

Project Background :

The ACCES Initiative is a project cofinanced by the European Union, CARE France, the Mairie of Paris, and ten communes in the Ouémé and Borgou departments of Benin. The primary promotor and implementer of the project was CARE International Benin/Togo and the targeted communes were Kalalé, N'Dali, Nikki, Pèrèrè, Tchaourou, Adjarra, Adjohoun, Akpro-Missérété, Bonou, Dangbo. The project lasted five years, with the goal of significantly improving access to infrastructure and services related to water, sanitation, and hygiene for 80 villages, 32 schools, and 10 health centers in ten rural communities of Benin. This was done through the construction and/or rehabilitation of water pumps and the extension of gravity schemes, the installation of incinerators in health centers, and the installation of latrines, trashcans, and urinals in primary schools. Additionally, trainings in management of the new installations were given to local actors and committees to foster self-reliance and local management, and Community Led Total Sanitation was used by facilitators to build demand for sanitation and to decrease or eliminate the practice of open defecation.

Justification of Evaluation:

An evaluation of the project was done one month after project completion. The evaluation found that school sanitation projects were facing greater challenges, but did not investigate why or what differences there were in management between school hygiene and sanitation projects and village hygiene and sanitation projects.

Furthermore, the evaluation was done only one month after CARE actors and partners were directly invested and present in the target communes. This study will seek to find if, given the high rate of failure of water, sanitation, and hygiene projects, the functionality of the pumps and latrines were maintained over the course of the year after project completion, after management of the infrastructures were handed over to local actors.

Objectives:

The objectives of the study were to:

- Establish the functionality or lack thereof of the latrines and pumps built over the course of the project
- Understand the role of local actors in the management, operation, and maintenance of the installations
- Investigate the relationship between the management practices and functionality of the installations
- Collect information to inform CARE's use of Community-Led Total Sanitation

Methodology:

To achieve the objectives of this evaluation, mixed-methods were used. Survey methods were employed to collect information on the subjects of functionality and management from the local water committees in charge of the installations in order to accomplish the first three objectives at the community level. After the survey questions, in-depth interview questions were attached on the subject of Community Led Total Sanitation to gain information on its efficacy and the communities' perceptions of the method. At the school level, where the targeted information for evaluation was management of

latrines, qualitative methods of observation and in-depth, key informant interviews of school directors and teachers were used to collect data concerning the upkeep of latrines and challenges faced to maintain them.

Because of constraints of time, money, and geography, the evaluation focused solely on Health Zone ABD, or the three target communes of Adjohoun, Bonou, and Dangbo in the Ouémé department. All thirteen of the targeted primary schools were visited, as well as 18 water points in 13 villages.

The survey tool for communities was designed in part based on a concurrent evaluation of water installations done by CARE Guatemala. However, after several surveys were done, it became evident that many of the management questions which were appropriate for Guatemala's integrated system of management by water committees and local governments were more appropriate in Benin for the local government (the mairie) than for the local water committees, which did very little financial management apart from collecting tariffs for water use. However, because of the time constraints and availability of local officials, only one interview of local government officials took place (Mairie de Dangbo).

Limitations:

One of the limitations of the evaluation was the inability to interview at every planned village and school. One water point did not have a committee present, and another village was inaccessible because of heavy rains. One of the targeted schools had no one present upon arrival, and CARE's infrastructures were locked, preventing even the observational component. Another limitation was the language barrier between the researcher and the target population, necessitating a facilitator to translate between French and the local languages to communicate with village water committees.

Results: School Interviews and Observations

Water: At most schools with water points installed, directors expressed satisfaction with the water. Directors at schools without water points stated that they needed them. At one school in Bonou, the water point does not function and never has. The director of this school, as well as the director of other schools without water points, must send students with money (frequently provided out of the director's pocket) to pay the water fees to collect water at the village water point (usually another ACCES point). This costs the director money and the students time, as the village water point is not always near the school. Directors consistently reported that schools alone were responsible for maintaining water points and other installations without the support of the mairie. If problems were to occur, Parent-Student Associations would have to raise money to repair the structure. The director of the school without a functional water point reported that he wrote a letter to the mairie several months ago but has not heard back.

Management of water points at the school level varied. Three schools have free and open access to the water point, and students can use them directly. At one of these schools, the director complained that it was impossible to prevent the community from using the water point as well. The majority of schools have a lock system, and a few students or teachers fill buckets of water to keep in the classroom, and students use the bucket of water and a shared plastic cup for drinking.

