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ACCESS TO SANITATION AND SAFE WATER:
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCAL ACTIONS

Scaling up sanitation delivery: The perspective of community water and sanitation agency

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The Community Water and Sanitation Agency since its inception in 1994 as part of its functions has been promoting sanitation through its project interventions. A lot of challenges have been encountered based on the approaches used for the promotion of sanitation which have resulted in low achievement in relation to behavioural change and physical sanitation facilities. The purpose of this paper is to draw attention to the challenges that affect promotion of Sanitation and the attempts that are being made to refocus on appropriate approaches, institutional strengthening, collaboration and coordination with the aim to contributing to the acceleration of assess to sanitation.

Introducion

The Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) was established in 1998 as the lead facilitating agency for the implementation of the National Community Water and Sanitation Programme (NCWSP) for accelerated and equitable delivery of potable water and improved sanitation facilities as well as hygiene promotion to small communities and small towns.

The focus of the National Community Water and Sanitation Programme (NCWSP) relating to sanitation is to achieve behaviour change through intensive promotion to generate demand and capacity strengthening of the private sector to construct sanitation facilities in institutions and households as demonstration latrines. The Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Environment is the lead ministry which set the policy framework for environmental sanitation through the Environmental Health and Sanitation Department. There are other agencies that play strategic roles in promotion of sanitation and among these agencies is CWSA. A key objective of the NCWSP is to maximize the health benefits through integration of water, sanitation and hygiene.

As part of its functions CWSA has promoted sanitation through projects interventions. The approach used focus on hygiene promotion to create awareness, capacity building for the private sector to construct the facilities, development of Information, Education & Communication (IEC) materials, and financial assistance provided by projects in the form of subsidy which covers the cost of slab, ring beam, vent pipe and the cost of labour for the artisan. The technology options promoted are mainly Ventilated Improved Pit Latrines (VIPs) and Kumasi Ventilated improved latrines (KVIPs).

However, Sanitation and hygiene components have generally lagged behind water supply. The result of the information collected and processed by CWSA suggests that at the end of 2006, the CWSA's contribution to national sanitation coverage is about 10 % (House hold latrines 49,426, and Institutional Latrines 2,360) whilst water was about 53% (Point Sources 18,987 and Pipe Systems 541) in the project areas (CWSA, SIP 2008-2015 & Medium Term Plan, (2007). This has been partly due to the inadequate attention given to sanitation and the perceived lower priority placed on sanitation and hygiene by communities in comparison to water supply. Besides, there have been other issues like

- not using the appropriate approaches to ensure sustained behaviour change,
- limited technology options which restrict the choice of beneficiaries,
- unaffordable technologies,
- financial constraints of beneficiaries,
- inadequate information management and
- weak collaboration with other stakeholders.

There is no gainsaying that improvement in hygiene and sanitation will go a long way to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. It is projected that with the attainment of the target of 85% sanitation coverage in 2015 the number of rural inhabitants with access to improved sanitation in Ghana will increase to 17.7 million from 4.9 million in 2004 (CWSA, SIP 2005 -2015, (2004). This means that about 1,600,000 should have access to sanitation facilities annually.

There is an absolute acknowledgement of the low sanitation coverage in the sub sector which is also flouted with a lot of challenges. The issue of providing subsidies for the construction of household latrines continues to be contentious. Sanitation and hygiene therefore need a more vigorous promotion and efficient management for the desired impact to be made. Whilst the National Sanitation Policy being led by MLGRD&E is expected to include key implementation strategies that could be adopted by all stakeholders in the sanitation sub-sector, CWSA is re focusing on issues that have challenged up scaling sanitation delivery in the sub sector.

Issues for consideration for scaling up sanitation delivery

The main issues for consideration to scaling up sanitation include:

The use of appropriate approach to sustain behaviour change

Sanitation is related to behaviour change and changing behaviour is a long term phenomenon which requires the appropriate approach that will shift the focus from physical installations to long term promotion and sustainable behaviour change.

