



WASH Systems for Health Programme Nigeria



Outcomes and Learning

2024–2026

Funded by the UK International Development from the UK government. | Implemented by Self Help Africa

Consortium Partners: Self Help Africa (lead) | NEWSAN | Toilet Pride | Population Service International | Sanitation Learning Hub | University of Bristol | BudgIT



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About This Document



A motorised water facility in Maitsidau community, Makoda Local Government Area, Kano State. 26th May 2026. (c) Self Help Africa.

This brief presents the learning and achievements from the WASH Systems for Health (WS4H) programme in Nigeria, implemented between 2024 and 2026 with funding from the UK International Development from the UK government. It is written for the WASH sector practitioners, policymakers, donors, and civil society in Nigeria and globally, including those engaged with the Agenda for Change collaboration.

The document aims to capture what we did, what we achieved, and most importantly, what we learned. It draws on programme reports, outcome harvesting, stakeholder feedback, and internal reflection to present honest, evidence-based insights from one of the first dedicated WASH systems strengthening programmes implemented in Nigeria.

WS4H is part of a growing movement in the WASH sector to move beyond infrastructure delivery toward strengthening the systems, governance, financing, capacity, coordination, and accountability that make water and sanitation services last. This brief is offered as a contribution to that shared learning journey.

"Systems strengthening is not about one organisation doing more. It is about enabling governments, communities, and Civil Society Organisations to do better together, and long after we leave."

- **Timothy Ibeawuchi, WS4H Programme Team Lead**

Abbreviations

A4C	Agenda for Change
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
CRS	Cross River State
DEWT	Delivering Effective WASH Training
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK)
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
IO	Intermediate Outcome
KAN-MAF	Kano Mutual Accountability Framework
LAM	Local Area Mechanic
LCCA	Life-Cycle Cost Approach
LGA	Local Government Area
LTGWASH	Local Task Group on WASH
MBS	Market-Based Sanitation
MDA	Ministry, Department or Agency
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MIS	Management Information System
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NEWSAN	Nigeria WASH Network
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
ODF	Open Defecation Free
PSI	Population Services International
SDM	Service Delivery Model
SHA	Self Help Africa
SLH	Sanitation Learning Hub
STGWASH	State Task Group on WASH
SURWIN	Sustainable Rural Water Infrastructure Nigeria (preventive maintenance model)
TWG	Technical Working Group
VLOM	Village Level Operation and Maintenance
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WASHIMS	WASH Information Management System
WS4H	WASH Systems for Health

The WASH Systems for Health Programme at a Glance

Funder	UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
Lead implementer	Self Help Africa (SHA)
Consortium	GOAL, NEWSAN, ToiletPride, Population Service International, Social Finance, Sanitation Learning Hub, University of Bristol, BudgIT
Duration	2024–2026 (2 years; premature closure)
Budget	£5,000,000 (across Nigeria and Sierra Leone)
Geographic focus	Kano State (Makoda LGA), Cross River State (Yala LGA), and national level (Abuja hub)
Programme goal	Progressive reduction in the number of preventable deaths of poor mothers, children, and infants due to WASH-related disease.

Executive Summary

The Programme

The WASH Systems for Health (WS4H) programme was funded by the UK International Development from the UK government and implemented by a consortium led by SHA across Kano and Cross River States in Nigeria from 2024 to 2026. With a total budget of £5 million, the programme set out to strengthen systems that undermine sustainable, inclusive, and resilient WASH services in Nigeria.

What We Did

Working across four Intermediate Outcomes (IOs), the programme strengthened WASH governance, policy, planning, and financing at the two targeted states and selected Local Government Areas (LGAs); demonstrated scalable and sustainable rural water and sanitation service delivery models; supported evidence-based sanitation governance; and built the sector coordination, capacity, and collective action needed for long-term impact. A national coordination hub in Abuja linked subnational implementation to federal-level advocacy and systems dialogue.

Headline Achievements in Numbers

~187,575 People with restored/new improved water access (SHA + LGA)	5,520+ New household toilets constructed (Yala + Makoda)	211% Increase in Cross River State WASH budget (2026)	169.07% Increase in Kano State WASH budget (2026)
32.9% increase in WASH budget allocation in Makoda LGA (2026).	51 Solar boreholes rehabilitated Yala(29) + Makoda(22) LGAs	151,634 Total Persons with sanitation access in Makoda (new + baseline)	1 Open Defecation Prohibition Bill passed in Cross River State
2 LGAs WASH Strategic Plans developed (Yala + Makoda)	2 States Adopted preventive rural water sustainability model	2 States WASH Finance Strategies developed (Kano + Cross River)	2 States WASH Policies reviewed, approved, and formally adopted
2 States WASH Finance Strategies developed (Kano + Cross River)	2 States Basic Sanitation Access Roadmaps developed (Kano + Cross River)	40 MDAs Dedicated WASH budget lines in Cross River State(23) and Kano(17)	50 TBOs secured ₦35 million in business financing through sanitation market facilitation in Cross River.

