

State of funding for WASH in HealthCare Facilities in Wassa East and Asutifi North Districts of Ghana

HealthCare Facilities are high risk settings where basic WASH services are vital for effective treatment and infection prevention. In addition, WASH in healthcare facilities play a key role in ensuring improved healthcare practices, including the safety of mothers during delivery. Despite the importance of WASH, estimated coverage for water and sanitation in healthcare facilities is often lower than in the household settings. WaterAid Ghana, in recognition of the role of WASH in quality healthcare service delivery implemented the 'Strengthening WASH in Healthcare facility project' in Wassa East and Asutifi North Districts. The project built the capacity of staff of the Districts Health Administration and Districts Assembly as well as Civil Society Organizations to advocate for improved WASH services in Healthcare facilities. At the 99th edition of NLLAP held on 17th October, 2023, participants, mainly WASH sector practitioners, policy makers, civil society and academia met to reflect on 'Using budget and expenditure analysis as evidence to advocate for increased funding for WASH in HealthCare facilities: the case of Wassa East and Asutifi North Districts,' and contribute to shape WAG's ongoing advocacy to promote the agenda of inclusive and sustainable WASH in healthcare facilities. A key objective of the project is to develop evidence-based information around WASH in health care facilities to inform policy and practice and to call for prioritization of WASH access in HCFs in Ghana.

1.0 Background and Context

Neglect for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in health care facilities undermines country capacity to prevent and respond to disease outbreaks (GLAAS, 2014 Report). The experiences of many countries during the COVID-19 outbreak bare amply testimony to this. Neglect of WASH, and ensuing poor conditions and practices in communities and healthcare facilities exacerbated the 2014/2015 Ebola crises in Sierra Leone. Ensuring essential services, including WASH, is one of the global response strategy to the outbreak of epidemics and is key to recovery.

WASH has an important role to play in the prevention of specific diseases. WASH supports the prevention and control of pathogens. Handwashing with soap and water is the most cost-effective method for preventing the spread of infectious disease. Diarrheal diseases are primarily caused by waterborne pathogens. Proper sanitation, good hand hygiene, and safe drinking water are all structural requirements for interrupting the faecal-oral route of transmission. Proper sanitation safeguards the spread of infections in faecal waste and proper water management ensures safe drinking water. Despite the critical role of WASH services in quality healthcare delivery and facilitating the essential of infection and control, many HCF in Ghana lack these basic services. WaterAid Ghana (WAG) conducted a baseline study on the status of WASH in HCF in both Asutifi and Wassa East Districts in March 2023 as part of the project.

WAG supported the Wassa-East and Asutifi North Districts to develop and launched an advocacy strategies for the two Districts. The findings of the baseline study, the District Medium Term Development Plans (2022-2025), outcome of consultations with the District Health Directorates and core staff of the Districts Planning Unit were used with other literature and stakeholder consultation to develop the advocacy strategies for Asutifi and Wassa East Districts. The ongoing advocacy and campaigns aimed at increased funding for WASH in healthcare facilities is guided by these advocacy

strategies.

2.0 Methodology

Two main complimentary methods were used by WAG to gather the budget and expenditure evidence for advocacy on financing WASH in healthcare settings. Desk review of Districts budgets and expenditure for years 2018 to 2022 was done. The analysis revealed total budgets, budgets for WASH and actual expenditures. In addition, key informants interviews were conducted. The District budget Officer, District Development Planning Officer, District Finance Officer and District Coordinating Directors were among those interviewed. The key questions covered the budgeting and funds allocation processes, how funds are utilized and its impact on development in the districts and WASH sector in particular.

3.0 Key Findings

In Asutifi North, overall, the total budget allocation did not meet the budget requested for, except for 2018 to 2020 where total budget allocated was higher than budgeted. The budget deficit creates a gap which affects WASH services in the district. For example, GHS12, 500,000 was budgeted for in 2018, but only GHS9, 000,000 funds were mobilized, leaving a funding gap of GHS3, 500,000. Similarly in 2022, GHS 27,000,000 was budgeted but only GHS19, 000,000 funds were mobilized. With these huge funding gaps, WASH activities suffer a lot with cuts and non-implementation. The actual expenditure over the years as a proportion of the total district expenditure budgeted ranged between 0.5% and 1.5%, between the years 2018 and 2022.

In terms of Internal Generated Funds (IGF) mobilization, the district generates higher revenue which has increased progressively from 2018 to 2022. Overall, the Asutifi North

district has done incredibly well in the water sector, which could be as a result of the District WASH masterplan launched in 2018 and implemented by Assembly and a team of partners. However, sanitation and hygiene are still a challenge in the district.

In Wassa East, that total budget allocation was consistently

lower than the budgeted from 2018 to 2022 (reference to table 2 below) which affected the prioritization of WASH projects in the district. The total WASH expenditure was encouraging as compared to the total district expenditure. From 2017 to 2022, the percentage allocation of WASH expenditure ranged between 2.2% to 7.0%. The percentage allocation is quite significant as compared to the Asutifi North

Table 1: WASH Expenditure for Asutifi North District

| Year | 2018 (GHS) | 2019 (GHS) | 2020 (GHS) | 2021(GHS) | 2022 (GHS) |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| WASH Budget Expenditure | 52,750 | 118,900 | 157,210 | 192,627 | 167,292 |
| District Total Expenditure | 10,361,494 | 9,204,019 | 13,786,944 | 12,636,081 | 19,797,305 |
| WASH Expenditure as a % of District Expenditure | 0.5 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 1.5 | 0.8 |

Source: WAG NLLAP Presentation on 17th October, 2023

Table 2: WASH Expenditure for Wassa-East District

| Year | 2018 (GHS) | 2019 (GHS) | 2020 (GHS) | 2021(GHS) | 2022 (GHS) |
|---|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| WASH budget Expenditure | 106,000 | 130,500 | 237,571 | 378,373 | 240,000 |
| District Total Expenditure | 4,880,130 | 5,288,000 | 7,087,933 | 6,521,322 | 7,420,143 |
| WASH Expenditure as a % of total budget | 2.2 | 2.5 | 3.4 | 5.8 | 3.2 |

Source: WAG NLLAP Presentation on 17th October, 2023

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

Adequate and reliable WASH in HCF is a key requirement. It is essential to promote maternal and child health and general well-being of the population. The Asutifi North and Wassa East Districts have an ambition to increase safe water and adequate sanitation on premises of health facilities, which is achievable with sustained advocacy. The following recommendations are worth considering:

- Stakeholders should support Wassa-East District Assembly to develop a district WASH master plan to enable the District achieve their vision of WASH for All, and promote their drive towards universal WASH coverage.
- The District Assembly should increase budget allocation

and expenditure for water, sanitation and hygiene with specific focus on sanitation and hygiene.

- The District and its key funders and stakeholders should strengthen hygiene programming in the districts to ensure a focus on district-wide culture of handwashing at critical times, as well as a focus on the elimination of diarrheal diseases and helminths.
- WASH Stakeholders/funders should support the training of healthcare workers on WASH IPC in the two Districts
- District Assemblies should develop a districtwide strategy for WASH in IPC
- The District Health Administrations and District Assemblies should increase WASH budget allocation.

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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