

WASH DIGEST

January 2022



WASH Digest 3

Dear Stakeholders,

Welcome to the third Ghana WASH Digest! This is a periodical that seeks to highlight topical sector issues in order to influence dialogue and sector thinking. This edition highlights main findings from the review of the National Level Learning Alliance Platform (NLLAP). NLLAP is a WASH sector multi stakeholder platform with the overall goal of improving sector learning and dialogue. The review was conducted in November/ December, 2021 with key sector stakeholder interviews to understand their perspectives on the relevance of the learning platform in facilitating dialogue and partnerships for improved sector performance in Ghana.

In this edition aspects of information shared in the WASH sector within the period is also captured.

Happy reading!

Ghana: National Level Learning Alliance Platform - Review highlights

Introduction

Learning Alliances are important multi stakeholder platforms for promoting individual, organizational and sector learning which can propel individual personal development, organizational development and sector-wide growth. Organizations must formalize the process of transferring good practices, including documentation and lessons learnt. Organizations must move beyond documenting good practices and lessons learnt, to putting in place a conscious system to ensure that new knowledge gathered is actually integrated into practice.

WASH Sector Learning Alliance

To advance the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sector learning, the National Level Learning Alliance Platform (NLLAP) was established in October, 2009 by the IRC-supported Ghana Resource Centre Network (RCN) as the first ever knowledge management hub of Ghana's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector. This platform brings different stakeholders together in a series of multi-stakeholder platforms at different levels (National, Regional and District) with the aim of creating innovative ideas around practical approaches to solve the challenges and improve sector performance. WASH Reflections paper is developed as a key outcome of NLLAP and circulated widely to WASH sector stakeholders. Having operated for over 12 years, IRC Ghana, the host of the RCN secretariat commissioned a review of the NLLAP to understand from stakeholders' perspective how the platform has enhanced sector experience sharing, learning and facilitating dialogue and partnerships for improved sector performance. Engage with partners on what they would like to see change to make it more effective to serve the WASH sector better.

Review Process

The process of review involved consultation with key stakeholders and twenty-two organizations, who were interviewed with a structured question guide. Key reports and documents were reviewed to augment the primary data findings. These elicited responses were synthesized and analyzed and key conclusions and recommendations drawn.

Key Findings

The findings revealed that NLLAP and the WASH reflections paper have been relevant and would continue to be relevant to serve sector knowledge needs if well positioned.

- The Government of Ghana, WASH sector actors, Non-Government Organizations in WASH, the Private Sector Organizations and WASH Consultants have used NLLAP reports and WASH reflections paper to shape policy development, proposal writings and project management activities at different levels.
- A NLLAP recommendation led to partner-supported nationwide dissemination of the strategic sector documents after the launch of such documents at the NLLAP session. This includes the USAID- Global Communities supported nationwide dissemination of the National Behaviour Change Communication Strategy and the National Strategy for Community Participation in Management of Urban WASH Services, among others.
- WASH stakeholders lauded NLLAP platform for providing the opportunity and space for networking and experience sharing, and in their opinion, this will remain relevant as the WASH sector moves towards the 2030 Agenda. They indicate that they used the platform for networking and dialogue on a range of issues including funding, collaborations, capacity building and building partnerships.
- With regular sharing from the NLLAP platform, stakeholders indicate that they are updated and able to self-assess ongoing work compared with new ideas and approaches that are introduced. This has enabled projects to obtain useful feedback from stakeholders from start, and contributes to new knowledge since models and approaches of implementation are shared. Through this, self-correction gets done to ensure successful implementation plans and attainment of desired objectives.
- Most stakeholders are willing to support in various ways to sustain the initiative. Some were of the opinion that the best option for funding the NLLAP is for projects to intentionally budget and commit portions of their project funds to sector learning. This means they should deliberately plan and budget for it to ensure an all-year-round fully funded NLLAP.

Sustainability of NLLAP

The sustainability of NLLAP and WASH reflections paper remain a key concern to stakeholders. Suggestions were made on how to ensure the long-term sustainability of NLLAP and host institution, RCN. This include the need for stakeholders to commit to a basket fund where agreed annual budgetary allocations are made by key stakeholders to fund NLLAP (and RCN) and collected on proportional basis at the beginning of each year. Another sustainability measure is to make a stakeholder or stakeholder groups who have findings, insights, innovations or policy issues to share at the NLLAP to cover the full cost of the meetings.

Changes were suggested to deepen the reach of the platform across the country. NLLAP should also be localized and hosted at regional and other zonal levels to increase participations of other Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non- Governmental

Organizations (NGOs). This could be successful if the hosting or partnership arrangement is well discussed, such that the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) or a well-established private sector agency or NGO is given the hosting and organization right on annual basis. The Organization interested in sharing any learning would fund the full cost of the platform at that level.

