



Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership

Tracking Network Analysis: Kitui County, Kenya

July 2021

Challenge

In 2013, a national government mandate made Kitui County in Kenya responsible for delivering safe, reliable water supply services to its more than one million residents. To fulfill this mandate water supply infrastructure was installed, though unevenly, and rural communities with few resources or capacity became responsible for managing and maintaining it. The result was long, frequent service disruptions that left people without water for extended periods of time.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership (SWS) is supporting the Kitui County government to strengthen an existing local water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) network named the Kitui WASH forum. The forum, comprising local donors, government and non-governmental entities, and private enterprises, meets quarterly and provides a platform for members to coordinate, plan, and support more sustainable rural water service delivery across the county. This includes models for professionalizing rural water service delivery, such as FundiFix — a performance-based water service and professionalized maintenance model.

In 2018, SWS began implementing various interventions to support the Kitui WASH forum with its goals that included:

1. Understanding the performance of WASH services in communities, schools, and health facilities.
2. Exploring the enabling environment to scale up FundiFix.
3. Engaging in county-level planning and delivery of universal access to water service.

At that time, SWS partners also conducted an Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) of the forum, and then again in 2020.

Network analysis was chosen as an appropriate method to evaluate forum member relationships because it helps to identify opportunities to improve network cooperation and information sharing, and to develop capacity. Specifically, ONAs provide network “maps” that visually display member engagement, power dynamics, coordination levels, resource flows, the network’s overall structure, and shifts within the network over time. Ultimately, SWS hopes that this knowledge will help the forum to advance its water service objectives.

The 2020 ONA and its comparison to the 2018 study helped SWS partners answer the following questions:

1. How has the network changed over the past two years?
2. To what extent have different stakeholder groups become stronger or more influential?
3. To what extent are actors coordinating or interacting more?

Approach

SWS interviewed 29 key Kitui WASH actors, all forum members, selected for their authority, knowledge, and consistent involvement in the local sector. Questions centered around quantifying four relationship types: information-sharing, skill-sharing, resources, and authority. Other qualitative-focused questions were asked to gather information on successes, challenges, and suggested solutions toward sustainable water service and maintenance in Kitui.

Partners gathered 15 of the interviewees to discuss and explain preliminary ONA findings, incorporating feedback from participants into the final report. Of note, there are approximately 50-60 active forum members. However this study commenced amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the forum to suspend its in-person meetings from December 2019 until March 2021. While some communication continued online and via other technologies, many forum residents in rural locations had limited access to these alternative methods.

Results

A comparison between the baseline 2018 ONA and the 2020 endline ONA shows an overall increase of network actor relationships in terms of types and frequencies of interaction (see Figure 1).

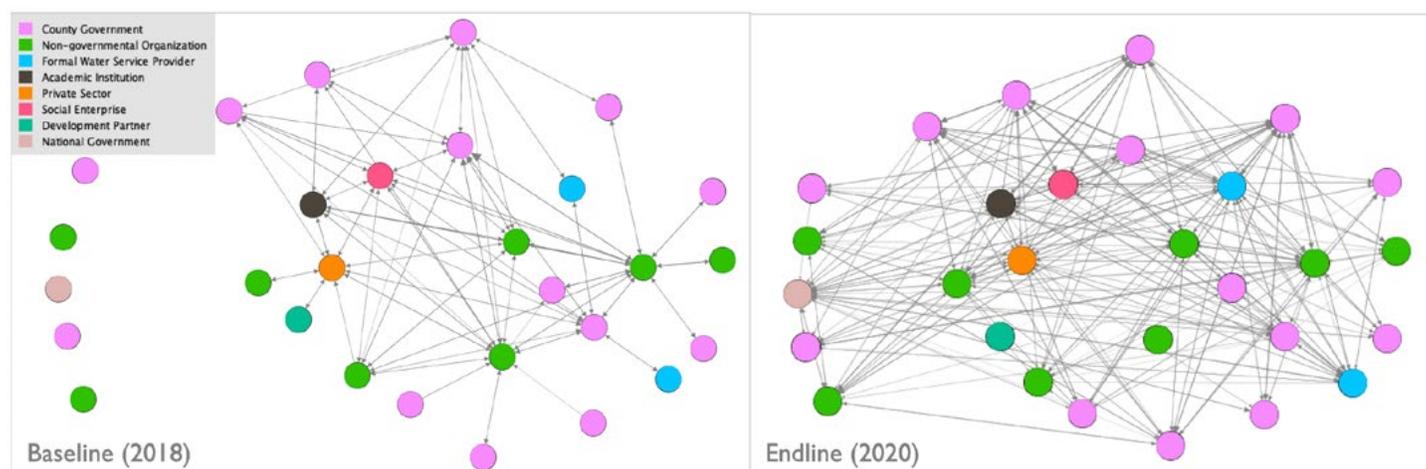


Figure 1. Baseline 2018 ONA results (l) and endline 2020 ONA

The endline Kitui ONA displays one large cluster with no isolated clusters to limit relationships. In addition, the combined number of all measured relationship tie types (information-sharing, skill-sharing, resources, and authority) increased fourfold between 2018 and 2020, from 223 at baseline to 825 at endline. Information exchange saw the biggest relationship growth from 117 to 345.

