

BCC Strategy for the Urban WASH Sub Sector in Ghana

The bane of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector is poor attitudes, behavior and practices of the public, especially the urban sub-sector. As such, the development of the USAID-CHF International sponsored Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) Strategy for the Urban WASH Sub-Sector is a commendable initiative. This was a major point arising from the twentieth edition of the National Level Learning Alliance Platform (NLLAP).

Prof. Mrs. Esi Awuah of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) chaired the 20th edition of the NLLAP, which was on the theme: “National Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) Strategy for the Urban Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Sub Sector in Ghana”. A presentation on the BCC by Demedeme Naa Lenason, Director, Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate (EHSD) of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), a speech delivered on behalf of the Minister, MLGRD by Mr Elvis Afriyie Ankrah, Deputy Minister, a panel discussion, a brief on the compilation of the next Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS), and general discussions were the main highlights of the day. This communiqué contains details of the day's proceedings and is intended to share with the wider WASH community the most important issues brought up during the meeting.

Peep into the BCC

The day was essentially to share and launch the Urban WASH BCC Strategy. Prior to the launch, Mr Demedeme Naa Lenason, Director of EHSD, gave an overview of the WASH BCC strategy. The process towards the development of the strategy dates back to 2010 when CHF International approached the MLGRD and the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing (MWRWH) about its plans to develop a project-specific BCC strategy for the WASH-UP project, funded by USAID.

However, following consultations, a wider WASH BCC strategy for the urban sub-sector was settled upon and a coordinator was engaged to facilitate and consolidate the BCC strategy, based on outputs from working groups, which had been put together. Following this, a draft was produced, subjected to validation and consultation at various levels, and a final document prepared.

The scope of the final document includes: Situation Analyses, Audience Segmentation, Prioritizing Behaviours, Behaviour Analyses, Strategic Approach, The Message Brief, Communication Channels, Tools and Strategy, Management Plan, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Overall Recommendations.

In terms of strategic approach, the “Strategy combines three main intervention areas that reinforce each other for sustainable behaviour change,” Naa Lenason noted.

These include:

- Promoting access to hardware (e.g. infrastructure, products, and service level improvements);
- Adopting approaches to hygiene promotion covering

communication—IE and BCC, training, and mobilization—social and community; and Creating an enabling environment, encompassing policies and advocacy, institutional development strengthening and creation as well as sustained financing schemes

Stakeholder consensus

A number of stakeholder concerns were raised at NLLAP 20. While presenting the overview of the strategy, Naa Lenason expressed some concerns, including the fact that the bane of the WASH sector and environmental sanitation is poor attitudes, behavior and practices of the citizenry.

He spoke of the danger of Ghana missing the Millennium Development Goals, especially targets for sanitation. In apparent frustration he said “sometimes we seem not to be getting the desired results because the little that we put in” is often negated by “very strange and poor attitudes, behaviours and practices of the populace” and described the urban sub-sector as the most challenging part of the WASH sector.

Agreeing, Alberto Wilde, CHF International's Country Director said “It doesn't matter how much money you put into a project. If you don't change people's minds and the way they behave the change will not happen. So this is something that is critical and I think we are going in the right direction; with the BCC I think we are on the right direction”. “We are very aware of the challenges facing the government today, especially the challenges facing sanitation. The goal that the government has established for 2015 is a very ambitious goal but is not impossible if all of us work together;

it's something that can be done.”

Launching the strategy on behalf of his Minister, Mr Elvis Afriyie Ankrah, Deputy Minister at the MLGRD, stated “There is no doubt that poor attitudes and behavior continue to be the major challenge confronting the effective delivery of sanitation and hygiene services in the country.”

He further lamented: “As a country our performance in terms of sanitation indicators has not been good and therefore requires that we do something dramatic to reverse the poor sanitation conditions we find ourselves in.

“Data available indicates that only 18% of the urban population has access to improved latrines. Nearly 50% use shared latrines whilst the rest of the population uses other unsafe sanitation facilities and 7% reportedly practice open defecation with their attendant public health consequences. Primary school children both in rural and urban areas had to study at schools without a latrine and water supply.

“These statistics are staggering and its implication to our health status is tremendous. Diarrhoea kills more children than HIV /AIDS and Malaria combine. Diarrhoea is estimated to account for 25% of all child deaths.”

GLAAS Report

Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) is a UN-Water initiative implemented by the World Health Organization (WHO). The objective of UN-Water GLAAS is to provide policy makers at all levels with a reliable, easily accessible, comprehensive and global analysis of the evidence to make informed decisions in sanitation and drinking-water.

The first GLAAS study on Ghana was carried out in 2009 and the resultant report published in 2010. The next GLASS report on Ghana is expected to be compiled in 2012.

Destina Samane of the then African Regional Center for Water and Sanitation (CREPA), now Water and Sanitation for Africa (WSA) took the opportunity to brief stakeholders on the importance of the GLAAS report and encouraged them to support the process. “As much as possible we want to get everybody aware and involved, especially the sector stakeholders.”

According to her unlike the previous report, the 2012 study will pay special attention to hygiene separately from sanitation and water. She added that among other things, the GLAAS study will help

The 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 and opened to all interested parties. The discussions of each NLLAP meeting are summarized and shared with the wider WASH community. The topics of upcoming meetings are decided on by the RCN secretariat and a list of upcoming meetings can be found on the RCN website www.washghana.net.

Ghana's decision makers to have more information and prepare them for the high level meetings of ministers.

The GLAAS report was presented at the first annual High-Level Meeting of Sanitation and Water for All (SWA), hosted by UNICEF on 23 April 2010 in Washington, D.C. The High Level Meeting provided a forum for Ministers of Finance from developing countries, accompanied by Ministers responsible for sanitation and water, and representatives from donor countries to share in a dialogue that focused on steps to target donor aid and coordination, and enhance accountability and action on the ground.

Key issues and recommendations

Undoubtedly, Mr Afriyie Ankrah, like many stakeholders sees the WASH BCC strategy as a major tool for addressing some of the gaps in the sub sector. As such, there is obviously hope in the BCC strategy, going forward.

And according to Naa Lenason, the strategy is not cast in iron and will be reviewed and updated over the period of implementation. He reminded stakeholders that the implementation of the strategy was a collective responsibility for all, but that the MLGRD will play the lead role.

Some agreed strategies for the way forward include:

- Sourcing funds to pilot the strategy for a period of 18 months to provide opportunity for field test and to refine the overall strategy;
- A National WASH BCC Handbook or Manual to be drawn out of this strategy document;
- A National Training of Trainers Manual on WASH BCC for urban sub sector with its various sections to be developed; and
- To update the BCC strategy every two years, based on emerging issues.

Participants also made recommendations, including:

- Putting in place requisite measures for implementation
- Translating the strategy into local languages
- Establishing punitive measures for offenders
- Getting a focal group of journalists to report on the pilots for purposes of documentation
- Organising dissemination workshops
- Engaging special focus agencies such as unit committee members, security agencies, the CWSA, Ghana Health Service, etc.
- Getting MMDAs to own the process
- Setting up a voluntary task force comprising of local WASH stakeholders in the pilot communities to monitor progress

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