Promotion of Community led total sanitation approach will trigger collective behaviour change where communities are facilitated to take collective action to adopt safe and hygienic sanitation behaviour and ensure that all households have access to safe sanitation facilities. The start up of the sanitation promotion should begin with gathering of information through baseline surveys. This could be done through informal discussions using focus groups to understand what motivates people to demand latrines. This will also make it possible for the provision of information on the range of latrines, designs and technology choice of the people. Sanitation is a social problem and should be approached within the cultural conditions of the people. In addition adoption of aggressive and intensive social marketing techniques will have a significant impact on sanitation delivery by treating sanitation as products and attractive to households.

Promotion of innovative ways of financing sanitation

Provision of subsidies for sanitation is acknowledged not to be sustainable and should be phased out gradually. A key issue that affect up scaling of sanitation delivery relates to financing. Not much effort has been made to promote independent (non-project) financing for sanitation. The lack of availability of independently sourced household funds has been one of the reasons why there have been very few latrines constructed after project support and even where there is subsidy the funds available cannot cover every household. To achieve the highest number of latrines built entirely by householders without project support, innovative ways of mobilizing funds and financing in the communities must be explored and promoted in order to make meaningful progress through, for example, rural banking institutions, micro-finance institutions or through community based establishment of revolving funds. Promotion of credit schemes will be one of the strategies to scaling up sanitation delivery.

In small towns, Water and Sanitation Development Boards may opt to make credit (from their own sources) available to households and groups of individuals. For small towns with established water systems and well functioning tariff systems, 'surtax funds' that is additional surcharge on water may be applied as an option (establishment of sanitation fund) and funds accrued dedicated to sanitation promotion. This mode will ensure continuous funding.

Individuals could come together to form voluntary work gangs and assist each other ("Nnoboa") in turns to pay for or construct facilities. Artisans will promote their services to these individuals/gangs who will then contract them to build their facilities.

Support for technology development and sanitation markets

There is the need for promotion of affordable latrines and other appropriate technology options that meet the interest of the people. The concept of standard latrines for every community has attracted some criticisms. Acceptability and affordability of technology options are critical factors in scaling up sanitation delivery. Apart from cost, choice is also very important to the beneficiary households. Research towards the development of cheaper cost technology options based on use of local materials will promote self help acquisition

of facilities and also broaden the scope and meet the choices of the people. For example there should be specific or appropriate technology options for specific geographic areas. Latrine designs should be re-visited to make them suitable and acceptable to all.

CWSA will therefore collaborate with other stakeholders to research into appropriate sanitation technologies. There will also be the need to systematically pilot proven technologies like pour flush and Ecosan latrines which have been applied successfully on a large scale for the benefit of poor sections of society in Uganda and Ethiopia (source of information or Reference) (Report on Working Visit To Understudy EtiopianTotal Sanitation Model in Ethiopia) but are largely untried in Ghana.

As part of support for improving household-level sanitation and hygiene behaviour, a number of Sanitation Markets for improving sanitation will be established. The markets will provide information on appropriate options of latrine technologies for local conditions and how they function, the construction processes, hygienic use and costs based on different materials. The centres will also be used as sales point for prefabricated latrine components, show-case constructed facilities (models) as well as serve as resource centres for training artisans, and for linking households and artisans.

Advocacy for increased investment for sanitation

There is the need for increased advocacy to project sanitation as a national priority for development. The needed political will to scale up sanitation is very weak. As part of the strategy to develop the nation, sanitation should be given a priority on the national agenda. The current investment in sanitation is woefully inadequate compared to the magnitude of sanitation related problems to be addressed (less than 10% of what is required) Sanitation is a whole system which involves activities like communication programmes, training, information management, development of information, education & ccommunication (IEC) materials and tools etc The need for substantial increase in investments in sanitation cannot be over- emphasised. It should be noted that some level of support or assistance may also be required for the poorest population in rural areas. The main source of funding has come from donors in the sub sector which unfavourably compares with support for water. CWSA is advocating for increased funding and the use of public funds for financing full scale Hygiene and Sanitation promotion a state of the art communication campaign instead of depending mainly on donor support.