12,642 New household toilets constructed in Makoda LGA	₦1B+ Kano State commitment to pro-poor sanitation subsidies.	USD 320K Additional external funding mobilised for SDM pilot	1 State Passed Water Law - Cross River
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1. Context: WASH in Nigeria

The Challenge

Nigeria's population exceeds 220 million, yet access to water and sanitation services remains limited (Ibrahim, 2025, p. 234). Approximately 60 million people lack basic water services and 80 million lack improved sanitation, while only 26.5% of the population has access to both (World Bank, 2021; UNICEF Nigeria, n.d.). In rural areas, 39% of households lack basic water supply and 29% practice open defecation, a figure that has shown little change since 1990 (World Bank, 2021). Critically, the latest WASHNORM III report indicates that the number of Nigerians practicing open defecation has increased from 46 million in 2019 to 48 million in 2021.

Systemic challenges stem from governance issues and a significant funding deficit. Meeting sector goals requires tripling the current annual expenditure of less than \$1 billion or allocating 1.7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to the sector (Ibrahim, 2025, p. 234; UNICEF Nigeria, n.d.). Overlapping jurisdictions in the 1999 Constitution between federal policy and state implementation frequently result in coordination failures (Ibrahim, 2025, p. 234). These issues are compounded by corruption, with estimates indicating 40% of project funds are lost to embezzlement, and a lack of climate-resilient planning in existing water laws (Ibrahim, 2025, pp. 241, 249). Consequently, 90% of water utilities report infrastructure damage from flooding, while 84% have observed significant changes in stream flows (Babalobi, n.d., pp. 12-13).

Kano and Cross River States, where the WS4H programme is implemented, reflect these national dynamics. Kano, in the north-west, faces severe rural water functionality challenges, low WASH budget allocations, and limited private sector participation. Cross River, in the south, has higher baseline access but struggles with similar governance and financing gaps, compounded by weak enforcement of sanitation legislation and fragmented coordination among agencies (Ibrahim, 2025, p. 234).

The Opportunity: Systems Strengthening for Health

The WS4H programme focused on strengthening WASH systems beyond infrastructure by improving governance, accountability, financing, and collaboration among key actors. Aligned with the Agenda for Change framework, the programme invested in the institutions, processes and capacities needed for sustainable service delivery. As a dedicated systems strengthening initiative, WS4H adopted a long-term, adaptive approach to build resilient WASH systems that can be sustained beyond project support.

2. Headline Achievements and Cross-Cutting Learning

Before presenting achievements and learning by theme and intermediate outcomes, this section highlights the headline results and the cross-cutting learning that does not sit neatly within any single outcome but shapes the programme's results across all outcomes.

Headline Results Across the Programme

ACHIEVEMENT	Strengthened WASH governance, policy, and legal frameworks across states and LGAs The programme contributed to significant governance reforms, including WASH policy reviews (at state, national and regional levels), enactment of the Cross River State Water Supply and Sanitation Law, integration of WASH into the Kano Mutual Accountability Framework, and improved planning and accountability structures, strengthening the enabling environment for sustainable WASH service delivery.
ACHIEVEMENT	Improved systems performance The programme recorded measurable improvements in WASH system performance using the WASH Systems Index Tool. Between 2024 and 2025, Kano improved from 29% to 55% for water systems and 33% to 50% for sanitation systems, while Cross River improved from 42% to 55% for water systems and 18% to 41% for sanitation systems. These gains reflect strengthened system performance across key building blocks, supported by improved coordination, planning, and use of evidence for decision-making.
ACHIEVEMENT	Increased and institutionalised public financing for WASH services There were marked increases in WASH financing commitments in Cross River and Kano States and their LGAs, including increased budget allocations, creation of dedicated WASH budget lines across MDAs, counterpart funding commitments, LGA operational funding, and financing coordination mechanisms that strengthened resource mobilisation and tracking.
ACHIEVEMENT	Legislative and policy milestones achieved Cross River State strengthened the WASH enabling environment through new WASH legislation, ODF prohibition measures, and the adoption of updated WASH policies in both states, providing a stronger foundation for sustainable and inclusive service delivery.
ACHIEVEMENT	Institutionalisation of sustainable rural water service delivery models The programme supported the adoption and scaling of preventive maintenance systems, professionalised rural water management, and water kiosk models, shifting service delivery from infrastructure provision to sustainable, system-based operating models with clearer governance and financial arrangements.

ACHIEVEMENT**Strengthened sanitation systems, markets, and household uptake of improved sanitation**

WS4H supported the development of sanitation market systems, domestication of the Clean Nigeria Campaign, expansion of sanitation enterprises, improved access to sanitation financing, and increased household investment in improved toilets through CLTS and market-based approaches.

