

# Dr. Lakhdar Boukerrou, Regional Director of USAID WA-WASH: “We have very good results”

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We discussed, on the sidelines of the second national water forum, with the USAID West Africa coordinator for water supply, sanitation and hygiene (USAID WA-WASH), Dr Lakhdar Boukerrou. In this interview, he discusses

participation in the USAID WA-WASH forum, its actions in the field.

**Lefaso.net: What are the countries and areas of intervention of WA-WASH?**

**Dr. Lakhdar Boukerrou:** We work not only in Burkina Faso, but also in Ghana and Niger. Our program focuses mainly on five areas: water, hygiene, sanitation, food security and adaptation to climate change. We also have cross-cutting components such as gender, the incorporation of gender in all our activities and also the development of capacities at different levels. From municipalities to decision-makers at the national level.

**What are your achievements in water and sanitation?**

In terms of water and sanitation, our objective is to work with the various communities to provide them with low-cost technologies that come from Burkina Faso. That is to say, we have trained people here in Burkina to manufacture, for example, rope pumps, foot pumps, filters, wash basins, filters, etc. so that populations have access to drinking water. We have helped to develop local businesses in Ouagadougou, Koudougou, Boromo which manufacture this material which has a very reasonable cost. The rope pump costs around 56,000 CFA francs and is still affordable. We said to ourselves that we must also think of people who do not have access to drinking water and who do not have enough money to afford these technologies or other infrastructures such as drilling which costs 15,000. dollars. To do this, we have developed a whole distribution chain for tablets to treat water at home. These tablets, we distribute them through 900 sellers in several regions. These tablets cost 10 F each and each tablet treats twenty liters of water. It must be said that the person who does not have access to drinking water today cannot wait for someone to come and install a borehole in one year, two years,

three years, four years or five years. You heard the children this morning talk about diarrhea, these are real problems. We must therefore find innovative solutions that are not expensive and that can be put in place immediately, while waiting for the drilling and supply of drinking water. And we have also worked with other technical and financial partners when possible for the establishment of drinking water supply, such as the Dori region where we have brought water to several villages through pipelines. drinking water, standpipes, with 4,000 people. We have so far had very good results in terms of access to drinking water and sanitation. And we have also worked with other technical and financial partners when possible for the establishment of drinking water supply, such as the Dori region where we have brought water to several villages through pipelines. drinking water, standpipes, with 4,000 people. We have so far had very good results in terms of access to drinking water and sanitation. And we have also worked with other technical and financial partners when possible for the establishment of drinking water supply, such as the Dori region where we have brought water to several villages through pipelines. drinking water, standpipes, with 4,000 people. We have so far had very good results in terms of access to drinking water and sanitation.

**And your results in terms of access to sanitation?**



In terms of access to sanitation, it is the same strategy, that is to say that the material to build latrines is made available to people at village level. In everything we do we don't pay 100% because people have to contribute, even if it's to dig the pit. We subsidize part and they pay for another part. So, in the villages where we operate, whether in the Boucle region or in the eastern region of the country, it is a grant that we have in the program, whether it is directly ourselves, with our local partners like EAA where we have planned to build hundreds of latrines and in the program in the east of the country with our partner IRC and a co-grant from the European Union, we have a grant schedule of 4,500 latrines.

**In terms of numbers, how many people have you helped to gain access to safe drinking water and sanitation?**

I do not have all the figures in mind, but the results achieved are well above our forecasts. This is because we work with local partners and our target is the local populations. At the local level, it is to encourage people to mobilize for the construction of latrines, to encourage people to buy water

treatment tablets at home, to encourage people to invest in low-cost technologies for water supply such as rope pumps. So we do a lot of work in the field to encourage and energize people so that they get involved. Our numbers are beyond 100% of our numbers in almost everything we do.

### **In the area of capacity building too?**

There too we have trained several thousand people. There is the training of trainers at the university level: 2IE, University of Ouagadougou. Then there are also the scholarships that we offer to students of these universities, including Aube Nouvelle, ex-ISIG. This scholarship program is co-funded by LONAB. We also accept interns within the framework of this project. We have so far accepted more than 120 interns in all areas: communication and public relations, water, hygiene, sanitation, project management. It contributes to capacity building. In addition, we work in the training of decision makers in water governance. We have trained parliamentarians and other decision-makers at national and local level. We are also working to train farmers for food security. In short, we have a vast training program that touches on several areas because you have to have an overview and global view of the sector, instead of focusing on a single sector. We should no longer speak only of access to water. To have access to water, it is also necessary to have qualified people to manage at the municipal level. And it is thousands of people who needed to develop the sector. It is true that the water services have been decentralized. But, where are the people at the municipal level who manage this issue? In my opinion, what we also need to focus on is investing in human resources. we have a vast training program that touches on several areas because you have to have a global and global view of the sector, instead of focusing on a single sector. We should no longer speak only of access to water. To have access to water, it is also necessary to

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### **How does your participation in this national water forum respond?**

Our goal is to make sure that the message we have about these ideas that I just shared with you gets through. It is sharing information, sharing knowledge, sharing methods. It doesn't

mean that we have the best methods, the best approaches. It's just being able to share with others who also have other methods. This will allow the forum participants to come out with some ideas on each other's experiences.

Interview by Grégoire B. Bazié  
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