



## Water+: Annual Innovation in Sanitation Award

### World Toilet Day 2020

In commemoration of World Toilet Day 2020, CARE's Water+ team would like to award our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual *Innovation in Sanitation Award* to the **CARE Côte d'Ivoire (CIV) team**, to recognize their outstanding work in increasing access to unsewered sanitation and waste management for the urban poor.

#### Context and Quick Snapshot

CARE's programming in Côte d'Ivoire addresses inadequate sanitation to improve the living conditions and health outcomes of urban populations. In strong collaboration with government, communities and the private sector, CARE's projects improve the technical, managerial and oversight capacity of government and the water and sanitation authority while developing sanitation enterprises to improve access to safe and affordable on-site household sanitation, fecal sludge management and household waste services. These activities are linked with a transformative gender approach to address key barriers to adoption and behavior change.

#### CARE in Côte d'Ivoire

CARE began working in Côte d'Ivoire in 2000. CARE CIV focuses on regions that lack access to basic services implementing projects that address urban and rural sanitation, rehabilitation and social cohesion.

#### Sanitation at a glance

**3 donors** European Union, African Development Bank and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grand Challenges

**2 active projects** Promotion of Access to Toilets and Job Creation Through Reuse of Fecal Sludge (PATER) and Community Sanitation Support System (CSSS)

**Impact** 9 cities, 35 enterprises and 8,085 people benefitting directly

**Staff** 6 staff

Below we feature an interview with **Losseni Coulibaly**, a Project Coordinator with CARE who has been working in the sanitation field for 17 years and **Stanislas Toure**, a project manager for the CSSS project.

## Interview: CARE CIV Sanitation Team

### In your experience, why is it so challenging and complex to increase sanitation coverage at scale?

According to the WHO Joint Monitoring Programme for WASH, only 54% of people in Côte d'Ivoire have access to an improved toilet. This percentage masks two different realities: the sanitation coverage rate in urban areas versus that of rural areas. In cities, inadequate sanitation is often found in low-income areas where people lack access to basic services and have little to no income. Factors for increasing sanitation coverage in urban areas of Cote d'Ivoire can be complex, and are mainly due to three factors:

**Lack of investment in the sector:** Everyone agrees that toilets can be an expensive item for households and that transport, treatment and disposal (or reuse) of fecal sludge in general is very expensive. Poor planning by city governments and low profit margins for the private sector hinders investment. Despite the large-scale investment needed, there is a large financing gap at both public and private levels.

**Absence of a regulated private sector:** Sanitation is not yet perceived as a field for business opportunities. Although the private sector has shown interest in household waste collection and the transport of fecal sludge, it has still not invested in large-scale work like landfills, treatment plants and de-sludgable toilets.

**“Since 2003, CARE has played a major role in supporting city governments and water and sanitation authorities in sustainable urban development and sanitation.” -**

### Losseni Coulibaly

**Household behavior:** In Cote d'Ivoire, 25% of households in urban areas practice open defecation. There is a strong need to support households in



stopping these unsafe practices and to deepen our understanding of their needs, barriers and aspirations. In CARE's experience, negative practices can be deeply rooted in underlying issues such as harmful social and gender norms.

### CARE has played a key role in influencing policy and practice in Côte d'Ivoire. Could you describe an example?

CARE established a training program focused on the professionalization of a new generation of managers and the formalization of sanitation committees. The sanitation committees are groups of 10 formalized waste collection, disposal and recycling entrepreneurs that are led by one team leader. These programs and models are used today by the government. CARE and the sanitation and waste authorities continue to collaborate to this day with projects like PATER and CSSS. These projects work to increase the availability and maintenance of affordable toilets, trash collection and fecal sludge management. while also strengthening the capacity of municipalities and service authorities to regulate these services.

As most urban populations in low-income areas depend on unsewered sanitation systems, such as pit latrines and septic tanks, there is also a need to safely empty, transport, treat and reuse fecal sludge. Systems for

garbage collection, disposal and recycling are also needed given the density and size. Our projects work across the sanitation value chain and support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) of desludgers and co-ops of waste collectors to grow their businesses. We also work with government to develop fit for purpose formalization and regulation processes and standards.

Our PATER project has also set up fecal treatment plants in secondary cities and conducted environmental impact assessments used by government to inform decision-making around sanitation in 3 major cities.



### What are the key innovations that CARE has made in Cote d'Ivoire?

**Sanitation committees (SC):** Established at the zonal level in cities, the SC's have been an innovation towards the professionalization of household solid waste management. This approach transforms the urban environment and creates livelihoods in low-income areas. SC's are also linked with the transport companies through fee-for-service that ensure waste reaches landfills. Although this model has been successful, CARE and the SC's engage in advocacy and negotiations with these companies to ensure fair wages.

**Microfinance for sanitation:** Although this is new in CIV, CARE leverages our existing relationships with Ivorian MFIs [*Microfinance institutions*] to develop sanitation-specific financial products for both households and service providers. We combine this with our Village

Savings and Loans (VSLA) and livelihoods approaches to ensure households are able to manage and pay back their loans. This is still being implemented, tested and improved but we are capturing best practices and see it as a promising model to address key barriers to effective behavior change and transform lives and livelihoods.

**“Access to financing is essential because it empowers the poorest and most excluded.” Stanislas Toure**

**Digital approaches:** With funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and as part of the Urban Sanitation Grand Challenge, the CSSS project is testing a digital platform that creates an inclusive market for supply and demand for improved latrines, desludging services, and waste management. The platform links low-income households, providers of regulated sanitation and waste management services, microfinance institutions and municipalities based on geo-location. Our approach goes beyond a service-delivery technology solution and tackles the institutional and socioeconomic factors that influence urban sanitation at scale.

*Congratulations to the PATER and CSSS teams!*



For more information, please contact:

**CARE CIV**

Losseni Coulibaly, Project Coordinator [Losseni.Coulibaly@care.org](mailto:Losseni.Coulibaly@care.org)

**CARE Water+**

Kelly Alexander, Senior Technical Advisor, [Kelly.Alexander@care.org](mailto:Kelly.Alexander@care.org)