ACHIEVEMENT**Enhanced coordination, evidence systems, and institutional capacity for WASH sector performance**

The programme strengthened coordination platforms (Local Task Group on WASH, State Task Group on WASH, national Task Working Groups, and regional forums), improved multi-level sector alignment, and institutionalised evidence tools such as the WASH Systems Index, outcome harvesting, WASHIMS, mWater, and Tracka, strengthening planning, accountability, and decision-making across the sector.

"We have been able to pass the water law, the state WASH policy, and other WASH strategic documents. We have to ensure that these laws, policies, and strategic guidance are implemented to get WASH delivery right."

- Barr. Offiong Bassey Mensah, Commissioner for Water Resources and Sanitation, Cross River State

Cross-Cutting Learning: What the WS4H Programme Taught Us



Stakeholders at the launch of the Strategic WASH documents in Kano State. 11th June, 2026. © Self Help Africa

KEY LEARNING

Policy reform accelerates when linked to evidence, tools, and structured dialogue

Policy and legal reforms are most effective when driven by evidence, technical support, and coordinated stakeholder engagement, enabling evidence-based findings to translate into government action.

KEY LEARNING

Sustainable service delivery depends on embedded systems and operating models rather than infrastructure alone

Sustainable WASH services require infrastructure to be supported by strong management, financing, and accountability systems. Long-term functionality improves when services move from project-based delivery to professionalised, system-managed models.

KEY LEARNING

Localisation and partner strengthening as a driver of sustainable system change

Investing in local partners and institutions is critical for sustainability, as it strengthens ownership, institutional capacity, and continuity of WASH improvements beyond the programme period.

KEY LEARNING

Institutionalised coordination and multi-level networks are essential for scaling and coherence

Institutionalised coordination platforms strengthen alignment, accountability, and collective action across WASH actors, making systems strengthening more effective and sustainable than project-dependent structures.

3. Learning Across the Programme Cycle

This section reflects on what we learned at each stage of the programme, from design and start-up through implementation and management, monitoring, evaluation, and learning and programme wind-down. These lessons apply beyond the four Intermediate Outcomes and are relevant to the design or management of similar systems strengthening programmes.

3.1 Programme Design and Start-Up

WS4H was designed as a systems-strengthening programme, shifting away from traditional infrastructure-focused WASH approaches. Its start-up phase prioritised managing stakeholder expectations, building relationships, and fostering shared ownership through early systems analysis and visioning workshops using the WASH Systems Index Tool. State and LGA selection was guided by strategic opportunities for reform and existing accountability structures, while consortium orientation and partner capacity strengthening required greater time and resources than initially anticipated.

KEY LEARNING

Systems strengthening requires extended, complexity-aware start-up phases.

Systems strengthening programmes require extended inception periods to build shared understanding, align stakeholders, and establish trust before results become visible. Early use of tools like the WASH Systems Index, strategic state selection linked to existing reform momentum such as the Kano State Mutual Accountability Framework (KANMAF), and structured stakeholder engagement were critical in establishing a foundation for implementation. The start-up phase also highlighted the need for sufficient time and resources for consortium alignment and capacity building across partners.

3.2 Programme Implementation and Management

Implementation was characterised by a high degree of adaptive management, iterative learning, and consortium coordination across geographically dispersed states.

- Consortia management across multiple partners with different organisational cultures, capacities, and ways of working was demanding. Regular joint planning, clear role delineation, and continuous capacity strengthening of local partners were essential.
- Stakeholder expectation management remained a recurring challenge, particularly where communities and government actors expected visible infrastructure investment. Demonstrating systems results, such as improved building block scores and new budget lines, required careful communication and political awareness.
- The programme's national coordination hub in Abuja proved valuable for bridging subnational implementation with national-level advocacy and the UK government's engagement. It also enabled the programme to contribute to national processes, from 'the Delivery Effective WASH Training' workshop to the Compact 2.0 development, and more.

KEY LEARNING**Managing stakeholder expectations in systems strengthening requires sustained communication and evidence translation.**

Systems-strengthening programmes require continuous communication to help stakeholders understand the value of less visible reforms and how they contribute to improved services. Clearly linking systems investments to tangible outcomes is essential for maintaining engagement and managing expectations.

3.3 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

WS4H applied a multi-method MEL approach to measure systems change, combining systems assessments, digital data platforms, budget tracking, and outcome harvesting. This strengthened government data systems, improved evidence-based planning and accountability, and enabled the programme to track changes in WASH system performance, policy, and coordination.

KEY LEARNING**MEL systems are most effective when they are designed for government decision-making, not only donor reporting**

MEL is most effective when it generates practical evidence for government decision-making, planning, and accountability. Combining tools such as systems assessments, performance tracking, and digital platforms strengthens learning and supports sustainable WASH systems when embedded within government priorities.

