Kindo Aïssata, 42 year-old, has lived in Belleville, a small district in the town of Anyama. Just like the entire 13,000 population, this Literacy Advisor has faced water shortages during all 15 years she lived in the Belleville neighborhood.

As a matter of fact, the city of Anyama suffers from drinking water supply. Aïssata remembers that she and her children walked up to 30 kilometers every two days to get drinking water at the fountain located outside the perimeter of the city.

As a result, all the children in the neighborhood were constantly tired and sick. Their academic results were not good as before going to school they had to go and collect water to drink and shower.

During the post-electoral crisis of 2011, things got worst; Aïssata and her children could no longer go to the fountain for security issues.  Ultimately, people in Belleville had no other option than getting water from the marigot. The distance to walk was shorter but the water was unclean so very early health problems occurred.

My children and I had black spots and pimples that appeared on our bodies, says Aïssata. We suffered from indigestion regularly. I remember that two campaigns against bilharziasis were organized in my neighborhood and its peripheries. At that time, practically every other child suffered from this illness because we all supply ourselves from the same source.  So rainwater was a blessing for us, she testifies.

In January 2016, during a workshop financed by USAID on the role and responsibilities of locally elected people, Aïssata shared how she and her association took matters in their hands and resolved the situation.

A Wednesday morning of February 2016, along with the women of the community she met the local manager of the water distribution company. To make a case, she brought with her a sample of the water she had been drinking. The community explained how this water affected all individuals of their families. Each one of them gave a testimony.  Being faced to this cry from the heart, the local manager made the commitment to supply the Belleville district of Anyama with drinking water.

The following week, the services of the National Office of Drinking Water (ONEP) began to supply all the Belleville district of Anyama. Ever since, there has been no case of bilharziasis.

For Aïssata, the impacts on households were immediately evident, as one-third of the household budget that was previously used to cope with health problems due to poor water quality is now being used for savings. She can therefore think of new projects for herself and her community.

Thanks to community action, the situation has greatly improved although drinking water supply is still a major problem for rural residents.