Interestingly, stakeholders are prepared to support in the dissemination of invitation, learning products, WASH reflection, setting up of benchmark to ensure the relevance of the content shared; and support to review proposals (learnings) brought up for sharing at NLLAP.

Conclusions

NLLAP is widely accepted as a sector platform for learning and knowledge management hub. As a result, the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources should provide the needed administrative, technical and financial resources to support NLLAP. With the leadership from the ministry, the NLLAP will further become an indispensable platform for sharing and reviewing relevant sector documents to inform sector know-how value.

An online version of the reflection paper should be circulated to sector stakeholders as part of the dissemination. An annual WASH reflection paper that highlights key innovations/researches and the key recommendation made for all the NLLAP sessions for the year is good to explore. This should highlight key issues shared over the year to serve as a reminder and to enable stakeholders reflect over the past period in looking forward.

Learning event products

WASH Reflections: A review of the national level learning alliance platform discussions and recommendations. In the October 2021 edition (NLLAP 91) - Participants at the fourth National Learning Exchange on District-Wide Initiative agreed to review, adapt, and adopt some of the innovative approaches implemented over the recent past years and share outcomes and actions that can be replicated and scaled-up towards the delivery of the WASH Sustainable Development Goal Six (SDG 6). Read more: <https://www.washghana.net/wash-reflections>

Mole WASH Conference Communiqué: A review of main decision/ action points that came up at the WASH sector CSO learning event. The 32nd edition of the Mole Conference was opened on November 2, 2021, by Hon. Cecilia Abena Dapaah, Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources in Ejisu - Ashanti Region, with a call for closer partnership with Civil Society Organisations to strengthen WASH sector emergency preparedness. Read more: <https://www.ircwash.org/node/88239>

Sector publications

Ghana National Implementation Plan for the convention on the protection and use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes - This Plan provides key strategic actions plans and measures for the implementation of obligations considering the physical and governance framework for water governance in Ghana with specific focus on transboundary management.

Read more: <C:\Users\HomeOffice21!\Downloads\Ghana-National-Implementation-Plan-1992-UNECE-Water-Convention-Final-24052021.pdf>

Community Water and Sanitation Agency Reform Brief: The ultimate objective of the policy reforms is to transform CWSA into a Utility Organization, having direct responsibility for the provision and management of small towns piped water supply systems whilst providing point water systems (boreholes fitted with hand pumps), in collaboration with the MMDAs. This is to ensure the delivery of quality, reliable and affordable water services to rural communities and small towns on sustainable basis:

Read More: <https://cwsa.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CWSA-REFORM-MEDIA-BRIEF.pdf>

Identifying barriers to inclusion in WASH: This brief looks at how improved knowledge and skills in social inclusion are improving the capacity to identify excluded persons and advocate for WASH interventions to be accessible to all persons, especially for people living with a disability. It is based on a survey of 22 communities within Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipality, Ghana. The survey examined the characteristics of a random sample of 40 people living with a disability, and their environmental, institutional and attitudinal barriers to inclusion. The study concludes that in order to leave no one behind, decision makers and service providers need to examine common beliefs in measuring access to services.

Read more: <https://www.ircwash.org/node/87457>

The journey so far - Working together for safe water in Ghana: This country brief shares the highlights and lessons learned from collective action in Asutifi North district and implementing a social enterprise model in Wassa East district in Ghana. The Safe Water Strategy partnership – made possible with funding from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation – works to ensure access to safe water, a reality, for everyone, for good. Please also see the other focus country briefs and the synthesis document: People, systems and change: harnessing the power of collective action through the Safe Water Strategy here:

<https://www.ircwash.org/resources/working-together-safe-water-journey-so-far>

2019 Annual Performance Report: This report provides an assessment on progress made in implementing the WASH master plan for Asutifi North District, Ghana since its commencement in 2018. The master plan is being implemented by the Asutifi North Ahonidie Mpontuo (ANAM) initiative consisting of the District Assembly, IRC Ghana, Safe Water Network, Netcentric Campaigns, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Vision Ghana and Aquaya Institute, with the support of Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. Several studies including water and sanitation service monitoring, budget tracking, outcome harvesting, district capacity assessment, and water quality testing have been undertaken, and informed the preparation of this performance report.

Read more: <https://www.ircwash.org/node/87462>

If you would like to feature your publication or organization's materials or suggest other content for upcoming issues of WASH Digest, please send them to RCN, at rcn@washghana.net. Don't forget to check out the RCN website, www.washghana.net for additional information and WASH updates.