3.4 Winding Down and Exiting a Systems Strengthening Programme (Prematurely)

WS4H was a two-year programme in a field where lasting change typically requires ten or more years of continuous engagement. Closing the programme at this early stage undermines relationships and momentum built on the programme and signals to the government that external partners are not reliable long-term collaborators.

- The programme team invested significantly in transition planning, including the development of LGA WASH Strategic Plans, State Financing Strategies, and Basic Sanitation Access Roadmaps, reviewed WASH Policies, LGA WASH Strategic Plans to ensure that the foundations laid would be institutionalised and could be built upon by government and future programmes.
- Securing counterpart funding commitments from state and LGA governments for continued scale-up was a deliberate exit strategy, shifting the financial basis for systems work from external grant funding to domestic resources.
- The Agenda for Change collaboration, the STGWASH and LTGWASH platforms, and the national Technical Working Groups provide institutional vehicles for continuing the programme's work beyond WS4H funding, a form of 'structural continuity' that may partially substitute for the programme's direct engagement.

KEY LEARNING**Sustainability must be built into systems strengthening programmes from the outset**

The early closure of WS4H reinforced the importance of embedding sustainability from the beginning of a systems strengthening programme. Institutionalising strategies, policies, financing commitments, and coordination mechanisms helped create a foundation for continued progress beyond programme funding. The key learning is that long-term sustainability depends on early investment in local ownership, institutional capacity, and domestic financing to maintain momentum after programme exit.

4. Approach, Achievements, and Learning by Intermediate Outcome

Intermediate Outcome 1: Strengthening the WASH Systems Cycle, Governance, Planning, Financing, and Accountability



Strategic WASH documents launched in Kano State. 11th June, 2026. © Self Help Africa

The WS4H programme strengthened WASH governance in Kano and Cross River States by improving coordination, planning, financing, monitoring, and accountability across the sector. Using a systems-strengthening approach, it addressed weak governance, limited coordination, inadequate financing, poor data use, and weak institutional capacity to improve service sustainability, strengthen government systems, and enhance resilience to challenges such as infrastructure failure, open defecation, limited institutional WASH access, and climate-related risks.

What We Did

Institutional and Policy Reform:

WS4H strengthened WASH governance by supporting policy and legal reforms at LGA, State, National and Regional (Post 2025 Africa Water Vision Policy) levels, clarifying institutional roles, and integrating gender, inclusion and climate resilience into sector frameworks.

Strategic and Evidence-Based Planning:

The programme improved WASH planning through LGA assessments, data-driven strategies and system performance tools that support evidence-based investment and service delivery decisions.

Sustainable Financing and Resource Mobilisation:

WS4H advanced sustainable WASH financing by strengthening budget processes, establishing dedicated WASH allocations, improving resource mobilisation and enhancing financial accountability.

Digital Monitoring and Accountability:

The programme enhanced sector accountability through digital monitoring platforms, performance dashboards and regular sector reviews that improve transparency, tracking and decision-making.

Key Achievements

Strengthened WASH governance, financing, planning and accountability systems

WASH systems in Kano and Cross River became more institutionalised through governance and legal reforms, including Cross River's WASH Law (2025) and Kano's integration into the Mutual Accountability Framework. WS4H supported these changes through technical facilitation and systems analysis, contributing to stronger financing mechanisms and evidence-based planning systems reflected in improved budget allocations, coordination structures, adoption of the WASH Systems Index tool and Tracka for transparency and decision-making.

211%

Cross River State WASH budget increase (2026)

169%

Kano State WASH budget increase (2026)

40 MDAs

WASH budget lines established - **(23)** Cross River and **(17)** Kano

32.9%

increase in WASH budget allocation in Makoda LGA (2026).

26%

increase in Kano State water systems building block performance score (from 29% to 55%)

17%

increase in Kano State sanitation systems building block performance score (from 33% to 50%).

13%

River State water systems building block performance score (from 42% to 55%)

23%

increase in Cross River State sanitation systems building block performance score (from 18% to 41%)

What We Learned

KEY LEARNING

Evidence-driven systems analysis can catalyse governance and planning reforms.

The use of the WASH Systems Index Tool and LGA-wide assessments provided a structured evidence base that informed policy reviews, strategic planning processes, financing discussions, and decision-making. The experience demonstrates that systems analysis can be an effective starting point for identifying bottlenecks and building stakeholder consensus around WASH sector reforms.

KEY LEARNING

Institutionalising WASH within existing government systems strengthens ownership and accountability.

Embedding WASH priorities within existing government systems and processes improved sustainability by strengthening planning, budgeting, and accountability mechanisms rather than creating parallel structures.

