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WATER, SANITATION, ENVIRONMENT and DEVELOPMENT

Collaboration for sustainable rural development

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Introduction

Sustainable rural development is now the acceptable goal for development workers dedicated to the transformation of rural life. In the past, the "top down" approach frustrated rural people to the extent that they felt no responsibility for systems placed at their disposal. World Vision International (WVI), a Non Governmental Organization, is extending the concept of community participation to include the active involvement of the Government of Ghana (GOG), World Vision United States (WVUS, a major support office) Conrad N Hilton Foundation, California, USA, (Corporate body), and some 350 rural communities (beneficiary communities), for the development of potable water supplies and improved sanitation facilities, Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) toilets, in the Greater Afram Plains (GAP) of Ghana. After two years of effective collaboration among these groups, there are positive indications of sustainable rural development in the GAP area.

This exercise begun in 1990 and involving the active construction of 500 boreholes fitted with handpumps, 800 VIP latrines, will be finished in September 1995.

Models for collaboration

World Vision International, Ghana Office (WVGhana) has developed two models for effecting collaboration among NGOs, governments, corporate bodies and beneficiary communities, for the execution of its 5-year Ghana Rural Water Project (GRWP) in the GAP.

Model 1: The Identification Model

The model seeks to identify collaborators who are subsequently called stakeholders.

World Vision US used its effective marketing strategy extensive network of friends, donors and partners, to identify the corporate body, the Conrad N Hilton Foundation (CNHF) of California, USA, as a major donor to support, World Vision Ghana's rural water and sanitation programme.

Having already been involved in the rural water supply sector in nine out of the ten regions of the country, World Vision Ghana made known its intention of continuing its rural water resources development programme, using CNHF funds. The GOG, represented by the Ministry of Mobilization and Social Welfare, and the Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation (GWSC), encouraged World Vision Ghana to concentrate any further water development activities in the Greater Afram Plains area, where very little water supply work had been done.

Almost coincidentally, the then District Secretary for Sekyere West District in Mampong-Ashanti and a Rev Father of the Roman Catholic Society of African Missions (SMA), based in Ejura in the Ejura-Sekyedumase District, put in a request for development support for the Afram Plains portion of two districts in Ashanti Region. The SMA had compiled baseline data for this area, and in the process had succeeded in highlighting the specific socio-economic problems of the inhabitants - paramount needs being potable water and the related sanitation support.

The rural people, duly represented in District Assemblies, had been pressing for these basic human needs.

WV Ghana, by early 1990, focused on completing the identification of collaborators. Various technical and financial proposals were developed by WV Ghana and World Vision Relief and Development Inc. (WVRD) of World Vision United States (WVUS), with guidance from the GOG provided by the Ministry for Mobilization and Social Welfare (now Ministry for Employment and Social Welfare) and Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation (GWSC).

The final proposal which was presented to, and accepted by the CNHF Board allows for provision of US $5.0 million by CNHF and a match of US $3.2 million by WVUS, to be used over 5 years, for the purposes of providing 500 wells fitted with handpumps, 800 VIP toilets, supported by intensive health, hygiene education and community participation activities for 350 communities in the 8 districts, which form the Greater Afram Plains of Ghana. The GOG in addition to regulating the programme, provides tax exemption on all imported physical and material resources for the programme.

Model 1 therefore involved the identification of the stakeholders (collaborators) and the establishment of working relatinships vital for effective collaboration.

Model 2: The process model

The processes adopted for the programme implementation, guarantee that all stakeholders play their roles efficiently and practically. World Vision Ghana realised the need to mobiliize, train, facilitate, and empower rural communities to own their development.

