

Democratizing water through Accountability

Case Study

LOCATION: Casino estate, Molo Sub-county, Nakuru County

Context

Cassino is an informal settlement with 644 households (3222 total population) in Molo sub-county, Nakuru County. Cassino estate was established in 1985 on migrants settling there after displacement by internally politically-instigated conflict. Molo is generally a wet area with many natural water resources and supplies Nakuru town with water services. Poor governance and corruption, for a long time denied residents of Molo and particularly Cassino informal settlement access to clean and safe water. Most of them, therefore got their water from unprotected river either by going to fetch it or through water vendors. The same river was used for other household needs, including washing clothes, watering cows and small scale irrigation for small scale farms along the river. This led to pollution and contamination of water leading to the outbreak of water borne diseases with cholera being the most prevalent. The most recent was in 2014 with cholera killing people in the location. With this background, the communities decided to demand for access to affordable, clean and safe water from the duty bearers. Molo's lack of access to affordable, clean and safe water is a classic example of the injustices and serious deprivation in access, control and use of water resources. It exemplifies existing inequalities of benefit sharing of water resources in that Molo is a water catchment supplying water to Nakuru town, yet since 1985 Molo residents continued to struggle to access and afford water until 2014 when they got piped water installed.

How the change happened

In September 2012, Forum Syd began the implementation of Jua Jimbo project a social accountability project in Molo Sub-county, Nakuru County. The project sought to empower marginalized communities to agitate for improved democratic governance at the county level. To achieve this, the Forum Syd carried out community workshops were to empower targeted communities with knowledge on the governance structures, the duty bearers and their roles and responsibilities, the human rights as guaranteed in the constitution of Kenya 2010. Jua Jimbo also imparted lobbying and advocacy skills through workshops and coaching processes. After gaining knowledge and skills, the community CSOs embarked on carrying out community driven needs identification and prioritization process where communities identified development needs that had not been met by duty bearers and where their rights were being violated. The 2 local community organizations – Hope Cassino Mwereri and Tujikaze self help group among other things prioritized water and sanitation issues in the casino informal settlement. To respond be able to claim their right to clean and safe water, the two CSOs and other community members formed a community lobbying and advocacy team which began to push duty bearers – county officials and water institutions to enable access to clean, affordable and safe water for the people of the Casino informal settlement.

During this processes, Jua Jimbo project targeted Duty bearers pushing them to be responsive to community needs by holding dialogue meetings. The project builds trust and creates working interfaces between duty bearers and community members. During this interfaces, the Cassino informal settlement community members would present their call to action in respect needs and in line with government development plans and strategies. The community members also held residents meetings (public barazas) focusing on water access in the area. During this meetings, they mobilized the communities to lobby and advocate for a sustainable water solution in the settlement in the settlements.

The process of lobby and advocacy in simplified steps:

1. Community orientation and by in: introduce the project
2. Community training workshops and mobilization
3. Community actions and dialogue meetings

Below is a rough diagrammatic representation.



Why the Change Happened

Through Forum Syd funded project titled Jua Jimbo project the representatives of the local community organisations were trained on governance structure after devolution, on the duty bearers and their roles, on rights and how to claim rights and most importantly on lobbying and advocacy. After these trainings, the local community based organizations, with the support of Muungano Support Trust (Forum Syd implementing partner) carried out needs identification and prioritization (more like community action plans) all which were activities within the project. These activities triggered action in the sense that the communities were aware of what they needed to do and how to go about it. After the training, the community began to lobby and advocate for access of affordable water & sanitation in Casino estate, Molo. The local CBOs carried out very successfully lobbying and advocacy to the institution mandated to provide water in Nakuru County namely Nakuru Water and Sanitation Services Company, which is a public interest company mandated by government to provide services related to water and sanitation in Nakuru County.

Before Jua Jimbo project, community members did not know the need to participate in public forums or to demand accountability from duty bearers. Service provision of water was always seen as a favour from political leaders rather than a right that people have. After Jua Jimbo project, the local CBO gained confidence to start raising questions to the leaders on violation of rights. They therefore were able to access water after lobbying and dialogue with leaders. They now have two water kiosks where they access water at an affordable rate of 2kes. Per 20lts of water (previously they were buying at 20kes for 20lts of water). The community members credit this change to Jua Jimbo project, because the knowledge and the trainings empowered them to act.

Reactions from Duty bearers

Jua Jimbo work contributed to change in relations and attitudes by duty bearers to rights holders demanding service delivery. The project work from the orientation process targeted changing relations between duty bearers and rights holders to build rapport, foster trust and promote responsiveness. The process of changing relationship with the duty bearers took place co-currently with the process empowering rights holders. Some of the duty bearers would attend community workshops and vice-versa. As such, when the two local CSOs forwarded the case to the Molo ward Member of County Assembly, his reaction was more of cooperation & collaboration. The MCA linked Molo ward residents to the NAWASCO (Nakuru Water & Sanitation Company) whose response was also cooperation and support to the CSO members.

Challenges Faced

1. During that time of face to face contact with NAWASCO, there were no public finances allocated to provision of water to Molo ward.

2. Getting a face to face meeting with the Managing Director of NAWASCO was challenging as he was always out of Office.
3. Fragmented water management, service delivery funds in Molo ward where the targeted geographical area was delineated as for sub-county development fund function rather than that of the national government.

An Illustrating Qoute from A Rights Holder

“ Before the project the residents were not aware of the importance about devolution and county governance. It was until when they got trained in lobbying and advocacy, community needs identification, writing of memos and petition, constitutional rights. Through lobbying and advocacy training the Molo community was able to lobby to get clean and affordable water. Since time in memorial, casino estate had never had clean water, but through the lobbying and advocacy they the estate got clean, sufficient, tapped water at a fair price.” Says Joseph Karanja, Community Mobilizer, Mollo

Implementation and partner relations

The local CBO Casino Mwereri group-advocated for casino water project, while the partner organisation **Muongano Support Trust** gave technical support to the CBOs and the villagers in terms of trainings and capacity building. Forum Syd worked with MUST to support the local CBO.

From all the changes the community learnt a lot

- Change is a process that takes time to be in shape
- The non-confrontational lobbying and advocacy can also allow them to fight and access their rights, they do have to do it through violence
- Communities need to be organised, there is need to unite and have a common achievable goal
- For change to start there must acknowledge the problems and be ready to change.

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