KEY LEARNING

Financing reforms require both political commitment and structured coordination mechanisms.

Evidence-based advocacy, coordination platforms, and financing structures improved WASH resource mobilisation, but sustained follow-through is needed to convert commitments into actual spending and better services.

KEY LEARNING

Systems strengthening takes longer than system establishment

The programme strengthened WASH policies, accountability, financing, and oversight systems, but the late timing of reforms limited evidence of their long-term effectiveness, highlighting the need for sustained institutionalisation beyond the programme period.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Sustainable Rural Water Supply



A community woman fetching water from a motorised water facility in Maitsidau community in Makoda Local Government Area, Kano State. 26th May 2026. (c) Self Help Africa.

This outcome tested whether a professionalised, preventive maintenance model for rural water supply could deliver sustained, functional water services in Kano and Cross River States, and whether governments would adopt and finance it beyond WS4H support. The two states were selected for their contrasting climatic, geological, and socio-political contexts to assess scalability. The intervention responded to Nigeria's persistent "build-and-abandon" cycle, where weak maintenance systems, limited financing, and fragmented institutional arrangements drive high failure rates of rural water infrastructure, leaving millions without reliable access and widening inequalities in service delivery. Against this backdrop of funding gaps, institutional fragmentation, and weak accountability, WS4H sought to demonstrate that a shift

from infrastructure delivery to preventive, system-based maintenance could improve long-term functionality and strengthen government and community ownership of rural water services.

What We Did

WS4H addressed Nigeria's "build-and-abandon" challenge by shifting from one-off infrastructure delivery to a sustainable water service model built on four pillars: evidence-based planning, professional maintenance, accountability, and performance-based incentives. The programme used LGA-wide water point mapping to guide investments, introduced professional management and maintenance models, strengthened citizen-government accountability mechanisms, and linked incentives to sustained functionality of water systems. Together, these approaches promoted more reliable, demand-driven, and sustainable rural water services.

Key Achievements

Rural water service delivery systems strengthened and transitioning toward scalable, sustainable models

Rural water service delivery systems shifted from fragmented and reactive approaches toward more structured, preventive, and scalable models, evidenced by institutionalisation of preventive models, expanded infrastructure access, and increased public and partner investment in service delivery innovations such as kiosk-based management systems. WS4H supported this transition through service delivery model design, training, rehabilitation planning, and coordination of scaling processes.

111,075 People gained improved water access in Makoda (SPBHs +HBPHs)	76,500 People with restored water access (Yala)	190 Handpump Boreholes rehabilitated Makoda LGA (170 by LGA authorities and 20 by WS4H)	33 New Handpump boreholes constructed by the LGA authorities in Makoda.
55,000 people benefited from improved water access through the integration of solar-powered boreholes into water kiosk management models. (Makoda)	29 solar-powered boreholes rehabilitated in Yala LGA.	6 Handpump Boreholes rehabilitated Yala LGA	USD 320K Additional external funding mobilised for SDM pilot

What We Learned

KEY LEARNING

Demonstration pilots can build confidence for government adoption and scale-up

The implementation of rural water service delivery models provided practical evidence that contributed to government commitment for replication and scale-up. Commitments to expand the Water Service Delivery Model into additional LGAs and the subsequent adoption of a professionalised preventive maintenance approach by Kano and Cross River States suggest that demonstrating workable models can help generate confidence for wider institutional uptake.

**KEY
LEARNING****Rehabilitation investments are more sustainable when linked to management and maintenance systems**

The rehabilitation of boreholes and restoration of water services were accompanied by governance strengthening, preventative maintenance arrangements, and the introduction of water kiosk management systems. This highlights the importance of integrating infrastructure investments with management systems that support long-term functionality rather than treating rehabilitation as a standalone intervention.

**KEY
LEARNING****Institutionalisation can begin within a short programme period, but sustainability requires longer-term observation**

The programme successfully supported adoption of preventative maintenance models, water kiosk management approaches, and government commitments for scale-up within two years. However, the shortened implementation period limited opportunities to assess long-term functionality, maintenance performance, financial sustainability, and replication outcomes. The experience demonstrates that while systems can be established relatively quickly, evidence of their sustained performance requires longer implementation and monitoring periods.

**KEY
LEARNING****Sustainable rural water services require a shift from infrastructure delivery to service delivery**

The institutionalisation of the Sustainable Rural Drinking Water Initiative in Nigeria (SURWIN) preventative maintenance model and adoption of professionalised rural water sustainability approaches demonstrated the importance of moving beyond infrastructure construction and rehabilitation alone. The experience showed that sustainability depends on clearly defined governance, maintenance, and accountability arrangements involving communities, service providers, and government institutions.