Table 1. Role of collaborators

COLLABORATORS	ROLE
1. WORLD VISION GHANA	- FACILITATOR - PROPOSAL PREPARATION - PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTOR
2. WORLD VISION UNITED STATES (WVUS) (WORLD VISION RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT) (WVRRD)	- MAJOR SUPPORT OFFICE - MARKETING - LINKAGE WITH DONOR - MONITORING + EVALUATION
3. GOVERNMENT OF GHANA (GOG)	- APPROVING AUTHORITY - MAJOR BENEFICIARY - REGULATOR OF PROGRAMME - FUND SUPPORT THROUGH TAX EXEMPTIONS
4. CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION (CNHF) OF CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.	- MAJOR DONOR - APPROVING AUTHORITY - MONITORING + AUDIT - REGULATOR OF PROGRAMME
5. BENEFICIARY COMMUNITIES	- PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTOR - APPROVING GROUP - LOCAL FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL CONTRIBUTOR - OWNER - MANAGER OF FACILITIES

Table 2. Models for collaboration

Model	Components
1. The Identification Model	- Identify Collaborators (Stakeholders) - NGO acts as catalyst: ° NEEDS ASSESSMENT Assesses beneficiary needs by receiving and processing requests for assistance at district community levels. ° IDENTIFICATION OF COLLABORTORS Uses contact and support organizations to identify prospective donor and and other collaborators. ° PREPARATION OF PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR DONOR SUPPORT Works within GOG development plans to present a viable project proposal to prospective donor. ° APPROVAL OF PROJECT BY GOG Presents donor approved project proposal to GOG for approval and necessary protocols. ° RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AMONG COLLABORATORS Establishment of practical working relationships among collaborators.

Model	Components
2. The Process Model	Process adopted for programme implementation should guarantee that all collaborators play their roles efficiently. - NGO acts as a facilitatorfor the following actions: ° training of local people to acquire various skills ie. management, maintenance, fund raising. ° build linkages and networks to bring collaborators together for collective goals. ° identification of resources and maximization of inputs at all levels. ° Monitoring, evaluations and audits. - The Workshop methodology has been used widely to establish above actions: ° Project Start-Up Workshop ° Project Review Workshop ° Project Implementation Workshop ° Project Information Workshop ° Project Training Workshop - Field Visits ° these have been used especially to bring the donor and support offices personnel, government officials to the communities. - Informal Visits ° At the community level, enables active interaction with community members. - The Participatory Methods are used to guarantee full participation of community members at all levels of programme activity.

The following processes adopted were aimed at guaranteeing that objective:

Workshops, training sessions, field visits, and informal meetings were used to bring together stakeholders. These vehicels created opportunities for stakeholders to define and review periodically, their roles and responsibilities, commitments, and strategies on the project.

- Monitoring, evaluations and audits have been done to establish and maintain the integrity of the programme.
- Linkages and networks have been built by bringing stakeholders together and focusing individual commitments towards realization of collective goals.
- Identification of resources and maximization of inputs at all levels.
- Training of local people in various skills to equip them for management, operation and maintenance of facilities.

Results

These models for effective collaboration for sustainable development have enabled all the stakeholders to achieve the ojectives outline in Table 3.

The collaborative efforts engendered by these models resulted in the underlisted strengths which serve as the foundation for sustainable development:

- The people in the beneficiary communities feel they own the facilities. Community, Water and Sanitation Committees (WATSAN) are operational at the community level.
- Individual members of communities have acquired various skills (handpump maintenance, VIP toilet construction).
- Hygiene and sanitation education and practices are being firmly rooted among the people, with visible improved health.
- The government machinery at the district level and the district assemblies are playing their roles as facilitators and regulators of development more efficiently.
- The major donor, CNHF feels part of the rural change, as the President, board and staff members have visited communities, interacted with the people and participated in workshops.
- WVUS and WVGhana continue to be catalysts and facilitators of rural life transformation in a sustainable way.

Conclusion

This unique exercise of collaboration for sustainable rural development is dependent on the ability to orchestrate the identification and the process models effectively. A non governmental organization (NGO) posesses the necessary flexibility and resiience to actively bring together a corporate body (major donor), government, beneficiary communities and other NGOs to achieve this.

Reference

Earther Foundation, 1993 Reference Manual for Sustainable Development Projects. NGOs, corporations and governments working together.

Table 3. Outputs of Wold Vision Ghana Rural Water Project (WVGRWP) activities in the Greater Afram Plains (GAP) of Ghana

	Target Sept. 1993	Output by May 1993
Wells drilled/ communities benefitting	500/350	273/170
Handpump Mtce. Volunteers	1000	333
VIP toilets Communities benefitting	800	73/33
VIP toilets Construction trainees	1600	90
Communities where health and hygiene education has taken place	350	200
WATSAN Committees formed	350	200