



ANAM WASH REFLECTIONS

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ASUTIFI NORTH DISTRICT LEVEL LEARNING ALLIANCE PLATFORM: PAPER 7

Addressing Water Contamination in Asutifi North District through Collective Action

Water contamination remains a major challenge in most parts of Ghana and addressing the challenge is a top priority in meeting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 6: (ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all).

The first step of addressing the challenge of water contamination is by identifying and understanding the key issues related to water contamination and the second step is by bringing to the forefront issues of water contamination for collective action.

The theme

In light of the above, IRC Ghana, World Vision, Safe Water Network, Netcentric Campaigns, Aquaya Institute and the Centre for Disease Control, CDC (Otherwise known as the Hilton Grantees), under the leadership of the Asutifi North District Assembly organized a webinar on the platform of the Asutifi North District Level Alliance Platform (DLLAP) – AN-DLLAP to agree on a strategy both short and medium to address water quality issues through treatment and public education a).

The webinar, on the theme “Addressing Water Contamination in Asutifi North- Action Plan and Way Forward”, was also used to explore sustainable options for water treatment; exchange lessons and experiences on water treatment options being implemented by service partners and to document possible challenges associated with the treatment options for redress by partners and the ANDA.

The panelists for the webinar included - James Ata-Era, District Planning Officer, Asutifi North District Assembly; Bashiru Yachori, Research Assistant, Aquaya Institute Katherine Marshall, Research and Program Officer, Aquaya Institute and Janet Atibiya, Water Quality Manager, Ghana Water Company Limited.

The WASH Master Plan Vision

IRC Ghana, World Vision, Safe Water Network, Netcentric Campaigns, Aquaya Institute and the Centre for Disease Control, CDC (Otherwise known as the Hilton Grantees) together with the Asutifi North District Assembly have collectively developed and are implementing a Masterplan to achieve universal WASH access in ANDA by 2030 with funding from the Conrad Hilton Foundation.

The plan contains the broad vision, programmes, and strategies of the Asutifi North District government and its key development partners for the implementation of a 12-year initiative to provide universal access to safe water, basic sanitation, and hygiene services to about 84,423 people by

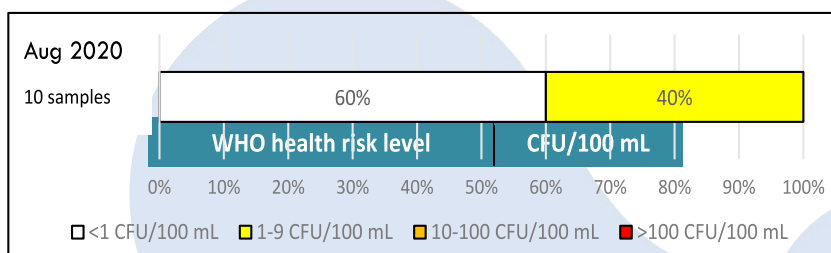
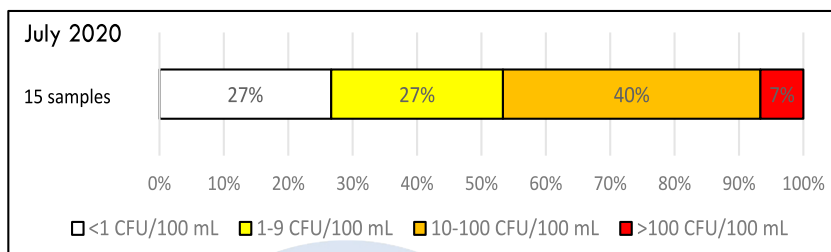
the year 2030. As part of the broad vision in the master plan, the District hopes to increase the proportion of the urban households who have access to safely managed water from 11 percent to 50 percent by 2030.

Similarly, the medium-term target also states that by the end of 2021 the proportion of urban households with access to safely managed water should have increased from 11 percent to 20 percent, with the remaining 80 percent having access to basic services through standpipes. Achieving the target for safely managed water services requires the provision of safe water free from contamination to the people of the district.