"The training of Local Area Mechanics has changed how our community thinks about water maintenance. For the first time, we have someone trained and paid to maintain our pumps, not waiting for an NGO." **Community Leader, Makoda LGA, Kano State**

Intermediate Outcome 3: Laying Foundations for Accelerated, Climate-Resilient Progress in Rural Sanitation



Toilet Business Operator standing at the entrance of a SATO Pan toilet facility in Yala Local Government Area, Cross River State. 15th June, 2026. © Self Help Africa.

WS4H shifted sanitation programming from short-term ODF-focused approaches toward a sustainable, inclusive, and market-driven model. By addressing weak coordination, limited local markets, and reliance on external support, the programme integrated CLTS with Market-Based Sanitation, informed by evidence from sanitation assessments, market analysis, GESI, climate vulnerability, and WASH systems strengthening. This approach aimed to strengthen governance, community ownership, and sanitation markets under government leadership.

What We Did

- Strengthened sanitation governance through support to ODF policy reforms, Clean Nigeria Campaign alignment, and development of sustainable sanitation roadmaps.
- Implemented integrated CLTS and Market-Based Sanitation approaches to address ODF slippage, strengthen sanitation markets, and improve access to sanitation solutions.
- Expanded sanitation access and infrastructure through government-supported construction of 48 gender-segregated VIP toilet blocks in public facilities in Makoda LGA, benefiting 7,680 people.

Key Achievements

Strengthened sanitation systems through governance reform, market development, and increased uptake

Sanitation systems in Kano and Cross River were strengthened through improved governance frameworks, emerging market-based sanitation structures, and increased uptake of improved sanitation at household and institutional levels. WS4H contributed through CLTS implementation, sanitation market strengthening, policy engagement, and coordination support, enabling reforms such as ODF legislation development, Clean Nigeria Campaign domestication, and improved access to sanitation products and services across communities.

21,662 Households now with toilets in Makoda LGA	6,553 new household toilets constructed to address slippage in Yala LGA (2026)	151,634 Persons with sanitation access	1 Open Defecation Prohibition Bill passed in Cross River State
₦1B+ Kano State commitment to pro-poor sanitation subsidies)	50 TBOs secured ₦35 million in business financing through sanitation market facilitation in Cross River.	2 States Basic Sanitation Access Roadmaps developed (Kano + Cross River)	100 Number of Sanitation enterprise trained in Makoda and Yala LGAs

What We Learned

KEY LEARNING

Sanitation progress is strengthened when policy, planning, and coordination mechanisms are reinforced at multiple levels

The initiation of the ODF Prohibition Bill in Cross River State, the review and relaunch of the national Clean Nigeria Campaign strategy, the domestication of CNC Phase II in Kano and Cross River States, and the establishment of a Technical Working Committee for the 2026-2031 Basic Sanitation Roadmap demonstrate that sanitation progress can be strengthened when governance and planning processes are supported at national, state, and local levels simultaneously.

KEY LEARNING

Combining CLTS with market-based sanitation approaches can stimulate both demand and supply for improved sanitation

CLTS combined with market-based sanitation increased demand for improved toilets and strengthened local sanitation services, showing the value of linking behaviour change with market solutions.

**KEY
LEARNING****Strengthening sanitation enterprises can improve access to sanitation products and attract financing opportunities**

The establishment of sanitation business networks, business development support to Toilet Business Owners, and the sanitation financing pilot contributed to improved market readiness among sanitation entrepreneurs. The experience demonstrated that strengthening sanitation businesses and generating evidence from pilot financing initiatives can help build confidence for additional investment in sanitation enterprises

**KEY
LEARNING****Evidence, coordination, and financing can create momentum for sanitation sector investment**

The domestication of the Clean Nigeria Campaign Phase II strategy, establishment of a Technical Working Committee for sanitation roadmap development, and increased public financing commitments for sanitation demonstrate that sanitation planning and investment can be strengthened when supported by technical coordination structures, evidence, and sustained engagement with government institutions.

IO 4: Strengthening Sector Capacity, Networks, Collective Action and Political Commitment



Self Help Africa Staff and the Cross River State WASH Media Network. 24th February, 2026. © Self Help Africa

This outcome sought to build the human capital, coordination platforms, partnerships, and political will that make systems change possible at scale.

What We Did

- Strengthened WASH coordination and collaboration by revitalising state and LGA coordination platforms, establishing a North-West zonal platform, and formalising the Nigeria Agenda for Change (A4C) collaboration.
- Built institutional and stakeholder capacity by supporting national WASH technical structures and delivering capacity-building for WASH actors through the Delivering Effective WASH Training (DEWT) workshop and other technical initiatives.
- Promoted WASH advocacy and youth engagement by strengthening the WASH Media Network and supporting implementation of the National Youth WASH Strategy through government partnerships.