Tie Type	Baseline (2018)	Endline (2020)
Information	117	345
Authority	58	218
Skills	37	212
Resources	11	50
Total	223	825

The endline ONA also indicates that the county government dominates two critical relationship types — skills transfer and influence — previously occupied by NGOs in Kitui. The ONA also shows that the county government expanded its role as a central skill provider and recipient, interacting with the entire network in terms of consultations, training, coaching, and co-developing solutions (see Figure 2). Forum interviewees mention specifically that county government WASH officials and community-level water committees were increasingly trained on technical topics, such as resource mapping, data analysis and management, life cycle costing approach, and climate-proofing water supply infrastructure. These findings, along with other evidence, point to the county government gradually taking on greater sector responsibility, supported by stakeholders.

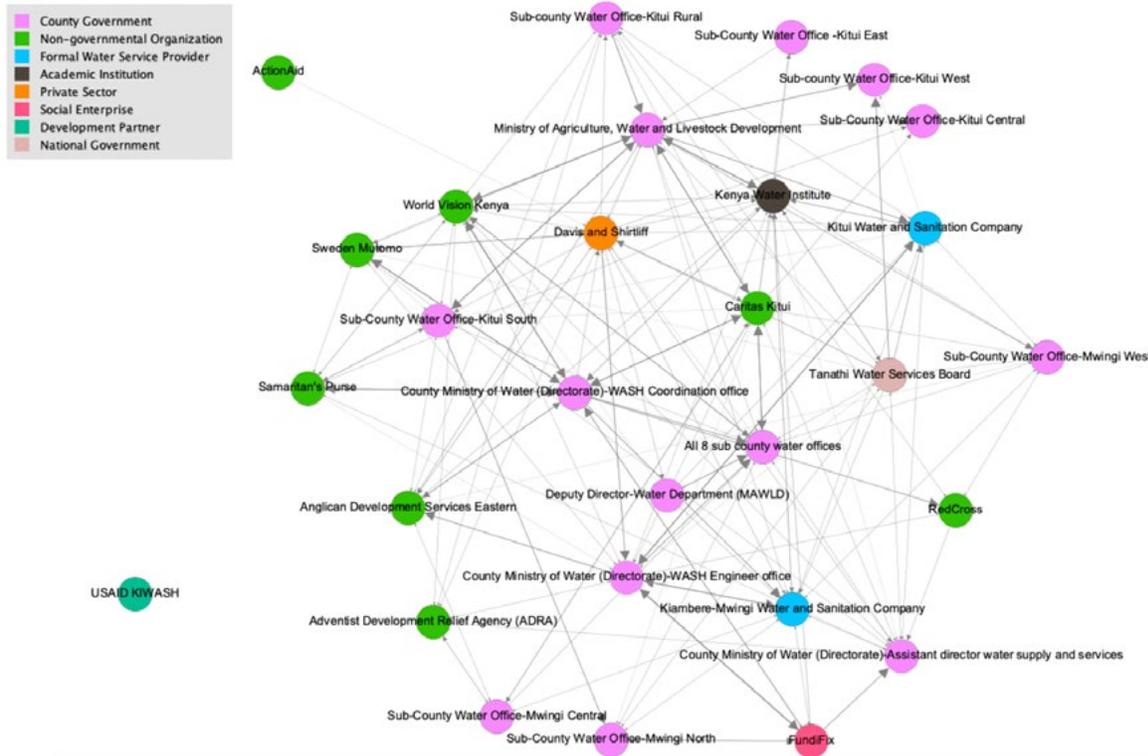


Figure 2. Endline network of skill ties for all frequencies of interactions

Overall, the endline ONA shows significant relationship and interaction growth among Kitui WASH network actors, driven largely by the forum’s quarterly meetings and follow up activities. Interviewees revealed that the forum’s collective approach to planning, monitoring, and reporting county WASH performance served to both increase and strengthen network relationships, and led to the emergence of sub-county WASH forums at the local levels. WASH actors say they anticipate a continued strong WASH network to lead to increased private sector participation and the scaling up of professionalized models for rural water service delivery across the country for more reliable water services.

About the Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership: The Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership is a global United States Agency for International Development (USAID) cooperative agreement with the University of Colorado Boulder (UCB) to identify locally driven solutions to the challenge of developing robust local systems capable of sustaining water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) service delivery. The consortium of partners—Environmental Incentives, IRC, LINC, Oxford University, Tetra Tech, WaterSHED, Whave, and UCB—are demonstrating, learning about, and sharing evidence on systems-based approaches for improving the sustainability of WASH services in four countries. This report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through USAID under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement AID-OAA-A-16-00075. The contents are the responsibility of the Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government. For more information, visit www.globalwaters.org/SWVS, or contact the USAID Center for Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (waterteam@usaid.gov) or Amy Javernick-Will (amy.javernick@colorado.edu).