In Africa today, limited access to information presents a major challenge to improving and sustaining service delivery of sanitation and water services for poor communities. Supported by active and dynamic civil society organizations, the latter are actors of their own development and are asking for platforms to share their stories, voice their needs and ask their governments to stand up to their commitments. The partnership between people strongly affected in their everyday lives by the lack of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), the media and civil society organizations is critical to influencing policies at the regional scale in West Africa, while strengthening citizen’s participation in the delivery of WASH services. In this way people’s voices can be amplified and the capacity of the media in turn can be strengthened by the relationships with civil society organizations.

To respond to this challenge, the West Africa WASH Journalists Network (WASH – JN) was formed late 2010 with the objective to leverage the voices of the poor and influence policy change and accountability through the collective power of media in the region.

The West Africa WASH Journalists Network is a network of networks, comprising national WASH Media networks from 13 West African countries – Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, and open for more participation. Its strategic objectives are:

- To amplify the voices of the poor to make them heard at national, regional and international levels;
- To ensure enhanced quality and flow of information on WASH service delivery coming from a wide range of sources;
- To ensure better targeting for enhanced influence and increased awareness on WASH for all citizens and decision-makers.

The activities of the Network include the production of compelling reports on WASH focusing in particular on poor people's perspectives in order to achieve increased attention from all citizens and decision-makers, capacity building of member journalists to ensure better quality of reporting, strategic partnership with WASH organizations for an enhanced quality of data collection and dialogue within the WASH sector.

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