Key Achievements

ACHIEVEMENT

Agenda for Change Nigeria formalised

In 2025, national WASH sector stakeholders and development partners, including Self Help Africa, WaterAid, Action Against Hunger, Female in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (FEMinWASH), and NEWSAN, formalised the Nigeria A4C collaboration, a landmark in sector coordination that creates a shared accountability framework, aligned advocacy, and collective learning infrastructure for influencing national WASH systems agenda.

ACHIEVEMENT

National Technical Working Group revitalized

The National TWG on Rural Water Sustainability revitalized and positioned itself to provide institutional continuity for the work WS4H started, ensuring that the technical dialogue on sustainable rural water service delivery continues at the federal level beyond the programme's closure.

ACHIEVEMENT

WASH Media Network mobilized independently

Following WS4H-supported capacity building, the Cross River State WASH Media Network independently organised a two-day town hall on 'Water and Gender' and coordinated outreach to promote WASH in secondary schools for World Water Day demonstrating the kind of self-sustaining civil society action that programmes aspire to catalyse.

ACHIEVEMENT

NEWSAN and ToiletPride Emerged As Stronger, More Capable Organizations

By programme close, NEWSAN and ToiletPride had measurably stronger organizational systems and greater capacity to lead WASH work independently. NEWSAN is now better positioned to carry out strategic and impactful sector advocacy. ToiletPride consolidated its standing as a credible sanitation market actor. Both are now anchor institutions for WASH systems strengthening in Nigeria, carrying the programme's gains forward beyond WS4H..

What We Learned

KEY LEARNING

Sector coordination platforms require institutional ownership to be sustainable

WS4H demonstrated that multi-stakeholder coordination platforms can strengthen collaboration, information sharing, and collective action around WASH priorities. However, sustaining these mechanisms beyond programme support depends on embedding them within government structures and ensuring clear ownership, roles, and responsibilities.

**KEY
LEARNING****Accountability is strengthened when diverse actors are engaged**

Engaging actors beyond government institutions, including media, civil society, and sector networks helped broaden accountability for WASH commitments. These actors played an important role in maintaining visibility of sector issues, promoting transparency, and encouraging follow-through on commitments.

**KEY
LEARNING****Building sector capacity is not enough without mechanisms for application**

Technical capacity development contributed to stronger stakeholder engagement and participation in sector processes. However, the value of capacity strengthening is maximised when institutions have functional platforms, resources, and mandates that enable stakeholders to apply new knowledge and skills in practice..

**KEY
LEARNING****Networks and collective action can generate results within a short timeframe**

The programme showed that strengthening networks and fostering collaboration among stakeholders can produce tangible gains within a relatively short period. Establishing relationships, shared objectives, and coordination mechanisms can create momentum for sector reforms even before longer-term system changes become evident.

5. Conclusion: Looking Forward

The WASH Systems for Health (WS4H) programme demonstrated that systems strengthening can drive measurable improvements in governance, investment, and institutional capacity. The progress achieved at the LGA, state, and national levels provides a strong foundation for sustainable WASH transformation.

While lasting systems change requires long-term commitment, the partnerships, platforms, and capacities established through the programme continue to support ongoing progress. Through continued collaboration with government, partners, and sector stakeholders, Self Help Africa remains committed to strengthening resilient WASH systems that deliver sustainable services for communities.

"The challenges are big. The opportunities are bigger. What we have learned together through WS4H is that systems change in WASH is possible and that collaboration is not just a nice principle. It is the only way this works."

Joy Aderele, Self Help Africa Country Director

Three Priorities for the Next Phase of Systems Strengthening in Nigeria

- Strengthen WASH governance and coordination by sustaining the Agenda for Change collaboration and implementing state sanitation roadmaps and WASH strategic plans.
- Scale sustainable WASH service delivery by expanding the professionalised rural water sustainability model and institutionalising MEL systems that track systems change and improve data quality.
- Increase sustainable WASH financing by leveraging counterpart funding and exploring innovative financing mechanisms, including blended and carbon finance.

Annexes

Annex A: Outcome Harvest Summary

The programme conducted a structured outcome harvest across 2024–2026, documenting 40+ discrete outcomes across the four intermediate outcomes. Key outcomes included:

IO1: Strengthening the WASH Systems Cycle, Governance, Planning, Financing, and Accountability

- Review and updating of WASH policies, legal frameworks, and sector strategies initiated in Kano and Cross River States.
- State and LGA governments agreed on a roadmap for strategic WASH investment planning and LGA-wide assessments.
- Resource Mobilisation Technical Working Groups were established to coordinate WASH financing.
- Cross River State enacted the Water Supply and Sanitation Law No. 5 of 2025.
- Kano State integrated WASH into the Mutual Accountability Framework (KAN-MAF).
- Dedicated WASH budget lines were created across 40MDAs in Cross River and Kano State.
- WASH Systems Index Tool adopted and applied for planning and systems analysis.
- WASH systems building-block performance improved in Kano and Cross River between 2024 and 2025

IO 2: Sustainable Rural Water Supply

- Preventive maintenance model institutionalised in Kano and Cross River States.
- Increased government investment in rural water infrastructure in Makoda LGA.
- Improved functionality of rural water infrastructure in Yala LGA.
- Water kiosk management model operationalised in Makoda LGA.
- Cross River stakeholders committed to multi-year financing to scale the Water SDM pilot.
- A professionalised rural-water service delivery model was adopted for replication by Kano and Cross River States.

