition, the Kamulanga SWM system discourages the indiscriminate disposal of waste and promotes local participation. Nonetheless, local authorities still need to intervene to ensure solid waste is disposed of correctly (IDI Solid Waste, 2024). The CBE has inadequate capacity to prevent indiscriminate disposal of waste.

The limited options for garbage disposal in both communities create informal opportunities for young people. However, the informal system contributes to poor sanitation because the young people indiscriminately dispose of the garbage. Some young people ethnographic researchers YPERs suggested formalising the involvement of young people in WASH as a means of empowerment. Some YPERs proposed that local leaders should consider using the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) to empower them to provide WASH services (i.e. garbage collection and toilet emptying) to help solve some of the problems.

YOUTH AND LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN WASH GOVERNANCE

LCC has a presence in the communities through the ward councillors, zonal leaders and Ward Development Committees (WDCs). Section 9 (d) and 37 (d) of the Local Government Act give the mayor and the WDCs the mandate to promote public engagement and participation in local governance. Despite the presence of these formal structures and ordinances, residents of the two communities feel left out of the governance process. This is primarily due to the limited engagement of locals in the governance process. The situation in both communities seems not conducive to public engagement, especially for young people.

“the councillor is aware of this issue, it’s her office that must implement something. Because we can discuss here but the people at the top are the ones that should take it up... we have had these challenges for a long time” (YPER from Chaisa)

Currently, young people are utilising the inadequacies of the formal system to participate in WASH governance (YPERs–FGD, 2023). Nonetheless, young people desire more engagement. They want to sensitise their communities and help provide WASH services. Sensitisation could bridge information asymmetries in the communities. A YPER stated, “If assaulted, you take the matter to the police but what about other things like garbage, if water is dirty, where does one report?”

The YPERs stated that water from the formal system is rationed and too costly for some residents. Water pricing is a recurring theme in studies on WASH in low-income communities. The utilities usually contend against the sentiment from the communities. They argue that the current prices are not cost-reflective. Only a few households can afford connections and pay the “right price.” Another challenge is the shortage of WASH facilities. The shortage of toilets has resulted in toilet sharing, which infringes on privacy, open defecation and flying messengers. Solid waste is visible in the two communities.

The YPERs' frustrations reflect the inadequacies of the current WASH systems: water rationing, costs, quality, limited access and sources and distance to water points. In Chaisa and Kamulanga, community members complained that they were neglected by their elected leaders. For young people, this created despair and made them lose trust in their leaders and become uninspired to take leadership roles. Some leaders disagreed with the young people and accused them of unwillingly participating in programmes without financial rewards. However, this view does not warrant the exclusion of young people. This is because some young people were willing to volunteer as long as their external support was needed to break social barriers. YPERs also recognised that young people can positively contribute to their communities. To overcome the social and economic barriers associated with youth participation, stakeholders must go beyond the conservative methods of political organisations, clubs and school sensitisation to involve young people in research and designing of programmes and interventions in their communities and participate in service delivery.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve local governance and community engagement there is need for:

- i. **Regular community engagement:** The situation surrounding the inadequate deliveries of WASH services in Lusaka's low-income communities is linked to their social, geospatial, economic and infrastructural evolution. To overcome them, communities need to be engaged in some of the WASH projects and programme processes. The mayor and WDC are mandated to regularly engage communities – using this channel, the utilities and authorities can organise community meetings to understand local contexts.
- ii. **Down-top and top-down co-creation.** The WDC is the engine for ideas on the utilisation of the CDF, which appears to be an effective channel for investing in water and sanitation. However, in their current forms, the WDCs lack the technical capacities to find solutions to some of the WASH problems. Hence, there is a need for both top-down and down-top approaches in the use of interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral collaborative methods of co-creation. Thus, WASH projects could be studied with a thorough investigation and possible mapping of the possible model in each community. The investigation should consider the social, economic, geographical and other characteristics of the communities. This could help deconstruct the idea of large centralised WASH infrastructure as the solution to the problems in densely populated unplanned settlements and pave the way for more technical that would ensure the delivery of quality (clean and safe) water and proper sanitation facilities.
- iii. **Formalisation of informal actors to feed into the CBE:** The informal involvement of young people in both Chaisa and Kamulanga shows the opportunities available to formalise their participation in the delivery of WASH services, particularly garbage collection. In Kamulanga, the local authorities could urge the CBE to work with the young people to provide services to the unreached area. Alternatively, the council can engage the CBE to allow the young people to provide services to areas where the CBE trucks cannot reach using their pushcarts. The CBE could require them to sort their waste at the collection before disposing of it at the depot. The informal actors can pay the CBE using some of their recyclable waste or money.
- iv. **CBOs to work with Young people.** The Good Cities project has proven that young people know the problems in their communities and could effectively contribute to finding solutions. Despite being discouraged by social, cultural and political factors in their societies, the young people are eager to influence WASH outcomes. Thus, CBOs should engage and onboard young people through the existing social organisations (i.e. churches, youth clubs, schools). Their work with young people should extend beyond sensitisation to hearing their views and incorporating them.
- v. **Awareness of current laws on WASH:** Current laws on the indiscriminate disposal of garbage need to be enforced. This should be accompanied by sensitising locals on where to report offenders and encouraging them to police their environments. In addition, the local authorities should educate residents on the channels to use to report non-performing CBEs.



CONCLUSION

The problem of poor WASH services in Lusaka has persisted for years. The situation is particularly worse in low-income communities such as Chaisa and Jack compound of Kamulanga. For example, in several cities in the Global South, this has resulted in a hybrid governance model. Both formal utility and informal actors provide various services. In Chaisa, the WT provides water and sanitation services. In Kamulanga, LWSC provides water and sanitation but does not cover the entire ward. The collection of garbage is the responsibility of the local CBEs. Inadequacies of the utilities and CBEs have created room for informal local participation, with young people actively participating in WASH processes. However, informal participation presents new challenges, especially indiscriminate disposal of waste, consumption of untreated water from private boreholes and exploitation of casual youth labour and children.

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