

# WaterAid in Ghana

## Country programme evaluation

### Introduction

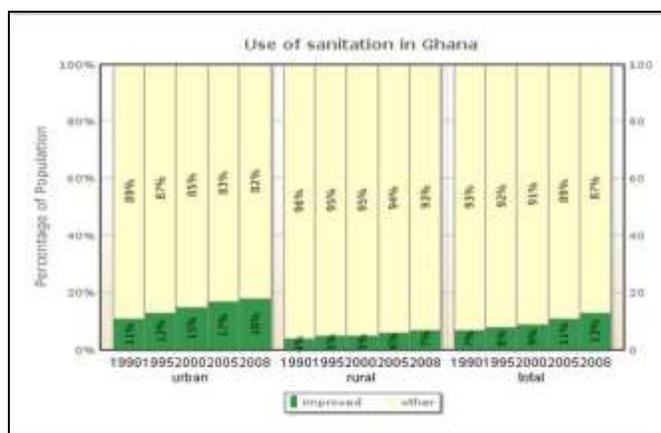
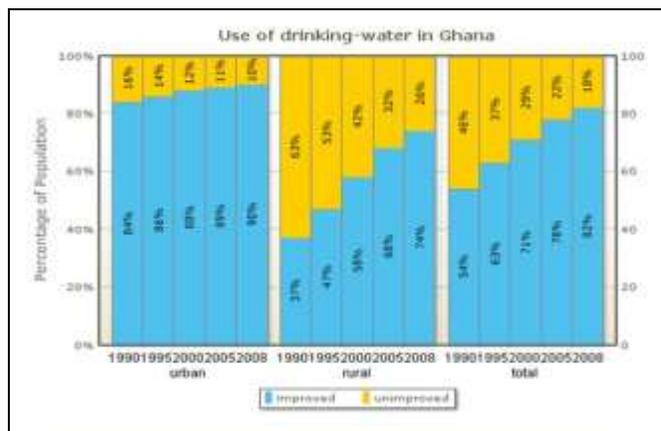
This is a summary of the WaterAid in Ghana country programme evaluation carried out in May 2010. The evaluation concentrated on the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the country programme’s work. Specifically, the evaluation considered on WaterAid in Ghana’s response to identified sector blockages and strategic priorities; the effectiveness of internal processes and external outcomes; and the sustainability of service delivery and influencing work.

In Ghana, WaterAid works in the Northern, Eastern, Upper East, and Accra regions. The country programme’s budget for 2009-10 is GHS 2.6 million (just over £1.1 million).

### National context

Ghana’s population is estimated to be 23.5 million, approximately 50% of which is urban. The southern part of the country has the greatest population densities and largest towns. The Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) estimate that coverage for improved water is 90% and 74% respectively for urban and rural populations. Corresponding coverage figures for sanitation are estimated to be 18% and 7%. With current rates of progress, the 2015 Millennium Development Goal target for sanitation coverage will not be met until 2130.

The water and sanitation sectors continue to be under-resourced by the central government, with budgets heavily reliant on donor support. According to a sector investment report, 95% of capital funding is from donors. A recent sector review (Maple Consult, 2009) highlighted low



Source: <http://www.wssinfo.org/data-estimates/graphs/>

government funding to the sector as a key blockage to progress.

The sector review also noted ineffective decentralisation and inadequate district-level capacity were hampering progress. Provision of water and sanitation in Ghana is the responsibility of local governments. Both urban and rural areas have elected assemblies as well as ‘de-concentrated’ bodies, with staff representing central government organs such as ministries. This duality of power weakens the sector as local governments have difficulty in controlling the work of locally based officers who report to their line ministries.

The Water Directorate of the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing; and the Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development are the high-level government agencies leading the sector. However, the latter in particular is unable to fill its required staffing positions.

## Findings: Relevance

WaterAid in Ghana's objectives and plans are well aligned with national policy and the needs of the water and sanitation sector. Activities sometimes fall short of plans, notably the lack of clear prioritisation of work on sanitation and hygiene. Recently improved links with local governments are important in the context of decentralisation and the search for better local support to sustain services.

## Sanitation and Hygiene

Sector assessments have repeatedly indicated that sanitation and hygiene receive too little attention in comparison with water. WaterAid in Ghana has attempted to address these issues for nearly two decades and currently has a number of initiatives including use of Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), sanimarts and eco-sanitation. However, the country programme still plan to support more people with access to water than sanitation.

## Inclusion

WaterAid in Ghana's established response to including the poorest and most marginalised groups was to ensure it worked in areas of the country with poorer access and social indicators. More recently, work with local governments to promote district wide assessments, including water point mapping, have identified less well served communities.

At the community level, a participatory approach has always been promoted. In principle, all community members are part of the decision making process and women are included on all water and sanitation committees. Training on



**Upper East Region**  
Population: 920,089  
Land area: 8,842km<sup>2</sup>

**Northern Region**  
Population: 1,820,806  
Land area: 70,384km<sup>2</sup>

**Eastern Region**  
Population: 2,106,696  
Land area: 13,232km<sup>2</sup>

**Accra Region**  
Population: 2,905,726  
Land area: 3,245km<sup>2</sup>

equity and inclusion has resulted in efforts to alter technical designs to allow easier access for disabled people. However, inclusion is not consistently practised and field visits for this evaluation found examples where the most vulnerable people were not being catered for.