IO3: Laying Foundations for Accelerated, Climate-Resilient Progress in Rural Sanitation

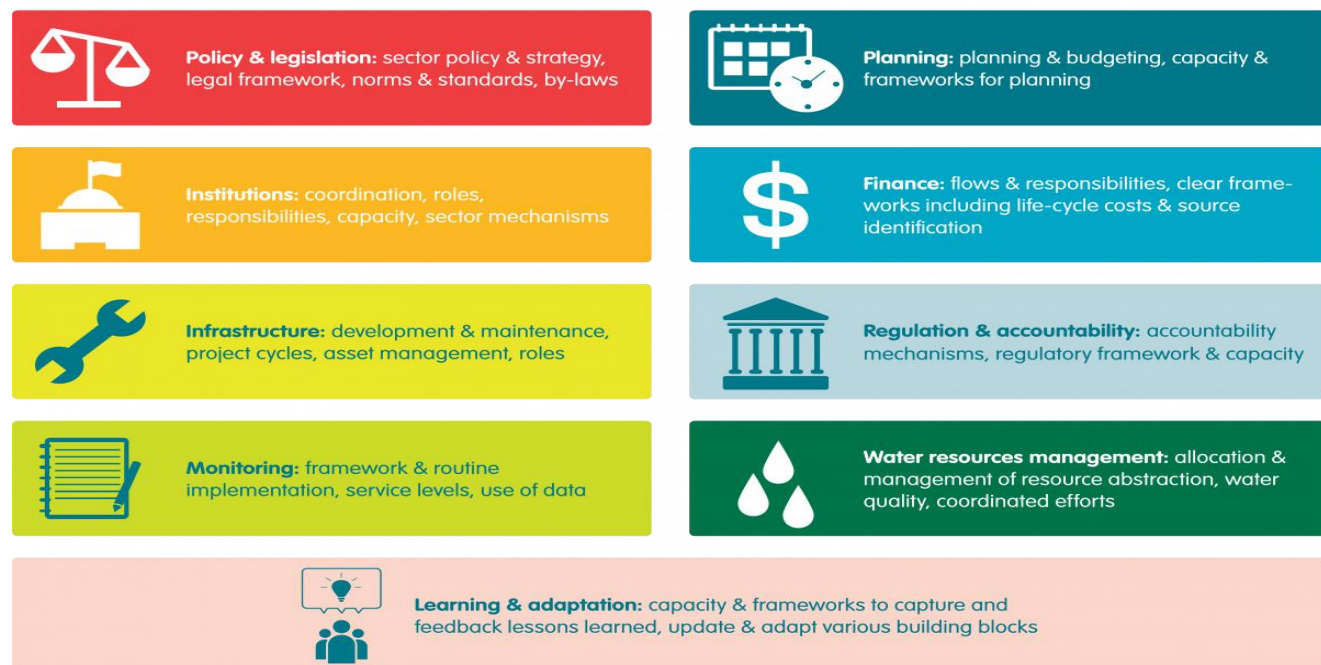
- Strengthened sanitation governance through the enactment of the ODF Prohibition Law.
- National Clean Nigeria Campaign implementation strategy reviewed, updated, and relaunched.
- Clean Nigeria Campaign Phase II was domesticated in Kano and Cross River States.
- Local sanitation business networks established and strengthened through Toilet Pride.
- The Toilet Support Centre established in Makoda LGA is strengthening access to sanitation products.
- Increased government financing for sanitation services in Kano State
- Increased household toilet construction through CLTS and MBS (2026)

IO4: Strengthening Sector Capacity, Networks, Collective Action, and Political Commitment

- State and LGA WASH coordination structures revitalised and strengthened in Kano and Cross River States.
- North-West zonal WASH learning and coordination platform established.
- Nigeria Agenda for Change collaboration platform advanced through multi-stakeholder engagement.
- National Youth WASH Strategy operationalised through a youth-focused WASH campaign.
- STGWASH and LTGWASH platforms strengthened coordination, planning, and monitoring practices.
- The National Technical Working Group on Rural Water Sustainability was established.
- National Village Level Operation and Maintenance (VLOM) Technical Working Group revitalised.

Annex B: WASH SYSTEM BUILDING BLOCKS

WASH System



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