

WSUP PASS Project Provides Clear Pathway for Urban Sanitation Delivery in Ghana

The Partnership for Advancing Sustainable Sanitation (PASS) Project, led by Water and Sanitation for Urban Poor (WSUP), has made significant outcomes in the Ga West Municipality over the past four years, according to the project evaluation findings. At the end of the project in November 2018, the Municipality had been equipped with a clear pathway to move its sanitation agenda forward. Ga West Municipal Assembly had also become a strategic knowledge hub for urban sanitation delivery in Ghana. These, among other lessons, were shared on the 75th edition of the National Level Learning Alliances Platform (NLLAP 75) in November, 2018.

Water and Sanitation for Urban Poor (WSUP), in collaboration with the Ga West Municipal Assembly (GWMA) and RCN, hosted the 75th edition of the National Level Learning Alliances Platform (NLLAP 75) on 29th November, 2018. The session was chaired by the Executive Secretary of the Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS), Basilia Nanbigne. A project Manager at WSUP, Anthony Addae delivered a presentation on the overview of the PASS Project, while a Project Evaluation Consultant, Benjamin Edusah, shared findings from project evaluation. Participants also shared their perspectives about the success of the project and contributed ideas for a possible scale-up.



The PASS Project – an overview

Presenting an overview of the project, a WSUP Project Coordinator, Mr. Anthony Addae said the overall objective was to demonstrate a scalable approach to sustainably improving sanitation, faecal sludge and hygiene services to low income urban inhabitants of Ghana through strengthening the links between the public and private sectors, and their capacity and financing models. Mr. Addae said the 4-year project had the following sub-objectives:

1. To initiate a well-planned project via a strong public-private partnership;
2. To strengthen supply of, and landlords' demand for, compound sanitation in tenanted compounds, and thereby facilitate access to new or upgraded toilets for 45,000 in GWMA;
3. To strengthen the capacity of GWMA to collect revenue for financing Faecal Sludge management (FSM) and school sanitation;
4. To increase knowledge and practising of hand-washing with soap at critical times among 1.6 million school children nationally and increase access to improved and sustainable school WASH facilities for 7,700 children in GWMA;

5. To increase access to improved and sustainable FSM services for 80,000 people in GWMA; and
6. To complete the project as per the plans and disseminate learning nationally and internationally.

Main partners in the project, he said, included the Ga West Municipal Assembly, which played a central role in the project as the ultimate duty bearer for the provision or facilitation of sanitation and hygiene services in Ga West. He said WSUP provided a lead role in project and budget management, while HFC Bofo led in the exploration of micro-financing solutions to compound sanitation development. He said another partner, UNILEVER Nederlands Holding BV, led in school WASH activities within the project.

Achievement

By the end of the project, according to Mr Addae, the PASS project had established a strong partnership among WSUP, HFC Bofo, Unilever and GWMA for sustainable sanitation service delivery. A compound sanitation strategy had also been developed, and close to 500 residents had been provided with access to compound sanitation. The project, according to Mr. Addae, had also triggered demand for household toilets in the Municipality.

In terms of revenue mobilization for sanitation, Mr. Addae said the project had facilitated the introduction of 10% sanitation surcharge on property rates through the valuation of a sample of 885 properties to inform realistic billing for property rates. The capacity of the GWMA had also been built for revenue collection, transparency, and accountability in revenue management. Through the project, sanitation bye-laws had been developed and gazetted and capacity of the Assembly had been developed for sanitation enforcement and prosecution.

Other successes, he said, included the provision of school WASH facilities helping nearly 9,000 school children to gain access to improved toilets with dedicated changing rooms for menstruating girls. The project, he said, also reached about 1.5 million school children with hygiene education messages through Unilever's School of 5 Campaign and activated schools handwashing clubs, while training more than a thousand School Health Education Programme (SHEP) coordinators.

Looking beyond the numbers

In his presentation on the findings from the project evaluation, the consultant, Ben Edusah, said even though the project may not have achieved all its quantitative ambitions, it had left behind a far-reaching pathway for improving access to urban sanitation in the municipality and beyond. He said beyond the numbers, the PASS project had left behind household toilet options and visibility for compound sanitation, availability of micro financing options, revenue mobilization through property rate calculation and collection, enabling environment for enforcement, toilet market opportunities, access to school WASH facilities, hygiene education, among others. He also said the project had left behind trained Toilet Sale Agents some of who had been developed into small scale Toilet Entrepreneurs, thereby making useful contributions into the promotion of compound toilets in the Municipality.

Challenges

Recounting some of the project implementation challenges, Mr. Addae said the cost of constructing toilets are high while the income levels of most of the intended household beneficiaries are low. He said the cost of loans for toilets were also high and there was no clear government strategy to facilitate reduction of loans meant for household or compound toilets. This made landlords reluctant to access the micro-finance facility that was made available through the PASS project. Mr. Addae said the PASS project, which was designed to promote a market-based approach had to compete with the GAMA Sanitation and Water Project, which was providing up to 70% subsidies at the same time. These conflicting approaches affected the PASS project negatively and more landlords would naturally opt for the subsidized option.

Comments and Recommendations for scale-up

In her comments as the chair of the session, the Executive Secretary of the Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation

(CONIWAS), Basilia Nanbigne called for increased advocacy for MMDAs to prioritise and increase allocation for sanitation. She said if sanitation in the country is to improve ever, it would depend on how MMDAs prioritize it since they have the mandate to ensure that communities in Ghana are clean and sanitised. "Stakeholders in basic sanitation should look beyond containment of sludge and target the entire sanitation value chain," She said, touching on the need to explore more toilet and liquid waste technology options especially in urban communities to respond to varying household capacities to construct toilets and manage environmental conditions.

Participants offered suggestions for scaling up the project in future project designs. In terms of stakeholder mobilization, participants suggested the inclusion of chiefs, elders, religious and opinion leaders, Assembly Members and Unit Committee members. Participants also suggested intensified public education through the mass media and community dialogues through Town Hall Meetings, in addition to house-to-house education. They also suggested a legislation to back the proportion of property rates that should be invested in sanitation. Low income earners, they said, should also be identified for subsidies, and NGOs should deal mainly with technocrats and focal persons rather than politicians.

Participants also suggested that capacity development should emphasize data generation, monitoring, technology development, management and provision of logistics. They said other partners who are into a similar programme should be involved in the capacity building process. Participants again suggested that there should be clear routine reporting to feed into key decision-making. For instance, field coordinators should report weekly to project coordinators, who should also be reporting monthly to partners, and then quarterly from partners to the Municipal Assembly.

In terms of faecal sludge management, participants suggested that biodigesters can support a medium-term solution while centralized sewers should be considered as long-term solutions. Sewer systems, it was suggested, should ensure that there are less 'foreign' materials to affect the quality of the sludge for treatment. In terms of transporting of sludge, participants said as much as possible old trucks should be out of the system as they are too expensive to operate, while truck drivers and operators should also be given professional training. MMDAs too were advised to invest more in the provision of micro-treatment plants, at least, for drying sludge for onward treatment elsewhere.

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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