

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT – A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE & IMPROVED SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPANTS (PSP) IN LAGOS, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

In recent years there had been a tremendous improvement in solid waste management industry when compared with the myriad of problems facing the industry some few years back in Lagos, Nigeria.

The improved service delivery in the industry was as a result of the restructuring of Lagos state waste management authority (LAWMA)- *a government owned agency charged with the responsibility of regulating waste management in the state*, and the activities of the private sector participants (PSP) in the collection, transportation and disposal of solid waste.

The private sector participants through their Association organised series of training programmes for the waste management practitioners, which include the CEOs, Business Owners, Senior Managers and the Operatives (Supervisors, Drivers & Evacuators).

The training programme covered topical issues like; Operational Efficiency, Sustainable Business Approach, Financial Planning/management, Sustainable service delivery, Risk Management, Human resources and Development.

This paper therefore highlight the problems of waste management in Lagos state before the restructuring of LAWMA and the capacity development programmes for the waste management practitioners and the resultant effects of effective and improved service delivery within the waste management industry. Equally highlighted are the roles of the government and her agency, including the role played by the Nigerian financial institutions in providing funds for capacity building in the area of equipment and infrastructure acquisition.

Introduction:

Lagos state is one of the 36 states of Nigeria, though the smallest in size, it is the commercial hub of the country and by extension the entire West African sub-region. It has a population of about 15 million people, the United Nations' estimated that by year 2015 based on 6% growth rate the state may be the 3rd largest mega city in the world.

The state is presently divided into 57 local government areas (municipalities). It is pertinent to mention here that, the incursion of the private sector participants into waste management industry in Lagos was as a result irregular and epileptic services of government owned agency responsible for waste management in the state. The nuisance caused by the uncleared waste within the communities led to the public themselves seeking for alternative waste disposal system, hence the entrance of the private sector into solid waste management stream in Lagos State "*necessity they say is the mother of invention*".

At the early stage of private sector involvement in solid waste management in Lagos State, the neighborhood structure determines the type of private sector involved in the collection, transportation and disposal of their waste. For instance, the formal private sector operated in high-income low population density areas, while the informal private sector like cart pushers operates in low-income high population density areas. This was attributed to the social stratification and wealth distribution of the society. While the high-income neighborhoods can afford to pay the high cost of the formal private sector whose operation is mechanized, the low-income neighborhoods can only afford to pay the cart pushers whose operation is manual and very cheap.

However, with time all that has changed now, as both the formal and informal private sectors operate in both areas now.

In 1996/1997, government commenced a programme of recognising and formalisation of the private sector, most especially the formal private sector by introducing a programme tagged "Pilot Scheme Project on Private Sector Participation in Solid Waste Collection and Disposal in Somolu and Kosofe Local Govt. Areas of Lagos State". The project was aimed at test-running the capacities of the private sector and also to test the willingness of the public to pay for the collection, transportation and disposal of their waste, which hitherto had been a social service. The pilot scheme project which involved twenty-two (22) Private companies (*including the writer of this paper*) marked the beginning of the formalisation of the private sector in waste management industry in Lagos, Nigeria. This also led to the formation of an association amongst the practitioners called "Waste Pilot Scheme Operators' Group" (WAPSOG). This group/association has metamorphosed into several names, the very last is the Association of Waste Managers of Nigeria (AWAM). Table 1 shows different institutional changes within the waste management industry since 1977 in Lagos state.

Table 1: Institutional changes in the state solid waste management in Lagos.

