

Eradicating water challenges through WASHCOM's intervention, Angwar Alhajo Magaji, Sandamu LGA, Katsina

Sandamu is a **Local Government** Area in Katsina State of Nigeria. It has an area of 1418 km² and a population of 137,287 as per 2006 census. Sandamu LGA share boundary with Daura LGA, most of the people of Sandamu are farmers and herdsman and some of them are working with federal, state and local government council. They grow crops like maize, millet beans and different types of vegetables. The people are majorly Fulani, friendly and accommodative.

Mallam Aliyu Hussaini is the WASHCOM (water, sanitation and hygiene committee) chairman of Angwar Alhaji Magaji Community of the LGA. He is a native of the village, married with children and a farmer with basic education. He shared his experience on how poor management and negligence of water facility had costed many lives in his community. The WASHCOM was formed six year ago but the committee didn't live up to the expectations as the members were not very serious. As result of this suffering for drinking water continued and increased in the community due to the increase in the population.

Many members of the community suffered in one way or the other way to non-availability safe drinking water, some members of the community lost one or two people of their family due to the outbreak of disease such as cholera, typhoid and malaria. The pregnant women and children were more vulnerable to the crisis. Many children didn't attend their schools regularly due to the search for water for their family. They used to go in search for water in the morning and when they return from the search, time for school was gone. The crisis didn't leave any one behind, even animal was not left out in need for water.



Today their story has changed, they thank god for giving them water, they are more careful and concerned about their rehabilitated water facility. Several trainings were conducted by project team supported by UNICEF, UKAid and LGA WASH Unit to eliminate the water related challenges in the community, some community member were also selected for training as a Local Area Mechanic (LAM), who are available to carry out major repairs in case of any breakdown. Local Trader (LT) is also available for them to supply good quality and affordable pump spare parts. Facility caretakers are also trained to carry out preventive maintenance of the pump in regular intervals.

All these were done under SHAWN project under which the community benefitted with the rehabilitation of their broken-down borehole. the WASHCOM was also strengthened to deliver its responsibility, they are oriented on water facility management, tariff collection, documentation of WASH activities and maintaining sanitation and hygiene in the community.

Today all 04 handpumps within the community are functional, all this are made possible with the community ownership and management of water facility by the WASHCOM. They have monthly meetings at the end of every month to discuss issues related to maintenance of water facilities and improving sanitation and hygiene within their community. Apart from that they organize meetings in case of any emergency.



Water User Fee is now introduced in the community for every households, and each member of the community is fully involved in it, this makes it easier for them, sometime when community have enough money in their account, soft loans were given to other members to assist them to grow in business or farming and since inception the community had never experienced any problem among the members of the village.

Now, all children attend school without any complain and, the WASHCOM made it compulsory for every child to be in school at the appropriate time given by school authority. Issue of cholera and typhoid has become something of the past. *“Even you can go around and see things by yourself Alhamdulillah”* Said Mal. Hussaini, WASHCOM Chairman.