Water contamination

Aquaya Institute, a strategic partner in the WASH Masterplan in ANDA has been conducting water quality testing in ANDA since 2017. In 2018, Aquaya conducted water quality testing that found indicators of fecal contamination in 45% (28/64) of water systems throughout the district. Subsequently, the ANDA, GWCL and Aquaya launched a pilot water quality testing agreement with 10 water systems (4 piped schemes, 2 mechanized boreholes, and 4 handpumps) serving approximately half of the district's population. As part of agreement, the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) has been conducting routine (monthly) testing, which has also revealed *E. coli* contamination in several of these systems.

E. coli contamination level of tested samples
Results from two rounds of testing



| | |
|--------------|--------|
| Low | <1 |
| Intermediate | 1-9 |
| High | 10-100 |
| Very high | >100 |

According to Bashiru Yachori, Research Assistant, Aquaya Institute, to protect public health and advance the objectives of the Master Plan, action must be taken to address water contamination in the district. This will require district leadership and support from all partners. "If at the end of the day we are not able to achieve the targets we set in the masterplan then what? so we need to urgently address the problem of water contamination in the water systems" He said.

Partners propose solutions

As a starting point to addressing the water contamination, Aquaya conducted a review of potential strategies for water safety improvement and proposes the introduction of Aquatabs – where chlorination tablets are added to make water clean and safe for drinking. He said Aquatabs are the most effective short-term solution to the problem of water contamination even though there are other ways of cleaning water including boiling, use of water filters and the solar disinfection methods among others. For Yachori, sustainable and long-term solutions will require; ongoing financial commitments; strong management systems and behavioral promotion.

Janet Atibiya, Water Quality Manager, Ghana Water Company Limited also indicated that apart from E.coli presence, there were high levels of acid in the water systems which makes it unsafe for drinking. She said it was important to do proper monitoring of the water systems and to correct the acid levels in the water systems.

In addition, Katherine Marshall, Research and Program Officer, Aquaya Institute said that Aquaya's role is to come up with models, systems and solutions that can address water quality issues identified in the district. "the first step has been the monitoring and conducting water quality testing and bringing the issue to the forefront"

"We are having some success with our work especially by bringing the water quality issues to the attention of the Water Sanitation Management Teams in the district; raising awareness in the district and also integrating the lessons into a

broader water safety management approach" "water quality management is an ongoing process which never stops and requires resources including capacity, money and strong partnership" She concluded.

Cephas Wedam, a Programme Officer with World Vision also indicated that World Vision does regular testing and monitoring of the boreholes they have constructed in the district and have carried out disinfection of boreholes found to have been contaminated

For his part, ANDA District Chief Executive, Anthony Mensah in remarks delivered by Mr. James Atta-Era, ANDA Planning Officer, making water free from contamination for drinking is a public health goal of the ANDA and the importance of addressing water quality issues in an integrated and coordinated manner is key in achieving the objectives of the master plan. For him, contaminated water exacerbates the already poor conditions of the poor and vulnerable groups thereby worsening existing inequalities in the district. "We are not just providing water, every water we provide must be safe" he said.

Recommendations

Panelists and participants proposed the following practical recommendation to ensure sustainable water safety management in the district.

- Aquatabs are the most favourable short-term solution - Aquaya can assist in setting up supply chains for household chlorination or bucket dosing.
- Treat all water systems
- Launch a community campaign to promote water safety and potential treatment options.
- Key message to households on the importance of treating water before drinking, especially if they live near a tested, contaminated water system
- Campaign can promote different effective solutions: boiling, chlorination, SODIS, etc.
- Develop a strategy for communication: Leverage power of Chiefs and community leaders
- Aquaya, DA, Netcentric Campaigns to collaborate on content and format for information dissemination.
- Aquaya will establish a learning strategy to ensure that we are measuring the success of the initiative and learning from it.

ABOUT AN-DLLAP

The Asutifi North District Learning Alliance Platform (AN-DLLAP) is a WASH sector, multi stakeholder platform with the overall goal of improving sector learning and dialogue. It was established in July, 2018, and is being hosted by the Asutifi North District Assembly. The platform offers learning and sharing opportunities for sector players as one of the practical approaches to improving sector engagements with the long term aim of achieving a knowledge driven WASH sector that delivers quality and sustainable services in the district and beyond. AN-DLLAP meetings take place quarterly (or more frequently, when necessary) and are open to all interested parties. The discussions of each AN-DLLAP meeting can be found on the ANAM WASH website [www.anamwash.com] or RCN website [www.washghana.net]

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