Sanitation: CARE latrines in schools are usually insufficient in number, and none of the schools adhere to all of UNICEF's guidelines, especially the ratio established in Indicator A (see text box). ACCES installed

one latrine block with three cabins and one urinal block with two cabins at each school that received sanitation infrastructure. At a few schools, the designation of latrine cabins is inequitable, with one cabin serving the directors, one cabin serving the teachers, and one cabin serving all students, both male and female. One cabin may therefore serve as few as four directors, while the student cabin serves 500 primary school children. Of nine schools, four of them had assigned two of three latrine cabins to school personnel and only one to students, and two schools did not have all cabins in use because no one has accessible keys to open cabin doors.

UNICEF Guidelines and Indicators for Latrines in Schools

- a. There are sufficient toilets available – 1 per 25 girls or female staff, and 1 toilet plus 1 urinal (or 50 centimetres of urinal wall) per 50 boys or male staff.
- b. Toilets are easily accessible – no more than 30 metres from all users.
- c. Toilets provide privacy and security.
- d. Toilets are child-friendly and appropriate to local cultural, social and environmental conditions.
- e. Toilets are hygienic to use and easy to clean.
- f. Toilets have convenient hand-washing facilities close by.
- g. There is a cleaning and maintenance routine in operation that ensures clean and functioning toilets are available at all times.

https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/CFS_WASH_E_web.pdf

With a few exceptions, the locations of the latrines are easily accessible on foot. However, at two schools where the latrines are in less accessible locations, the paths to the latrines are insufficiently maintained.

The VIP latrines provide sufficient light during the day and are well-ventilated. However, all schools reported that

the toilets are cleaned by students one time each week instead of every day or as needed, so observations done later in the week typically showed toilets in need of cleaning. Directors for the most part expressed satisfaction with the job done by students in cleaning the latrines. The one director that said the toilets should be cleaner attributed the lack of cleanliness to the age of the students doing the cleaning. The cleaning is done by student health committees in some schools, and in others the responsibility rotates between classrooms.



Missing and Broken Doors on Structures

The problem most frequently reported by directors and observed by the researcher was that doors were frequently ripped off of latrines and urinals. Directors reported that local people in the community do not respect school property, and when they find the latrine doors locked, they rip the door off the hinges or break the lock, and directors are not able to fix the problem by replacing the door or lock. Two directors also reported that the latrines are poorly constructed.

A management problem observed but not reported is that the latrines are frequently not accessible by students. To keep community members out, directors keep the doors to latrines locked when possible. On several occasions, the latrines were not accessible upon arrival to the school because the person who keeps the keys was not on campus and had taken the keys with him/her, meaning students were also not able to use the latrines.

In Bonou, a director complained that there is no local desludging company or infrastructure in the commune. Older latrines had therefore filled and were no longer in use by students, although people in the community still used them. The evaluation was conducted before the new latrines installed by CARE had filled, so the use of the excrement collected in the EcoSan latrines was unobserved and not described. Only one of the schools, Tove in Dangbo, used the byproduct from the urinals in a garden.

Hygiene: Of the 12 schools where the evaluation was conducted, none of the ACCES handwashing stations were still functional. However, all of the schools had compensated for the lack of a permanent handwashing station with buckets or kegs with water and soap for handwashing.¹ These stations are all posted outside of classrooms, as opposed to near the latrines.



Alternate handwashing station in use

One common complaint by directors was that there is no money in the budget for soap, so directors have to pay out-of-pocket if students are to wash their hands with soap.

Results: Community Surveys on Water Points

Functionality and Usage: Functionality and usage of water points were not consistently related across communities. For example, in two villages with manual pumps, committee members complained that the water from the water point is red. In one of the villages, there is no other source of water, so the people continue to buy and drink water from the water point. In the other village with red water, there are other sources, and no one uses the ACCES water point any longer. Usage, therefore, is a better measure of the success of the infrastructures installed than functionality is.

System	Usage		Total
	# In Use (% of total) ²	# Not in Use (% of total)	
Gravity System	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5
Water Pump (Manual)	11 (84.6%)	2 (15.4%)	13
Total:	13	5	18

Sixty percent of the points built as extensions of the existing gravity system (shown on the table above) were not in use because they no longer functioned. However, despite this higher rate of non-usage, no

¹ It is possible that without a secondary plan for handwashing, repairs for the ACCES stations might have been given higher priority by schools, but the evaluation did not answer that question.

² Number in use is used instead of functionality, because in some instances water points were at least partly functional and producing water, but villages are not using them for a reported reason.

conclusions could be reached on whether the problem is the type of infrastructure or local management, as all three of the broken water points that were extensions of an existing water scheme were in one village (Oueboussou), managed by one committee under one mairie. Further study is necessary to determine whether the infrastructure is simply more fragile, or whether Bonou is simply less responsive than other mairies in responding to problems with water points.³ All ACCES community water points that used pumps in Bonou were functional, but because none of them had ever had a functionality issue, the response of the mairie was untested.

