You have taken matters into your own hands. No one came to your community to build toilets. No one came to hand out soap. No one came to tell you what to do. You were empowered.”

Dr Williams, WSSCC Executive Director, to representatives of Obanliku LGA, Nigeria

Our Approach

UP supports Community led behaviour change

We are recognised for ensuring that local organisations and communities are engaged at every stage of the project, and for working through established local structures, to ensure our work is contextually relevant. We train community members in community-based management of water points, so that the communities themselves can provide the technical skills and mobilise maintenance funds to ensure the sustainability of WASH infrastructure.

In Malawi, Guinea and Nigeria, UP is known for its successful use of the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach to end Open Defecation. This methodology is widely adopted and considered ‘best practice’ in sanitation behaviour change but UP’s specific approach has been particularly successful. Our CLTS programmes are managed in a way that allows CLTS to respond effectively to different contexts in the different communities we engage with, in a truly bottom-up approach whereby communities are empowered to improve their sanitation and hygiene situation in a way that works for them.

In Malawi, UP is the most successful champion of Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, having supported over 3,000 villages and 20 Traditional Authorities to achieve ODF status, impacting over 900,000 people. In Nigeria, we have facilitated the first Local Government Area in the country, Obanliku, to be certified ODF. Approximately 124,000 people in Obanliku now live in clean, healthy environments.

Our inclusive approach ensures that no one is left behind

Inclusivity and participation is central to our work. We ensure that vulnerable and marginalised groups are not left out of development and that their voices actively contribute to the project. We work directly with existing structures, such as community-based organisations, associations and local government to increase opportunities for marginalised people to advocate for the services that meet their needs. This also includes enabling the development of gender-sensitive hygiene and sanitation facilities.

Our partnerships and capacity building ensure that positive change won’t end with the project

Partnerships are at the heart of what UP does and are the means by which we help people to improve the quality of their lives in a sustainable and practical way. It is a key element in ensuring the independence of individuals and communities in the future. For example, we:

- work with communities and through community-based structures to ensure that they are the drivers of their own change and engaged throughout the project
- form and train community-based WASH committees to maintain and repair WASH facilities
- work with local governments, aligning our work with their priorities and plans and helping to build the capacity of district and community-based government staff
- engage, train and collaborate with local leaders
- work with the private sector to stimulate demand and achieve shared goals around improved sanitation and hygiene.
In Guinea, UP is a leader in the "Making Markets work for the Poor" (M4P) approach, being the first organisation to apply this to the WASH market.

**UP takes a market-based approach**

UP promotes market-based approaches to generate demand and secure supply for affordable sanitation and hygiene products and services. To do this we train sanitation masons and strengthen the capacity of local entrepreneurs and private sector – such as mechanics, builders and local grocery shop owners. This ensures that communities gain access to a range of improved sanitation options that are appropriate to local technology and culture, land availability, average incomes, and disability. We analyse why the system is failing to work for the most marginalised people, and support WASH actors to create pro-poor and low-cost business models that enable affordable WASH services which are profitable and sustainable for suppliers.

**UP ensures our WASH supply technologies are sustainable**

UP ensures high quality infrastructure for all its water supply and sanitation construction. Where possible we use locally available resources to ensure local ownership and participation in the project. In Malawi, UP owns two sets of drilling rigs and employs highly qualified technicians to construct water points. This approach enables UP to ensure high quality standards, and drives Value for Money; the rigs ensure low cost, high quality operations at 25% less than a commercial contractor.

**UP strengthens WASH governance and accountability**

United Purpose believes that good governance of WASH water resources and services, and the accountability of duty bearers for their actions, decisions and spending of public money, is essential for effective and sustainable WASH programmes. We strengthen the capacity of both duty bearers and citizens to engage meaningfully in community decision making about WASH policies and delivery in an inclusive and transparent manner. We use our engagement with communities and evidence from the field to influence policies. In Nigeria, this is already resulting in increased allocation of funds to the sanitation sector, as well as increased inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral coordination.

**UP responds with WASH in emergencies**

In Malawi, during the 2015 floods, UP coordinated the emergency WASH response in Phalombe and Chikwawa Districts, reaching 10,000 people across 10 evacuation camps with safe water access, temporary latrines, handwashing facilities and sanitation campaigns. In Guinea, during the Ebola outbreak in 2014-15, UP ensured greater awareness and surveillance of Ebola across Forecariah prefecture, alongside our existing hygiene behaviour change work. By the end of the project, 7,500 people demonstrated improved sanitation and hygiene practices. UP supported local governments in Sierra Leone (Kambia) and Guinea (Forecariah) to share epidemiological information across the border, a significant breakthrough made possible by our WASH reputation and good relationships with communities and local governments. In Bangladesh, in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis, UP installed WASH blocks, bathing spaces and handwashing facilities in refugee camps. UP is implementing creative and dynamic social behaviour change communication activities and materials that are appropriate for a largely illiterate population.