Years	Name of institution	Supervising Authority
1977 -	Lagos State Refuse Disposal Board (LSRDB)	Ministry of works and Transport
1980 -	Lagos State Waste Disposal Board (LSWDB)	Ministry of works and Transport
1991 -	Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA)	Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning (MEPP)
1994 -	Local Government Councils and LAWMA	Local Government and MEPP
1997 -	LAWMA and PSP pilot scheme in Somolu & Kosofe Local government areas	Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning (MEPP)
1998	Private Sector Participation (PSP) in domestic waste management state-wide and LAWMA handling Industrial Waste	Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning (MEPP) / Local Governments
1999	Private Sector Participation (PSP) in waste management	All local Governments/ Ministry of the Environment/ Office of the Deputy Governor.
2004	Mega/ major PSP in waste management	Ministry of the Environment/ Office of the Deputy Governor
2007	Mega PSP in waste management	Lagos state Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) / Ministry of the Environment

The Association in brief

As stated earlier, the Association was ab-initio formed during the first formalisation of the activities of the private sector in 1997, during the implementation of the pilot scheme project. However due to several reasons amongst which are disagreements with government, institutional and policy changes on the part of government, the Association has metamorphosed into several other groups and names. Table 2 shows various changes and names of the Association since 1997.

Membership & Voluntary contributions

Membership of the Association started with the first 22 Waste Pilot Scheme Operators' Group, however with several institutional and policy changes by government and the attendant effect on the formation and re-formation of the Association, the new Association now has about 250 membership.

Membership is voluntary, however it is expected that every Private Sector Participant in waste management industry must be a member.

The Association has a structure headed by the Executive Council (EXCO), which functions through several committees of the Association (*One of these committees is the professional & training committee*)

There are also paid employees of the Association at the secretariat, while other staffs were employed to complement the activities of government officials at the various dumpsites.

Financial contributions

Members are obligated to pay a registration/application fee at the time of joining the Association, while monthly dues are paid as a monthly financial commitment to the Association. Occasional levies are imposed by the EXCO when the need arises.

Just like any other voluntary Association, there are cases of few members who are not up-to-date with their financial contributions. However the major tool deployed by the EXCO/Association is that the Association will only cater for or defend only financial members whenever they have problems with the regulatory authorities- *which sure were rampant*. Equally, it is only the financial members that can enjoy any benefit from the Association; they can vote and be voted for.

Conflict Resolution

Whenever there is any conflict amongst members either caused by competition or operational encroachment, the Association has a committee called “Reconciliation Committee”. This committee settles all conflicts amongst members on one hand and reconcile members with government agencies on the other hand. Decisions taken by this committee is binding.

Table 2: Changes & Names of the Association of PSP since 1997.

Years	Names of the Association	Government Scheme/Project
1997 -	Waste Pilot Scheme Operator’s Group (WAPSOG)	Waste Pilot Scheme in Somolu & Kosofe Local Government Areas
1988/99 -	Waste Privatization Scheme Operator’s Group (WAPSOG)	Private Sector Participation (PSP) in domestic Waste Management State-Wide
1998 -	Lagos State Waste Management Operators (LAWMO)	Private Sector Participation (PSP) in domestic Waste Management State-Wide
2001 -	Association of Licensed Private Waste Managers (ALPWAM)	Private Sector Participation (PSP) in Waste Management
2004 -	National Association of Waste Managers of Nigeria (NAWAMA)	Mega/ Major PSP in Waste Management
2007	Association of Waste managers of Nigeria	Mega PSP in waste management

Capacity Development Needs

Private Sector involvement in solid waste management industry in Nigeria is an emerging sub-sector of the Nigerian economy with a lot of potentials and capacity development needs.

The manner in which the private sector involvement in solid waste management industry in Lagos evolved did not give room for thorough screening of the practitioners, until recently when the stakes were raised. Only very few professionals were involved at inception, however many investors have over the time learnt on the job and have therefore perfected their operational capabilities.