Community-Committee Relations: The committee members in Bonou and Dangbo were elected by the villages. In Adjohoun, instead of a committee to run the water point there was a delegate appointed by the mairie. The delegate had to undergo interviews to determine whether he/she could handle the responsibility and behave ethically. Three of the village water committees reported problems caused by inadequate management. The most consistent complaint across interviews with village committees and delegates was that some community members did not understand why they have to pay for water. However, only one committee reported conflict with the community, and that conflict was a result of mishandling of money from water sales.

Community-Mairie Relations: Relationships between water committees and the mairie varied. No conflict between delegates in Adjohoun and the mairie were reported, but the delegate was also assigned his/her role by the mairie and so most likely had more of a relationship with the office than committee members elected by their villages did. Furthermore, a CARE representative who works at the office of the mairie was present for the survey, which could have resulted in less honest responses stemming from social desirability bias.

Mairie	Village Water Points Observed	Number In Use (%)
Bonou	8	5 (62.5%)
Dangbo	5	4 (80%) ⁴
Adjohoun	5	4 (80%) ⁵

The residents of Bonou, Oueboussou in particular, were less pleased with local governance. Oueboussou had received no action in response to their complaint about their three broken water points and the villagers were using water from rainwater collection and from an uncovered well instead of the ACCES points. Bonou Centre had no complaints about the ACCES water point, but had received no support for

³ It is worth noting that Bonou is also the mairie that has no desludging infrastructure as well as the mairie addressed by the school director at the school with the nonfunctional pump. When I went to the mairie of Bonou, I was told that no one from the WASH focal point was at the office for the week and therefore was unable to speak to anyone.

⁴ Of the functional water points, one village committed reported that the water has turned red, but they continue to use the point for lack of other options. Of the non-functional water point, the representative of the water committee reported that the pump is in fact functional, but that due to a committee member who embezzled money, the Mairie removed a piece of the pump to prevent anyone from using it until the money owed has been paid.

⁵ One of the water points in use was reported as in need of minor repairs. The water point not at all in use still produces water, but because the water is red in color and because of the presence of other nearby water sources, the people of the village refuse to use it.

other broken water points, and Assrossa had no complaints about the water points, but expressed concern and displeasure over the fact that they had to pay the mairie for water use and management when the water committee wanted to self-govern the pumps.



Dangbo-Honme, Gbodo

In Dangbo, two communities reported that the mairie was prompt in responding to problems with the infrastructure. However, when a committee member in one of the villages mishandled funds and the mairie was not paid its monthly charge, the mairie's response was to remove a part from the pump, rendering it nonfunctional (picture of water point today on left).

Results: CLTS Community Questions

The communities reported experience with Community Led Total Sanitation was overwhelmingly positive (although the interview format lends itself to bias). Several committees mentioned that before the programming, their villages had problems with odors and flies, and that the problems have since been resolved.

While communities reported that there was sufficient educational programming during the CLTS process, and that frequently village committees were continuing those efforts, two did report that it would be more effective if a third party continued to come in on a monthly basis to remind the community because the community respects the expertise of outsiders more than their own members.

Most villages as a result of CLTS reported access to latrines, and many latrines were in the process of being constructed. Except for one village, Bonou-Centre, which reported no latrines and instead used the cat method of disposal of excrement, committees reported that community members shared latrines among households, and that new latrines are in the process of being constructed. Community observation supported these claims.

Recommended next steps:

For future projects,

- Expand training on ecological sanitation for schools to fully profit from the technology
- Ensure that students are never locked out of latrine cabins during school hours, either by removing the locks during school hours and replacing them at the end of the school day, or by providing every school personnel member a key so that students are not locked out of the toilets when the directors is off campus
- Explain sex-specific engineering of urinals to school directors so urinals are properly assigned
- If feasible, build larger latrine blocks with more cabins to meet acceptable pupil:latrine ratios
- Build relationships between communes and schools for latrine and water point repair so that Parent-Student Associations are not financially responsible

- Explore new designs for handwashing stations at schools
- Follow up with communes after close of project to ensure continued functionality of water points

Conclusions:

The ACCES project made enormous strides in communities through building water points and creating demand for latrines. Communities in turn built positive relationships with CARE and their local governments, and many of them reported a reduction in diseases, open defecation, and odors in villages. In the future, building stronger relationships between the mairie and village committees can lead to better functioning and more durable water and sanitation infrastructure, and projects should target capacity building at the level of the mairie and the focal points responsible for water and sanitation. Responsibilities for water and sanitation repair and management at the school level should be clarified at the local, commune, and national level.

One year after the completion of the project and the end of the project-funding monitoring and evaluation project, the majority of water points were still functioning, and local committees by and large displayed self-efficacy in governance and management. While schools faced significant challenges in sanitation, all save one reported satisfaction with the quantity and quality of water from the pumps. All communities and schools were eager to work with CARE on more infrastructure and capacity building projects in the future.

