

# Human resources: East and Southern Africa region

Gashaw Kebede Muluneh (Plan International, Ethiopia), Anyitike Mwakitalima (Ministry of Health, Tanzania)

## The hunter-gathering approach

Hunter-gathering is a process of rapidly collecting and collating information, experiences and contributions. In a workshop setting, hunter-gatherers self-select a topic they are most interested in championing and work together in groups to produce a short report (2-6 pages) by the end of the workshop – groups and topics are decided upon on the first day. Each day, dedicated time is given for people to collect relevant information from one another. Over the course of the session the groups self-organise collecting contributions and feeding into other topics. Participants are asked to collect information informally through breaks and mealtimes. They may also like to use the opportunity in plenary sessions to take notes on their particular topic and ask questions to presenters that could help them with their reports. Outputs are action-orientated, with groups asked to reflect on what should be done moving forward and recommendations for policy and practice.

The notes produced are not meant to be polished or exhaustive, and they are not peer reviewed. They are rapid explorations into priority topics, which are written and disseminated quickly in the hope that they will trigger further conversations, debate and interest. As such, they are not for citation.

***This methodology is very much a work-in-progress. Comments and suggestions to strengthen and develop the hunter-gatherer process and method, as well as the content and structure of the notes would be very welcome. Or if you wish to do a rapid exploration into a topic that interests you, please contact us: [clts@ids.ac.uk](mailto:clts@ids.ac.uk)***

## 1. Description of issues/challenges

The sanitation sector in the region suffers from a shortage of human resources to adequately implement the related activities at scale. The shortage differs from one country to the other, for instance, in Tanzania the shortage is around 40 per cent, 35 per cent for Uganda and 30 per cent in Kenya.

Other issues include shortage of skilled staff, high staff turn-over, limited budget for capacity building and shortage of working tools (transport and office equipment). At the local level (Village/Kebele) the Health Extension Workers (HEWs) are very busy with multi-tasks. For example in Ethiopia they are responsible for 18 packages/areas, only some of which are related to sanitation. Due to this shortage the Environmental Health experts are forced to over stretch themselves,



working in more than one county (Uganda and Kenya) and up to five wards in Tanzania. In Eritrea the situation is worse where one staff is placed to work at the sub-zone level (similar to district in Tanzania and Ethiopia). In Eritrea the personnel are responsible for all health related issues including sanitation.

In terms of the learning institutions the number is inadequate because quite a few recruit trainees for certificate, diploma and degree. In Tanzania and Uganda only two Universities offer a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Health. However, in Ethiopia there are around 32 Universities which offer a Bachelor of Science related to Sanitation and Hygiene. In terms of Diplomas and Certificates, the number of training institutions is reasonably better compared to degree.

## 2. Current solutions (including country/ organisation)

In order to provide support to busy extension workers, Ethiopia has devised the Health Development Army (HDA). The HDAs are the 1:30 networks in which one HDA is responsible for supporting 30 households. An HDA will share reports and issues with HEWs twice a month. The structure is extended to include the 1:5 networks (1 to every 5 households). In Tanzania, the government has implemented the formal training to Community Health Workers (CHWs) to support health related matters within the villages. In each village one CHW is assigned. The nine month training is provided to enable them to comprehend technical issues relevant to their areas of jurisdiction.

Similarly, to cope with the shortage of staff, governments have devised the system to assign more service areas to Environmental Health personnel as is the case in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Eritrea. Although this model is not very effective it helps to ensure services are extended into unserved areas.

## 3. Emerging questions

Institutional review happened in some of the countries including Ethiopia where a new Department of Hygiene and Environmental Health has been introduced at Federal level and will be cascaded into lower levels. Other measures which are emerging include re-distribution of staff from areas where they are concentrated especially in urban areas (Urban-Rural movement, the case of Tanzania). Also, Tanzania has decided to provide vehicles to environmental health offices at council level and a motorcycle for staff at ward level to facilitate follow-up, supervision and monitoring. In addition, the best performing districts, wards and villages are awarded means of transport to try to tackle the transport issues (case from Tanzania).

## 4. Recommendations

- Assign one environmental health personnel to the Kababi level to strengthen the delivery of sanitation services (case of Eritrea).
- Support the cascading of the new Hygiene and Environmental Health department into the lower government levels.
- Equip the environmental health/public health offices with means of transport and working tools.
- Provide job trainings, tailor-made trainings and long-term trainings to staff in order to build capacity within the sector.
- Establish a budget line for sanitation that covers the recruitment of new staff.
- Foster development plans for environmental health/public health staff.