The following are the capacity development needs of the private sector participants in solid waste management industry in Lagos, Nigeria;

- i. **Regular Training:** The practitioners require regular training on the latest methodologies of waste management, most especially in relation to collection, transportation, treatment and disposal – **Internationally acceptable best practice.**
- ii. **Exposure:** There is a need for the practitioners to be exposed to these best practices and models through orientation visits (O.V) to the developed and more experienced countries for practical & technical exchange.
- iii. **Technical Training:** There is a need for the training of the technical staffs, most especially the engineers and mechanics that handles the repairs of the modern equipment required in the industry.
- iv. **Access to long term loan facility:** This is also a very vital capacity development need of most operators. Access to long term loan facility with single digit interest rate cannot be overemphasised (*Unfortunately this is not available in Nigeria as most banks will rather give short term loan with very high interest rate*). The facility will enable the operators purchase modern equipment required for the job.
- v. **Infrastructural Development:** The need for the establishment of more waste management infrastructures like the landfills, transfer stations and recycling centres cannot be ignored.
- vi. **Contractual Agreement:** The government should sign proper contractual agreement with the companies to protect their huge investment in the industry.

Training as a Tool for Effective & Improved Service Delivery

As stated in the abstract, the professional and training committee of the Association worked with a consulting firm in collaboration with LAWMA to organised a training programme for over 200 companies with their CEOs and equally organised a “train-the-trainer” workshop for the about 600 operatives, which include the supervisors, drivers & evacuators (waste handlers).

Topics like; how to deliver effective services delivery and how to not service a customer were thoroughly discussed, other subjects treated includes; Operational Efficiency, Sustainable Business Approach, Financial Planning/management, Sustainable service delivery, Risk Management, Human resources and Development.

The operatives were trained on how to improve on their health and safety, improve customer service, how to foster behavioural change amongst themselves as a key integral part of their various companies and also to believe in the dignity of their labour. Various experts, consultants and motivational speakers were used as resource persons, these also include high-ranking officials of government.

Assessment of the Impact of the Training Programme

The training programme was very successful as participation was very high and encouraging. The programme was a 3-day residential extensive training i.e. participants were taken to a very conducive environment at the outskirts of the city.

Other participants are the Lagos state Ministry of the Environment, Lagos state Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) and some of the financial institutions in Nigeria.

The major impacts of the training programme on the industry are:

- i. The training changed the perception of the investors and the practitioners on the industry.
- ii. It brought about an increase in the volume of investment in the industry, with companies investing more on the purchase of compacting trucks as against the usual open tipping trucks.
- iii. The increased investment on more specialised equipment in the industry brought about effective and improved service delivery within the waste management system in Lagos state.
- iv. The usage of compacting trucks also eradicated occasional waste dispersal experienced amongst some operators when transporting waste to the final dumpsite.
- v. The training programme led to the exposure of the emerging industry to the Nigerian financial institutions, this also led to the industry/companies gaining the confidence of the financial sector.
- vi. The confidence of the financial industry in the waste management sector vis-à-vis the private sector brought about the provision of funds into the industry for capacity building in the area of equipment and infrastructure acquisition.
- vii. Government perception towards the private sector also changed, as they began to see them as more organised and serious organisation. (Government-LAWMA was so impressed that it promised to co-sponsor the next training programme).

Lessons Learnt

- i. It was learnt that the industry is a multi-million dollar industry waiting to be explored.
- ii. It was also learnt that companies can also diversify into other components of Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM) like; resource recovery, treatment and recycling instead of the collection and disposal of waste alone.
- iii. Business owners/CEOs learnt how to manage risk and how to manage their health, most especially high blood pressure when things are not going as expected.

- iv. The banks learnt that there is a need to give out loan facility to the private sector for capacity building.
- v. The government equally learnt that the operators require contractual agreement to protect their huge investment.
- vi. The operatives learnt how to have good relationship with their clients and also to know & meet their expectations – **Tailor made services.**
- vii. The operatives especially the evacuators learnt to desist from sitting on top of their waste trucks.
- viii. The investors learnt to change the dilapidated and unfit vehicles used for waste collection.

The lessons learnt are too numerous to mention, however, the summary of the entire lessons is that new approach to effective and improved waste management by the Private Sector Participants (PSP) was learnt, while it also brought about the exposure of a vibrant industry to other sector of the economy – Advocacy for capacity development and resource management.