Annex 1:

Status of Water Points for each Water Committee and School Interviewed					
Commune	Arrondissement	Village	Locality	Functionality and Usage	Additional Notes
Adjohoun	Awonou	Awonou	EPP Awonou Centre	Functional and in use	
Adjohoun	Azowlisse	Gbékandji II	EPP Sahoro	Functional and in use	
Adjohoun	Akpadanou	Kpatinsa	Houégbètohoué	Partly functional, not in use	The water is red, and villagers choose other sources.
Adjohoun	Akwonou	Abidomey	Azonnamonhoué	Functional and in use	
Adjohoun	Akpadanou	Sokpetinkon	Anannonhoué	Partly functional and in use	
Adjohoun	Kodé	Kakanitchoé	Houédahoué	Functional and in use	
Adjohoun	Azowlisse	Gbékandji I	Sèglahoué	Functional and in use	
Bonou	Bonou	Bonou	EPP Bonou Centre	Functional and in use	
Bonou	Dame wagon	Assrossa	EPP Assrossa	Completely nonfunctional	The school director gives students money to carry water from the village source
Bonou	Atchonsa	Agbomahan	EPP Agbomahan	Functional and in use	
Bonou	Atchonsa	Dogba	Todo	Functional and in use	
Bonou	Dame wogon	Assrossa	affazounme	Functional and in use	
Bonou	Bonou	Bonou Centre	Sèdjè	Partly functional and in use	The water point doesn't function well during the dry season.
Bonou	Bonou	Ouébossou	Djougoudoumè	Completely nonfunctional	
Bonou	Bonou	Ouébossou	Sèkodji	Completely nonfunctional	
Bonou	Bonou	Ouébossou	Ouébossou Centre	Completely nonfunctional	
Bonou	Hounvigue	Atankpè	Atankpè Honto	Functional and in use	
Dangbo	Zoungue	Akokponawa	EPP Akokponawa	Functional and in use	
Dangbo	Dangbo	Tovè	EPP Tovè	Functional and in use	
Dangbo	Dangbo	Mondotokpa	EPP mondotokpa	Functional and in use	
Dangbo	Dangbo	Dangbo-Honmè	EPP Dangbo-Honmè	Functional and in use	
Dangbo	Zounguè	Zounta	Zounta Aga	Functional and in use	

Dangbo	Hozin	Tokpa koundjota	Houngon	Partly functional and in use	The water is red, but villagers still use it
Dangbo	Hozin	Akpamè	Lokonontokpa	Functional and in use	
Dangbo	Dangbo	Dangbo-Honmè	Gbodo	Completely nonfunctional	The mairie disabled the pump because the tariffs were not paid.

Annex 2:

Notes on School Latrine Use				
Commune	Arrondissement	Village	School	Notes
Adjohoun	Awonou	Awonou	EPP Awonou Centre	Of three ACCES latrine cabins, one has no key, one is for faculty, and one is for students. The school has six other latrine cabins (not built by ACCES). Doors are missing off both urinals
Adjohoun	Azowlisse	Gbékandji II	EPP Sahoro	Of three latrine cabins, one is used by girls, one by boys, and one by faculty. One door is broken off the urinals, and both urinals are unassigned. There is no soap for handwashing.
Adjohoun	Akpadanou	Akpadanou	EPP Akpadanou	Two latrine cabins are reserved for faculty, and one is for students.
Bonou	Dame wagon	Assrossa	EPP Assrossa	One latrine cabin is closed (no key), and of the remaining two, one is for students, and one is for faculty
Bonou	Dame wagon	Ahouanzonme	EPP ahouanzonme	One latrine cabin is used by students, one is used by teachers, and one is used by directors, meaning 600 students share one cabin. The door to the boys' urinal is broken.
Bonou	Atchonsa	Agbomahan	EPP Agbomahan	One latrine cabin is assigned to students, and two are assigned to faculty. Two of the cabins (student and one faculty) were locked with no available key, so the informant reported that students were permitted to use the faculty latrine, meaning 170 students and all faculty members shared one cabin.
Dangbo	Dangbo	Tovè	EPP Tovè	Of three latrine cabins, one is used by girls, one by boys, and one by faculty. The girls' urinal is missing a door.

Dangbo	Dangbo	Mondotokpa	EPP mondotokpa	One cabin was assigned for girls, one for boys, and one for faculty. One urinal was missing a door, and both the latrine and urinal block were not easily accessible.
Dangbo	Dangbo	Dangbo- Honmè	EPP Dangbo- Honmè	Two latrine cabins are reserved for faculty, and one is for students. The only student cabin has an exterior lock, but not interior lock.