Strengthening coordination and collaboration with relevant institution

The poor coordination between key institutions involved in sanitation and hygiene delivery has been a major problem which has resulted in fragmented approaches and duplication of efforts. To ensure effective collaboration between stakeholders at the national and decentralized levels proper coordination structures will be established at the national level to be replicated at the regional and district levels. CWSA will deepen collaboration with relevant institutions like Environmental Health Sanitation Units/Directorate under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment, NGOs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Information Services to facilitate coordination of hygiene and sanitation related activities. This will be in the form of seminars, review meetings, round table discussions to promote a better understanding of approaches for strengthening coordination among agencies and institutions involved in sanitation and hygiene development.

Institutional strengthening at all levels

The institutions at both District and community levels will be strengthened to intensify promotion and sanitation delivery. This will include orientation and training of key Local Government (District Assembly) personnel (including Environmental Health Assistants and District Water and Sanitation Teams) in new concepts and approaches and equip them with the needed knowledge and skills to intensify promotion at various levels. The District Assemblies will also be re oriented to be responsible for spearheading sanitation and hygiene promotion at that level. The Districts Assemblies will be given logistical support and assisted to develop detailed plans for hygiene and sanitation and make budgetary allocation for it implementation.

At the community level agents for sanitation promotion will be widened to include Traditional Leaders and Religious Leaders. In order to assure vigorous promotion and marketing of sanitation at that level Town Councils, Area Councils, Unit Committee members, WATSAN/Water and Sanitation Development Board members, and Latrine Artisans shall all receive training to equip them with skills and knowledge that will contribute to up scaling sanitation. There will be emphasis on social marketing, community-led total sanitation and entrepreneurial skills development especially in the training for latrine artisans. Identified Private firms or individuals who are interested in sanitation promotion will be given technical assistance.

Documentation and promotion of best practices

There is inadequate information and knowledge on new sanitation concepts and approaches including evolving sanitation best practices. There have been a lot of hygiene and sanitation projects dotted all over the country besides CWSA interventions. This has resulted in a wide range of approaches and experiences and innovations in the sub sector. However the experiences and lessons learnt are not well documented. To promote learning and also facilitate coordinated complementary and linked approach to development of hygiene and sanitation sub –sector these experiences and lessons will have to be documented to serve as a reference point in promoting best practices for improving sanitation delivery. In addition an inventory of IEC hygiene and sanitation materials will be taken, reviewed and harmonized.

Effective monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of hygiene and sanitation has been very effective. There has not been conscious effort to monitor the progress of sanitation delivery and evaluate sanitation interventions. A monitoring tool emanating from the community level will be developed and integrated into the national monitoring system to be able to track the progress or otherwise of sanitation activities to inform planning of hygiene and sanitation activities. The District and the communities will be given orientation to oversee and monitor hygiene and sanitation promotion with the view to avoiding key problems which usually slow down sanitation. For a long term effect there will be the need for District and community-based monitoring for an effective sanitation programme that goes beyond the implementation period of projects



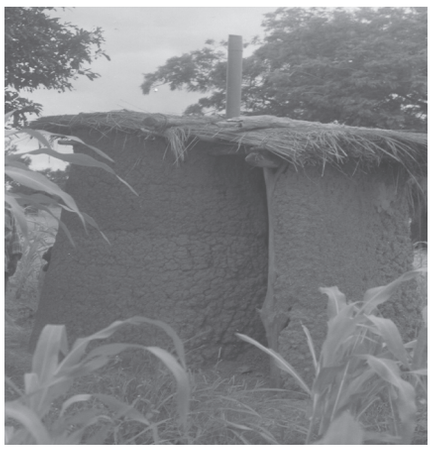
Photograph 1. Institutional KVIP latrine



Photograph 2. Household latrine – cement superstructure



Photograph 3 Capacity building



Photograph 4. Household latrine – Mud

Conclusion

Sanitation is a cross cutting issue and central to the achievement of the MDGs. Unfortunately sanitation issues have not been given the deserved attention both at the national and community levels. Sanitation is complex because it revolves around behaviour change which requires a combination of sustained effort from all stakeholders in a coordinated manner. CWSA playing its strategic role in sanitation delivery is moving from discrete project sanitation issues to address the challenges confronting up scaling of sanitation delivery in general to move the sanitation agenda forward.

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