## Organisational priorities

WaterAid recently launched a new five-year strategy which recognises the right to water and sanitation, linkages to related development sectors and management of water resources. While WaterAid in Ghana may be criticised on the speed of its adjustment to organisational priorities, globally WaterAid may consider how many new initiatives country programmes and partners are expected to adapt to.

## Findings: Effectiveness

There are real results, in both service delivery and advocacy work. The former have been demonstrated for many years; the latter is the result of WaterAid's growing focus on policy and advocacy this decade. Service delivery achievements, however, continue to be centred on water supply, and advocacy on national level.

## Key relationships

WaterAid's consistent support to the water and sanitation sectors over the last 25 years has

brought it into contact with all the important sector stakeholders. Many of these organisations are now partners or collaborators in one sense or another. An important mechanism for building relationships has been the extremely successful Mole series of conferences. Attracting increasing interest from the governmental and donor communities, the conferences are well attended knowledge sharing platforms.

In Ghana, WaterAid's partnerships are strongest and longest standing with NGOs. The consistency of support, capacity building and opportunities provided by WaterAid are appreciated by partners, although frustrations were also evident. These centred on the perceived frequency of changes and rapid take-up of new initiatives and programme directions required by WaterAid, especially at times of diminishing support. From WaterAid's perspective, it was believed some partners were not demonstrating the interest or capacity to take new work into account.

Although several of WaterAid's relationships with NGOs have lasted for 20 years, they are still governed by one year project agreements that lack strategic direction.

Relationships with local governments go back at least five years. More recent tripartite agreements between local governments, NGOs and WaterAid have more clearly defined expected roles and responsibilities. A water and sanitation mapping exercise as part of the arrangement has led to the development of District Water and Sanitation Plans, which links the service delivery work of partners to the priorities of local governments. However, there were some reservations regarding the quality of district plans and the process for keeping maps up-to-date.

## Advocacy

Considerable recent success has been achieved by WaterAid in Ghana at the national level. A new initiative in 2008 was to get each political party to explain its commitment to water and sanitation in the course of the presidential election campaign. One of WaterAid's partners (CONIWAS) is now monitoring the fulfilment of the winning party's commitments.

The respective directorates for water and sanitation told the evaluation team that WaterAid had constructively supported the national water policy and revised environmental sanitation policy. However, NGOs may not fully perceive the impacts of national work on what they do or the potential for their local experience to influence the national level.

## Service Delivery

WaterAid has been delivering services to poor communities for two and a half decades; and although the exact numbers served are unknown, they must be in the hundreds of thousands.

The favoured water supply option has been the protected hand-dug well, generally fitted with a hand pump. Figure 1 shows a protected hand-dug well fitted with a Nira handpump installed by WaterAid's partner in Gambia village.

Historically, protected wells have proved an effective means of water delivery, however in recent years, questions over their sustainability have been raised with a reported lowering of the water table. In response, WaterAid are supporting an increasing number of drilled boreholes. The higher cost of boreholes, in comparison to protected hand-dug wells, means the cost of delivering improved access to communities has risen.



Figure 1: Protected hand-dug well in Gambia village fitted with a Nira handpump

The current experimentation by WaterAid in Ghana of approaches to sanitation that move away from high quality, expensive ventilated improved pit latrines was welcomed. Lessons could be learned from other WaterAid countries where Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) has been introduced to promote its successful integration into project work.

Strengthening links between experimental approaches, for example using sani-marts to promote affordable and appropriate latrine options for CLTS projects, many further yield benefits to the country programme. The photograph on page 3 shows models of sanplats currently on display in the sani-mart.

The current one year project timeframe is not realistic for the software components, including hygiene promotion, CLTS approaches and building effective community management structures. More time is also required for advocacy to take root in communities. A longer time frame for agreements with partners would additionally allow more strategic thinking and



Figure 2: Sanplat models on display in the WaterAid supported sani-mart

planning to enhance programme effectiveness.

## Staff retention

The country programme has experienced and dedicated staff with good skills, but high turnover undermines achievement. Over the last two years it has been 30% per year, which would inevitably reduce effectiveness as remaining staff engage in recruitment and training. Institutional memory is also affected as staff leave. Fortunately, a number of partners have worked with WaterAid for one or two decades and can therefore provide a history of the country programme. Long hours and work pressures were identified as possible contributing factors to the high turnover.

## Monitoring processes

Monitoring information is fragmented at present. Although WaterAid have invested a number of years in developing a regional monitoring system (PROMISE), it is not being consistently used in Ghana. However, no alternative system exists meaning project plans and reports are held in different locations. The WaterAid team could not report the current status of outputs from service delivery work over the years. Partners visited by the evaluation team were also not able to produce precise statistics on the number of facilities installed with WaterAid support.

