

USAID/E3 Water Communications and Knowledge Management (CKM) Project

GLOBAL WATERS RADIO

Jacky Ralaiarivony on Water and Sanitation in Madagascar

Interview Transcript

Global Waters Radio: You are tuned into Global Waters Radio, a podcast series produced by the Water Team at the U.S. Agency for International Development. The series offers listeners insights from USAID officials, development partners, thought leaders, and experts from across the water sector, as they discuss current USAID water programming and cutting edge research from around the world.

This week on the podcast, Jacky Ralaiarivony. For the past eight years, Jacky has served as USAID/Madagascar's water and sanitation program specialist. In that position, he has helped advance the role of public-private partnerships in improving the capacity of the island's WASH sector, and has also helped lay the groundwork for successful community-led total sanitation efforts in Madagascar's rural districts. We recently reached Jacky at the USAID office in Antananarivo to talk about, among other things, ongoing capacity-building efforts to improve water supply and sanitation in Madagascar, the island's recent successes with community-led total sanitation, and the importance of monitoring and evaluation in strengthening the mission's water and sanitation programming.

Jacky, welcome to the podcast, and to start things off, introduce yourself to our listeners and tell us about your roles with USAID/Madagascar.

Jacky Ralaiarivony: Okay, thank you very much. My name is Jacky Ralaiarivony and I am a water engineer. I first joined USAID in 2008 as the land resources management specialist at the Office of Environmental and Rural Development and Food Security. Since 2009, I have been the mission's water and sanitation program specialist, and I'm the acting mission environmental officer as well.

GWR: Well, as you know, capacity building has been one of the mission's priorities as it works to improve infrastructure and service provision in the WASH sector. Can you talk about how USAID/Madagascar has contributed to those capacity-building efforts, both at the national and local levels?

JR: We have worked closely, hand-in-hand, with the Government of Madagascar to boost their capacity, build their leadership roles and responsibilities. We have worked also with the community at the grassroots level. Mainly we have worked with a community of volunteers in order to sensitize people about key WASH messages. We have worked with over 15,000 volunteers in our intervention areas.

On top of that, we literally built strategic partnerships with other donors and partners, and also with the private sector, such as Coca-Cola, which is really I think a huge collaboration from our part. And finally, we have implemented innovative approaches based on the reality and based on the assessment and evaluation that we have conducted at the grassroots level, such as the public-private partnership and community-led total sanitation approach, for instance.

GWR: Well, we'll talk a bit more about Madagascar's successes with community-led total sanitation in a moment, but first, looking to the year ahead, could you tell us what specific WASH activities or partnerships the mission is involved with that you are particularly enthusiastic about?

JR: I think 2018 will be an exciting year for us, because we have just awarded RANO-WASH, one of our bilateral WASH projects—it is really our flagship WASH project—within the government system, assisting them to improve their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, their information management systems, their leadership and governance aspect. And also to really work on infrastructure, with WASH infrastructure at the grassroots level, and we are going to work in six regions of Madagascar with that project. And finally, that project will enhance behavior change through information, education, and communication.

On top of that, we have also our urban activities in collaboration with Coca-Cola. It is really interesting because it is a project of \$5 million for three years. We are going to work in three urban communities here in Madagascar; it is exciting because we can really leverage Coca-Cola's resources to build infrastructure and we can complement that with our information, education, communication, and behavior change communication-funded activities. At the moment, it is really one of the greatest public-private partnerships that the mission has ever had.

GWR: Let's talk some more about collaboration between these different stakeholder groups in Madagascar's WASH sector. Can you give our listeners a sense about how government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector have been coordinating with one another to improve WASH services and infrastructure on the island?

JR: Yes, previously we had the WASH Coalition that gathered private sector, or NGOs, or international NGOs, or donors working in the WASH sector. The WASH Coalition was like a space where we can discuss the WASH challenges in Madagascar; it

helped also to do some reflection about coordination among the WASH stakeholders as well, by including the government as part of the discussion.

In Madagascar as well we have the WASH private-sector association, and we have also the WASH civil-society organization, that were set up in a legal way. Of course we have the donors group alliances that help donors to discuss about support in the WASH sector, and to look for synergies or leverages in the WASH sector. Finally, the mission is increasing in a significant way its leadership role in the WASH sector, so they are really pushing for complementarity and also synergy.

GWR: Well, as mentioned earlier Jacky, community-led total sanitation, or CLTS, has had a positive impact recently on public health in Madagascar. Can you describe the ways that CLTS has been important to achieving USAID/Madagascar's overall objectives for the WASH sector?

JR: Sanitation is really a great challenge in Madagascar. However, we have implemented the CLTS activities in Madagascar, and we have seen really great improvement in terms of containing human waste and also in terms of, really, the health outcomes of such activity. Having sanitation facilities is real important. Once the human waste is contained, we really see great improvement in terms of the nutrition status of children under 5. It is really important, as well, because you know Madagascar subscribes to the SDG [Sustainable Development Goal] goals, and we would like really to see Madagascar ending open defecation practice. For your information, the open defecation practice is currently over 40 percent. So with the ministry in charge of WASH leadership, the WASH community in Madagascar strives to reduce in a drastic way that open defecation practice in a few years. So I think this is really a huge achievement, what we have done so far. But a great challenge is still waiting for us.

GWR: Given that remaining challenge, would you say you are optimistic when you look out at the next couple years that Madagascar will be able to continue making improvements in terms of eliminating open defecation?

JR: Yes. I'm really optimistic because for us it was like a learning-doing process. And I can tell you, other countries, they come here to learn more about how Madagascar is implementing these CLTS activities. We have tried to conduct several assessments, like adoption barrier or behavior change barrier and so on and so forth, in order to inform us as we are implementing the CLTS activities. Let's say we have implemented from the beginning until now, we have implemented a true improved CLTS approach so far based on those assessments that we have done in our CLTS movement.

GWR: And Jacky would you say those monitoring and evaluation efforts for USAID/Madagascar WASH programming have helped increase the effectiveness of those programs?

JR: Yes, that's correct. Last March, we helped the Government of Madagascar to put in place more actually data-based with regard to the WASH status in each of the 22 regions of Madagascar. Of course we have worked hand-in-hand with UNICEF and WaterAid, but it's a huge contribution in the WASH sector because we currently have those data that will inform the implementation of WASH programs in Madagascar from now to the future.

GWR: Well, Jacky, thank you so much for taking the time to join us today.

JR: Okay, thank you very much, you are more than welcome.

GWR: For more information on USAID/Madagascar's WASH programming and the country's experiences with community-led total sanitation, please have a look at the links below. And as always, if you have a topic you would like to see covered on a future edition of the podcast, go ahead and drop us a line at waterteam@usaid.gov.

This is Global Waters Radio.