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Sustainable village water and sanitation management

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WATER, SANITATION, ENVIRONMENT and DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable village water and sanitation management

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Introduction

In recent times, sustainable water and sanitation programmes have become crucial to any meaningful rural water development. Management of water supply and sanitation systems at the village level seems to provide the basis for the desired sustainability.

In seeking to address the management of sustainable water supply and sanitation, World Vision Ghana Rural Water project (WV/GRWP) has embarked on the following programme components:

Education

Educating and creating the needed awareness of communities on personal and environmental hygiene.

The indispensability of education in ensuring sustainable water supply and sanitation management at the village level cannot be over emphasised. It seeks to create awareness and gradually brings the beneficiary communities to a point where they can themselves identify and prioritise their needs and initiate means to address them.

The Animation and Sanitation (ANISAN) Department of World Vision Ghana Rural Water Project (WVGRWP) undertakes the education of the communities within which WVGRWP operates.

The communities are educated on various sources of water and the potability of each of these sources. This is done to help the communities select the most viable and appropriate source of water for their communities.

Education on water borne/related diseases

The communities are educated on water borne/related diseases. The idea is to disabuse the minds of the people on cultural practices concerning water borne/related diseases in the need to eliminate these diseases.

The education on these diseases, such as guinea-worm, bilharzia, etc, generates a better understanding and appreciation of the peoples' behavioural practices that contribute or inhibit the promotion of good health. This facilitates them to take the necessary health promoting actions to maintain and sustain the water supply system provided.

In order to maximize the health benefits of the water programme, sanitation improvement programmes form an integral part of WVGRWP. Sanitation education

focuses on three levels of intervention namely, personal, environmental and social.

Personal hygiene education

The communities are educated on personal hygiene and the need to maintain good health.

Environmental hygiene

The communities have been educated to keep their environment clean. This aspect of the education programme focuses on refuse, liquid and solid waste disposal. The communities are facilitated to construct latrines, bathrooms and laundry sites. They are also educated on the need to have soakaways.

Social education

The education here has resulted in the improvement of sanitary facilities. The improvement of sanitation in over 100 communities have resulted in the reduction of diseases.

Education and establishment of WATSAN committees

Through education the people are facilitated to either establish or reactivate any dormant Water and Sanitation to oversee the project. They monitor and supervise the overall management and utilization of water facilities. Over 100 communities have such committees established.

Training

Training of 1,000 village volunteers in the repair and maintenance of 500 handpumps.

WV/GRWP is a five year project which started in October 1990 and will end in September 1995. The Project being funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation of USA (US\$5 million) and World Vision Support Offices notably WV.US (US\$3.13 million) is a sequel of the 1985-90 GRWP funded through a USAID capability enhancement grant of 6.0 million US dollars, which enabled World Vision Ghana to capitalise on drilling plant, equipment and vehicles, and to construct and install 455 boreholes, equipped with handpumps in 9 of the 10 administrative regions of Ghana. The current programme is a combination of water and sanitation project with clear set goals of constructing and installing 500 boreholes equipped with handpumps and training local artisans to construct 800 latrines in rural communities in the Greater Afram Plains of Ghana.

The major concern in this project is to guarantee sustainable systems in the beneficiary communities. WV GRWP is ensuring this by incorporating a major health, community and sanitation education/training component in the programme. In the area of training volunteers to maintain and repair handpumps, WV GRWP has adopted a strategy of training two people for each handpump installed in a community. The Greater Afram Plains (GAP) is made up of 8 district administrative areas. In order to achieve maximum returns on the training programme each district is divided into zones of six or eight depending on size of the district. Volunteers from each zone are then congregated at one centre in the zone and given theoretical and practical training in the installation, repair and maintenance of the handpumps. The training lasts between 8 and 10 weeks in each district.

A year after the first training the volunteers are given a retraining lasting between 4 and 6 weeks at a time in each district. Experience has shown that with the type of training given to the volunteers they are able to carry out all types of repairs on the handpumps whenever they break down including even fishing rods and riser pipes which drop occasionally into the wells. They are therefore the pivot around which all other activities for the sustenance of the handpumps revolve.

Technical skills enhancement

Especially basic construction skills (masonry and carpentry) for village volunteers.

Sanitation has been recognised as an integral component of rural water supply for health improvement. For project implementation World Vision Ghana is seeking to encourage and facilitate rural dwellers to construct their own individual toilets.

As a result village volunteers are being trained in the construction and maintenance of simple VIP latrines, who in turn are assisting communities as well as individuals to construct their own latrines. A technical assessment of viable pit latrine options in the rock types underlying the Kwahu South district has also been carried out. Model latrines are already being constructed for others who have similar problems to study the construction techniques for application in the communities.

Financial management skills

Over 100 communities have been educated to raise funds towards the sustainability of the programme. Funds raised fall between C75,000.00 and C200,000.00. These have been deposited in rural banks. In the Afram Plains District the Rural Bank was brought onto the communities preparatory stage to educate the people in banking services. As a result the bank was capitalised with an amount over C2 million. This has also helped to improve upon the banking/saving behaviour of the people. Over 50 communities have saved their monies with the bank. Furthermore the communities have been trained on basic book-

keeping, organising and running meetings, record keeping, report writing, development of action plan to address their problems, and the monitoring and evaluating of their programmes.