

REPORT ON THE 10TH NORTHERN REGIONAL LEARNING ALLIANCE PLATFORM MEETING

Campaigning for Sanitation

The 10th in the series of the Northern Regional Learning Alliance Platform meeting was held on Tuesday 1st March, 2016 at Modern City Hotel, Tamale on the theme '**Campaigning for Sanitation**'. The meeting was called at the instance of WaterAid Ghana under the auspices of the core group. The meeting among other things was to share lessons and knowledge acquired on advocacy activities on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene interventions sponsored by WaterAid Ghana with support from the Gates foundation through some partner organizations in Gushegu and Akuapim North Districts in the Northern and Eastern regions respectively.

The Communications Officer at WAG in the Person of Ms. Kafui Nyaku welcomed participants to the meeting. In her remarks, she underscored the need to maintain proper sanitation at all times to prevent diseases. She espoused the success of the intervention in relation to the situation which prevailed in these communities prior to the intervention.

The Regional Manager of WAG-Northern Region Alhaji Sulaiman-Issah Bello expressed appreciation to all stakeholders present. He pointed out that the platform afforded WAG the best opportunity to showcase what they have done in these communities and the experiences gained.

PRESENTATION

The first presentation on the day was the premiering of a brief documentary on the sanitation situation in the eight communities prior to the intervention. The documentary previewed the sanitation challenges these communities were facing in terms of managing their liquid and solid waste as well as the implications of these conditions on the health and general wellbeing of community members.

New Energy, a non-governmental organization working in the Northern Region presented their side of the initiative in the four communities in the Gushegu district. According to the presentation, the strategy adopted for the sanitation campaign geared towards promoting behavior change in these communities included radio programs, capacity building initiatives, advocacy among others.

After successfully rolling out the intervention, over 30 household latrines have been constructed, 70 tippy taps constructed using local materials for the promotion of handwashing with soap and ash, the capacities of over 1000 individuals built to sustain the sanitation drive in these communities. The communities are Wuntugu, Zamashegu, Zantili and Damdaboli.

The third and final presentation on the day was done by AKDEP from Akuapim North. The presentation showcased the strategies adopted, successes and challenges with the roll out in the Akwapim North district. According to the presentation, 25 household latrines have so far been completed and in use in three (3) communities - Kwamuso, Larteh, Tinkong. A third community – Okyerekrom, is still going through triggering. Some of the strategies adopted include the formation of advocacy groups to champion the cause of sanitation and hygiene in these communities.

Each of the presentations by the POs was followed by an experience sharing session which involved a beneficiary sharing the benefits derived from the initiative and how this has transformed their social life. Some reported of drastic reduction in diarrhea and cholera cases after the intervention has been successfully rolled out.

DISCUSSIONS

Participants were generally impressed with the outcome of the intervention. Particularly of interest to participants was the manageable number of communities involved. Many alluded to the fact that the size of the intervention area was part of the success story. A clarion call was made to all partners to emulate the example set out by WAG by focusing on sizeable number of communities at a time. This will ensure prudent community interaction and action.

Measures put forth by the POs to ensure the gains are sustained beyond the intervention period dominated the discussions. A representative from the University for Development Studies Navrongo campus urged partners to introduce the concept of lining pits of latrines and also construct shallow pits. This according to him will prevent the pits from collapsing after rainfall.

The POs also argued that, the vigorous involvement of all in the sanitation drive is one sure way of ensuring that the intervention is sustained.

Mention was also made of the active involvement of the Environmental Health and Sanitation Officers of the district assemblies in the entire process. Participants however bemoaned the lack of logistical support to the unit by the Assemblies to effectively carry out their mandate.

WAY FORWARD

The following were suggested by participants to be considered as the next steps in consolidating the successes chalked in the two districts

- Innovative financing mechanisms for sustaining the sanitation campaign
- Targeting identifiable groups as agents of change
- Community action planning and timelines
- Adequate support to the EHSU (From the DAs and partners) for post intervention monitoring and coaching

CONCLUSION

The Communications Officer of WAG thanked participants for making time to participate in the meeting and made a passionate appeal to all to support the fight against sanitation.