LEGAL CHALLENGES FOR SANITATION

Regulations for better sanitation practices in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire

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Background

According to the National Office of Sanitation and Drainage (ONAD), 60% of fecal sludge in Abidjan is unsafely and illegally managed.

- Only 3 fecal sludge collection centers for 7,000,000 residents
- In ATTECOUBE, a commune of 372,000 residents, tens of thousand of households don’t have septic tanks
  - Don’t mention fecal sludge management
  - Low fines (around $10) are not successful deterrents
  - No standard specifications for facilities or buildings
  - People are not aware of national sanitation law
  - Municipal authorities (mayors) need support to incentive people to better sanitation practice

Intervention Model

In response, SSD program worked in partnership with ATTECOUBE commune authorities, community leaders, and government representatives.

- SSD advocated for:
  - A new framework concerning improper fecal sludge management and illegal disposal of fecal waste by HHs
  - Increasing fines for illegal fecal waste disposal
  - Upgrading the role of city police
  - Requiring landlords to do upgrading
- SSD encouraged municipal initiatives:
  - Awareness raising campaign via local radio and field work
  - Increasing the municipal police patrols for poor sanitation practice
- SSD organized capacity building workshops on improved sanitation solutions for municipality staff
- SSD organized workshops with mayor and legal consultant:
  - Studied existing laws
  - Established new bylaw approved by the municipal council and signed by the mayor
- SSD led sensitization campaigns
- SSD organized a workshop with local authorities to enforce new bylaw

Results

As a result of SSD’s work:

- Establishment of and sensitization around new law contributed to positive behavior changes
- Communal police patrols dismantled around 1000 illegal open wastewater deposits, which have been replaced by safe facilities from SSD program
- From April to June 2019, around 215 households were aware on the new bylaw and 47 infractions tickets were issued
- Seven (7) other cities show interest in this process and have made inquiries into our program

In conclusion, sanitation issues are not sufficiently covered by laws in Cote d’Ivoire. Where they do exist, laws are outdated or do not elicit behavior change. Sanitation programs must take actions to strengthen legal frameworks for safe sanitation practices.