RCN Ghana
Resource Centre Network Ghana

WASH REFLECTIONS
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Review of the Regional Level Learning Alliance Platform

State of Water Services in Western Region of Ghana

Eighty-nine (89) participants from District Assemblies, Western Regional Coordinating Council, Private and Public Water Service Providers, Small Water Enterprises, Water and Sanitation Management Teams, Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation, Community Water and Sanitation Agency and Ghana Statistical Service participated in a 2-day validation and dissemination workshop on the 'State of Water Services in Western Region.' Event day one, August 30th 2023, hosted 14 District Assemblies; and day two, August 31st 2023, focused on the Districts' Water Service Providers at the Regional Coordinating Council Conference room in Takoradi. The IRC Ghana in collaboration with the Ghana Statistical Service undertook the mapping of water infrastructure and services in Western Region to know the state of water infrastructure, types of service providers and the state of water services with a view to providing credible data for evidence-based decision-making. The mapping activity is funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation under the Rural Water Utilitisation Project, which is also supporting the Community Water and Sanitation Agency in its growth towards becoming a professionalised public utility in rural water sub-sector.

Cross-section of Participants at the event

Background and Context

Availability and sustainable management of Water and Sanitation for all is the vision of the Sustainable Development Goal six, but millions of people still lack access to safe water globally. In Ghana, 87.7% of the population has access to basic water services according to the Ghana Population and Housing Census 2021 report. The deadline set by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is seven years away. To achieve SDG six, it is imperative to have evidence-based data to aid in effective decision-making and resource allocation to tackle inequalities in access to safe water.

The IRC Ghana and the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) carried out Water Services Mapping in Western Region. The objectives were to establish an inventory of water infrastructure with technical information, service levels, and key performance data in rural water service delivery in 14 districts in the Western Region. It is also to identify service delivery models for rural water service delivery in the Western region, and, provide support to develop a database framework for collection, analysis, and updating information for the rural and small-town water sub-sector; as well as develop a database for the small-town water sub-sector.

The implementation of this mapping exercise is under "Rural Water Utilitisation Project" (R-WUP) funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation in Ghana. The project aims to support the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) in its growth as the leading public sector Agency in Rural Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sub-sector, with the object of facilitating the provision of safe water to Rural Communities and Small Towns through a decentralized service delivery approach.

Overview of the Mapping Exercise

The mapping exercise was led by the GSS. It covered 14 Metropolitan, Municipal and Districts and mapped all water service delivery models in Shama, Ahanta West, Ellembelle, Jomoro, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tarkwa-Nsuem, Wassa Amenfi East, Wassa Amenfi West, Wassa East , Nzema East, Mpohor, Ahanta West, Effia-Kwesimintim (EKMA), and Prestea Huni Valley. Selected officials of these districts and water service providers were interviewed. Data collection started in February 2023 and lasted one month. This was followed by data cleaning and reporting; and finally the validation and dissemination

workshops at regional level involving the 14 districts.

Key Findings

The findings of the mapping exercise revealed that 88% of people (1,804,345 people) in Western Region have access to safe water supply. This is made up of 77% basic/limited access and 11% safely managed. 12% of the population is unserved/underserved and possibly depends on unimproved sources such as polluted streams, rivers and unprotected wells. 50% of the population is served by Limited Mechanized Scheme (LMS), 30% served by piped scheme, and 20% served by hand pump. There are 7 Ghana Water Limited piped schemes, 61 small town piped schemes, and 931 LMS. Over 95 percent of pipe schemes in the region takes its water source from one borehole and close to three percent of pipe schemes takes its water sources from multiple boreholes.

The mapping found five (5) main service delivery models: Utility Managed, Community Managed, Small Water Enterprises, Institutional Managed and Private Managed.

Under the utility manage, GWL and CWSA are the service providers. The community manage has community leaders and water and sanitation management teams (WSMTs) as service providers. The private model has private individuals and NGOs as service providers. In the region, over 90% of hand pumps and hand-dug wells are managed by communities. However, there are 57 hand pumps that are not managed by anyone, imposing serious consequences on sustainability of these hand pumps.

The Central Government is the largest funder of hand pumps in the Western region, providing funding for about 50% of hand pumps. NGOs and private companies are also major funders, providing 19% and 15% of funding, respectively.

The findings revealed that 60.6% of hand pumps in the region are functional, while 39.4% are not functional. The districts with the highest number of functional hand pumps are Ahanta West, Wassa Amenfi West, Prestea Huni Valley, Wassa West, and Wassa Amenfi East, with 100 to 197 functional hand pumps each. The districts with the highest number of non-functional hand pumps are Wassa East (140), Wassa West (109), and Wassa Amenfi East (102). Non-functional hand pumps means safe water is unavailable to communities, hence the need to prioritize interventions to improve the availability and accessibility of clean water in the Western region.

Only about 20 percent of hand pump users in the Western region pay for their use. This is in contrast to Sekondi-Takoradi and EKMA, where residents do not pay any tariff for the use of hand pumps. Payment for hand pumps is a key factor in their functionality. This is supported by the finding that 81% of functional hand pumps are paid for, while only 56% of functional hand pumps are not paid for.

Participants Contribution and Comments

Participants asked questions, made contributions and shared their perspectives during the validation and dissemination workshop. A participant indicated that there is the need for the CWSA and the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources to establish monitoring teams in each district or at regional level to undertake regular monitoring and support visits to ensure all water systems adhere to the routine maintenance schedule to forestall major breakdown. He indicated that major breakdown always require huge financial resources to fix, in addition to the fact that residents live without safe water for days during period of major maintenance. Another participant wanted to know the reason why about 60% of WMSTs did not implement the pay-as-you fetch system. He found it difficult to accept that communities who contribute either cash or in-kind to construct borehole turn around to refuse the pay-as-you fetch system which is sure measure of sustainability. He insisted that all hand pumps in all communities should implement the pay-as-you fetch system.

Small Water Enterprises members who were present expressed their confidence in the findings and stressed their commitment to continuously provide safe water to communities and institutions such as healthcare facilities. They appealed for appropriate tariff regimes for water they provide to enable them recoup at least their capital investment and expenses. They also appealed for enabling policy environment including regulations that will enable them benefit from Government financial support to enable them continue to fill the water service delivery gaps in the country as a social enterprise.

The **WSMT members** appealed for refresher trainings on effective water management, record keeping and professional approaches that will ensure hand pumps provide sustainable water services.

Way forward/Next steps

The IRC Ghana indicated that the final report with the inputs from the Takoradi workshop incorporated will be shared with the Western Regional Coordinating Council, all 14 MMDAs and service providers in the Western Region. It was announced that the final dissemination forum of the 'State of Water Services in the Western Region' final report will be held at the national level in Accra at a date to be communicated in due course.

NLLAP is a WASH sector multi stakeholder platform with the overall goal of improving sector learning and dialogue. It is hosted by the Ghana WASH Resource Centre Network (RCN). The platform offers learning and sharing opportunity for sector players as one of the practical approaches to improving sector engagements/sharing with the long term aim of achieving a knowledge driven WASH sector that delivers quality and sustainable services in Ghana. NLLAP meetings take place on the last Thursday of every month (with modifications when necessary) and are open to all interested parties. The discussions of each NLLAP meetings can be found on the RCN website www.washghana.net.

If you are interested to propose a topic for a meeting please contact us on,
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