Role of Government & the International Communities

Since the restructuring of Lagos state Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) in May 2005 and the transfer of regulatory function of the PSP from the Lagos state Ministry of the Environment (LMOE) to LAWMA in March 2007, there had been several capacity development programmes organised for government officials. These were aimed at preparing them for the task of effective policy implementation, monitoring and compliance of the PSP programme.

Notable amongst the capacity development programmes, most especially the one that had direct impact on the private sector was the “Lagos Municipal Services Maintenance training project”. The project was sponsored and funded by USTDA- United State of America Trade Development Agency.

The task that were completed by the project includes;

- ✚ The development of an environmental infrastructure Asset inventory
- ✚ Completion of a Current Practice Review and Analysis
- ✚ Development of a Maintenance Management Best Practices Model
- ✚ Development of a Draft Maintenance Program for LMOE, LWC, LAWMA
- ✚ Completion of an Environmental Impact Analysis
- ✚ Preparation and Submission of a Final Report

As part of the training programme expert were flown into Lagos, Nigeria from U.S to train government official and the Private Sector Participants (PSP) on the best practices and models for municipal service maintenance.

It is pertinent to state that, the training programme was aimed at increasing the capacity for environmental infrastructure maintenance in Lagos, it was to provide technical assistance and training on maintenance planning for all the agencies providing municipal services in Lagos, namely; Lagos state Ministry of the Environment (LMOE), Lagos Water Corporation (LWC) and Lagos state Waste Management Authority

(LAWMA) including the Private Sector Participants (PSP) involved in waste management.

Residual Capacity Building Needs

1. The need to further open up other access to funding which will be long termed with very low interest rate.
2. The need for government to sign (not less than) five (5) year contractual agreement with the private operators to protect their huge investment.
3. The need for training & study tours (orientation visits) of the private operators to the developed countries for practical experience on best practices and models.
4. The need for government to provide more infrastructures within the industry – Landfills, transfer stations and recycling centres.

5. The need for a sustainable and continuous training programmes for the waste management practitioners, most especially in the area of cost recovery.

Attitude of Government

As stated in the earlier part of this paper, there had been several formation and re-formation of the Association since it was formed as WAPSOG in 1997. Table 2 shows the evolvement of the Association.

The regular changes of the names and re-formation of the Association was as a result of several disagreements and conflicts between the Association and the government.

The major causes of the disagreement/conflicts are:

- i. In some cases the Association will come up with recommendations on how best to handle the programme, this sometime is seen as an act of a pressure group which is not welcomed by the government officials.
- ii. The private sector/investors see themselves as a major stakeholder, whereas the government still adopt “a master – servant relationship”.
- iii. Government sometime formulate policies without the input and contributions of the private sector.
- iv. The private sector sometime wants to maximise profit, while the government may disagree.

However, in the recent time there had been a tremendous improvement in the relationship between the Association and the government, most especially after the formation of the Association of Waste Managers of Nigeria (AWAM)

Challenges

One of the greatest challenges that the Association faces is how to maintain a sustainable cordial relationship with the government despite several grew areas and policies that are not in the best interest of the operators.

Secondly, the operators are faced with the problem of raising long term loan with very low interest rate.

Finally, the challenges of sustained Capacity Development are also overwhelming as there are not enough funds for this. Equally the continuous increase in the cost of petroleum products globally has eaten up the profitability of the job as the cost of service delivery has gone up by over 500% without an increment in the income.

Conclusions

In anticipation of the new status of Lagos state i.e. the status of a mega city. It was therefore expedient on the Private Sector Participants (PSP) in solid waste management to update themselves and their operational activities through capacity development – training and the re-training of the management staff and the operatives to reposition the sector for the new status and the on-going reforms.

The training programme therefore was a tool that led to an effective and improved solid waste management by the private sector participants in Lagos, Nigeria.

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