## Findings: Sustainability

The unspoken assumption behind many development projects is that, by the time the major infrastructure elements wear out, communities and / or local governments will be in a position to take care of such work. In practice, in most of sub-Saharan Africa, this has proven not to be the case. The fact that WaterAid in Ghana has provided consistent support in the same areas over such a long time period brings this point out strongly.

## Community funding

Community funding of maintenance (especially for significant repairs) is weak. Communities have derived much satisfaction from the use of

facilities, but most have not succeeded in developing sustainable financing that could cope quickly in the event of breakdowns. There was a tendency for communities to rely on the implementing NGO for assistance, even in the case of minor repairs. The urban systems that use payment per container of water tend to function better in this regard, but given the tariffs applied and the cost of investment in major equipment such as pumps, tanks or main pipes, even they are probably under-funded.

## Spare parts

Many communities indicated that in the event of a breakdown, they found it difficult to locate spare parts shops, and when they did, parts were expensive. For spare part supply chains to be effective, communities (either independently or through co-financing) need to raise sufficient funds to cover the cost of repair.

## Advocacy

The sustainability of advocacy outcomes can be most clearly seen in the institutionalisation of processes promoted by WaterAid. At the national level, advocacy efforts have been successful on a number of policy issues for both water and sanitation, including the adoption of CLTS as a sanitation strategy and introduction of the rope pump. Both of these are evidence of 'advocacy by example' as they were programme initiatives and promoted on the basis of that experience.

## Partners

Good capacity has been built with NGO partners, and although most are still financially quite dependent on WaterAid, their skills and outputs are impressive. Collaboration with local governments should improve the sustainability of outcomes, but the local governments themselves are not yet committed to the partnerships being developed.

## Recommendations

### Long lasting relationships:

In most of its country programmes, WaterAid has produced some of its best and most lasting

outlines through long-term relationships with NGO and government partners. This applies as much to advocacy, where two voices are better than one, as it does to service delivery. While the evolution of partners is expected, the quality of enduring relationships should continue.

### Project approach:

A new approach should allow a two or three-year programme of intervention in a community, allowing sufficient time for hygiene promotion and community mobilisation prior to water service delivery, and for hygiene and sanitation work to continue through the construction phase and afterwards. Support systems for these longer term projects would need to be developed.

### Prioritise sanitation and hygiene:

In rural areas, WaterAid needs to be more widely promoting many more technology options, including sanplats, arbourloos and different pit lining methods. It should be using the experience and enthusiasm of successful initiatives CLTS initiatives and looking to work in innovative ways for financing latrine construction, so that as many as possible of the latrines built under CLTS qualify as 'improved' facilities. It should also focus on promoting hygiene and sanitation in advocacy work.

### Improve links between policy and programme work:

WaterAid and partners should learn from DANIDA's recent experience in district support to encourage closer working between WaterAid's programme and policy staff as well as staff from partners. Collaborative working on the community scorecard initiative and district mapping work would improve the integration of policy and programme work at the field level.

### Community maintenance:

The funding issue needs to be addressed, but this is not an easy issue. Consultation with WaterAid West Africa and other

stakeholders should therefore be undertaken, as well as much more rigorous software work with communities to better understand what kind of financing mechanisms could be used for long-term repairs and replacement. Such work would also develop knowledge of funding needs for these eventualities.

#### **Water point mapping:**

WaterAid has been advocating the need for reliable information to local governments through its water point mapping work. Exactly the same is true for other types of information, and WaterAid is currently in no better position than most local governments in this sense. A robust monitoring and evaluation system that records and analyses programme outputs and outcomes is very much needed to improve the quality of learning, reporting and planning.

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WaterAid's mission is to overcome poverty by enabling the world's poorest people to gain access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education.

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## WaterAid in Ghana

WaterAid in Ghana started its operations in 1985 and quickly developed relationships with NGO partners to build water supply systems (which were initially mainly hand-dug wells). Currently there are eight of these NGO partners, all of whom have long-term relationships with WaterAid dating back between 15 and 25 years. In the early 1990s, WaterAid internationally was integrating hygiene and sanitation into its programmes. Health education (from 1989) and household latrines (from 1992) were introduced to the Ghana programme. During the 1990s, when the programme size and budget were growing quickly, the first Country Representative decided to develop an indigenous NGO to provide support to implementing partners. In due course this led to the foundation of ProNet, which had a focus on monitoring, evaluation and training. The intention at the time was to keep WaterAid staff presence small, and by the late 1990s, the Country Representative position was deemed unnecessary. WaterAid therefore maintained a Country Co-ordinator from 1998 to 2000. Further change was afoot however, in WaterAid internationally, with the development of a new strategy and increased attention to new elements including urban work and sector advocacy. In this context, the Representative's position was re-established and with it, a more typical role for a WaterAid country office emerged. ProNet, meanwhile had developed its own field implementation capacity in response and has become an implementing partner.

Developments in recent years has seen the establishment of a Senior Management Team and specialised departments for Programme Support, and Policy and Partnership. There are 20 positions in the current organogram.

Close links have been build with national and local government bodies, donor organisations, Civil Society Networks and the Ghana Watsan Journalist Network.