

Happiness on tap: piped water adoption in urban Morocco

Introduction:

It is observed that households in developing countries spend considerable amount of time in fetching water. Improving access to safe drinking water is one of the Millennium Development Goals and accordingly many initiatives have been taken in the developing countries. With this regard, Morocco has planned for increasing access to safe drinking water by helping poor households get connected to piped water under “National Initiative for Human Development” programme.

Objective and rationale:

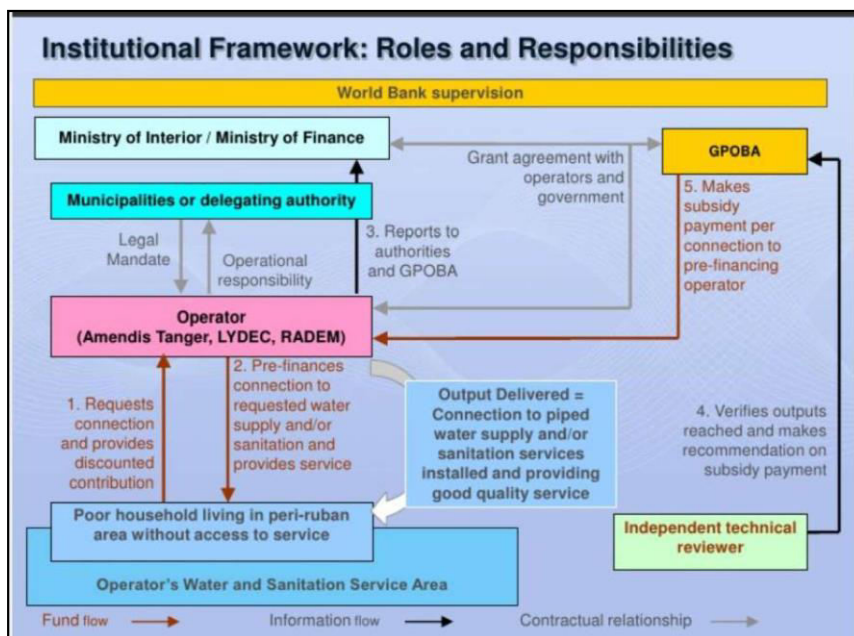
To connect poor households to the drinking water network and in turn to improve their physical health.

Key Stakeholders:

Amendis. Veolis.

Implementation strategy:

In Morocco, majority of households depend on public taps and spend more than seven hours a week collecting water, despite the higher density of water taps. This burden generates considerable amount of stress and tension. It is revealed that 66 percent of households without a water service connection report that water is a major source of concern, 16 percent have had a water-related conflict within the family and 12 percent have had water-related conflict with their neighbours. In order to reduce such burden of water collection, M/s Amendis, an international private utility company, had launched a social program to increase households' direct access to piped water in Tangier, Morocco in the year 2007. The Amendis program has offered low-income households pipe connection in three zones consisting of 4600 plots with interest-free loan to cover the cost of the water connection.



The loan was to be repaid in regular instalments at MAD 105 (US\$15) per month with the water bill over three to seven years depending on zone's distance from the water grid. Initially, a door-to-door campaign was organised for identifying the households and beneficiaries have received information about the credit offer as well as hand hold supports have also been provided for administrative procedures needed to apply for the credit, preparing all the necessary paperwork and brought them to the municipal office for bulk approval.

Resource utilization:

	Number of Connections		Grant Amount (USD million)
	Water Supply	Sanitation	
LYDEC	6 218	6 218	3.5
RADEM Urban Areas	602	794	1.5
RADEM Rural Areas	1 209	-	
Amendis – Tangiers	3 200	3 200	2.0
TOTAL	11 229	10 212	7.0

Impact:

- Around 70 percent of households had purchased a connection to the water system
- No households had been disconnected from the grid for defaulting on their loan or on water payments, and 44 percent of households had paid all instalments on due date

- 20 percentage of Households were more likely to report having enough water for bathing and 16 percentage points more likely to report having enough water for cleaning
- The time that families spent fetching water decreased from half an hour per day to essentially zero and used the saved time primarily for leisure activities, such as watching TV and socializing
- Households were willing to pay a lot for increased water quantity and convenience. The saved time and the decrease in stress levels related to water collection increased households' happiness and social integration.
- Getting connected to the water system reduced risk of conflict or ill feelings between neighbours and increased overall quality of life.

Key Challenges and Lesson learnt:

Interest free credit can enable households to invest in lump-sum quality-of-life investments that can significantly improve welfare, even if they do not result in income gain. Further, the important effects on take-up of awareness program and campaign that simply reduced paper works and administrative barriers to get the tap connection. Further, high observed willingness to pay suggests that relaxing credit constraints for poor households and making credit access straight forward and transparent might be enough to generate important private investments in water connections.

Replicability and sustainability:

AMRUT projects provide to address the basic needs of citizens. The benefits, while not being quantified, are similar to the above initiatives. By providing water connections to household premises, citizens attain numerous tangible and intangible benefits. The positive impact is widespread and has been recorded.

Fact Sheet:

Thematic area	Impact of water connections to households
First-year of the program	2007
Responsible institution	Veolia, Amendis
Target audience	Urban population
Coverage	Tangiers, Morocco

Source: (Household Water Connections in Tangier, Morocco, 2019), (Water and sanitation for the remote hinterland of Morocco, 2020)

<https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/research-paper/93%20Happiness%20on%20Tap%20AEJ%202012.pdf>, <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/household-water-connections-tangier-morocco>