



Planning of community water projects

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THE GOVERNMENT OF Ghana has introduced a decentralisation Policy in 1988 that established 110 District Assemblies as decentralised legislative and administrative entities. This Policy was confirmed by the constitution of the 4th Republic that established District Assemblies as the second highest constitutional power in Ghana. Subsequently a new "Local Government Act 1993" redefined the "Decentralisation Law (PNDC Law 207)".

The first District Assemblies in Ghana have been elected in 1988. The decentralised departments of Government were created under the Assemblies. And, by this, decentralisation was assumed to become operational in Ghana. However, this did not happen instantly. A large number of actors, such as rural communities, assembly persons and personnel in the administration or decentralised departments needed to learn, accept and fulfil their new roles.

The Programme for Rural Action (PRA), a bilateral rural development programme in the Nanumba and West Gonja Districts, jointly implemented by the Government of Ghana and the 'Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit' (GTZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development, aims to realise the potential for sustainable rural development.

Training

PRA embarked on an intensive training and 'learning by doing' programme in decentralised development for its target districts, with the following issues addressed:

- Village communities had to learn about the new potential for community-initiated development programmes that became accessible.
- Assembly persons had to learn about their role as electorate representatives towards their constituencies.
- Staff members of the administration and the decentralised departments had to adjust from a rather directive role as central government representatives at a local level, towards an implementation and service institution at a district level.

Planning

In 1992 PRA started the aforementioned human resource development measures, along with a planning process in targeted districts that was demand-oriented and based on community initiatives. The several steps of implementation will be described later.

PRA was supposed to work in two districts of the Northern Region, namely 'West Gonja' and 'Nanumba'. Due to the outbreak of an ethnic conflict in the Nanumba District in 1994 PRA had to stop its activities there.

Implementation of water and sanitation projects within the PRA

Since water and sanitation projects had been defined through preliminary studies as projects of the highest priority by the population of the targeted districts, a water component had to be drawn up as part of this project. This component is been implemented by the Rural Water Department (RWD) of the Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation (GWSC), Tamale. The author is advisor to this line agency in the fields of technical advice and institution building.

The PRA implementation procedure

1. During village level planning (VLP) the needs of a community are formulated.
2. The project applications are forwarded by the assembly person to the District Assembly (DA), where they are discussed and scrutinised.
3. The clustered projects are forwarded to the respective line agencies for technical assessment.
4. A report with the outcomes of the technical assessment is sent back to the District Assembly, where they will finally be approved, after the relevant sub-committees prepare a project proposal, considering the existing budget ceiling of the district.
5. The District Assembly charges the RWD/GWSC (rural water supply projects only) to proceed with the implementation of the selected project.
6. The RWD/GWSC goes out on tender and awards contracts to private contractors for implementation.
7. The contractors proceed with the implementation, in close collaboration with the villagers.

The inputs provided by the Programme for Rural Action to achieve the aforementioned objectives are:

PRA collaboration partner

gets input in the form of :-

GWSC/RWD

1. Technical and administrative advice through one long term GTZ expatriate.
2. Finance for implementation - only through a GTZ Financing Agreement.

	3. Equipment support (vehicles, equipment)
	4. Long term foreign training to Counterparts
District Administration	1. Training in administration and finance.
District assembly (DA) subcommittees	
Assembly members	Training in VLP.
Village Level Facilitator (a creation by the DA to supplement the work of the Assembly persons)	1. Training in Participator Rural Appraisal

- Fixed commitment fees for the communities toward the capital costs of facilities.
- Full "taking over" of maintenance costs by the beneficiaries
- Handing over of planning and implementation of smaller programmes to a newly created district body the 'District Water and Sanitation Team' (DWST).
- Implementation to be carried out by private entrepreneurs only, which get assistance in establishing their businesses.

These main pillars of the CWSD have many aspects in common with the PRA project, which participated continuously in the creation of the programme.

The following break-down of implementation steps describes the procedure as laid down in the implementation manual of CWSD:

1. Villages forward construction grant applications through their assembly persons to the DWST. Prior to that, they have to disseminate the steps of implementation to the relevant villages.
2. The DWST proceeds with awarding contracts to small entrepreneurs for new projects, which have been approved by the district assembly. If more complex projects will have to be implemented, such as drilling programmes, the Regional Water and Sanitation Team, which forms part of the CWSD structure, will be asked to assist technically.
3. The RWST informs the DWST about the technical feasibility of the application.
4. The District Assembly charges the RWST with supervising and/or implementation of more complex programs.
5. Contracts are awarded to private contractors for the implementation of bigger projects.
6. The contractor proceeds with the implementation of the facility, being supervised by either the DWST or the RWST.

PRA will for the duration of its activity in the water sector collaborate with the CWSD on the regional and district levels, in order to achieve the success of the programme. This will be done through the 'feeding-in' of experiences done on the district implementation level and as well through a technical advisory service.

Experiences made

Since simple 'participation' of the beneficiaries has turned into a real village level decision in the frame of PRA, people in the target district are more committed to the 'projects'. During assembly meetings representatives of line agencies are questioned about processes and/or problems of implementation.

For the line agencies, which are in charge of implementing of some of the projects, this is a completely new

Collaboration

PRA is collaborating with existing staff of sector departments in the following sectors:

Sector	Agency
Mobilisation/ Animation of communities"	Department of Community Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Health and Education.
Hygiene Education"	Guinea work eradication project and MOH
Geological investigation in parts of NR	Department of Geology, University of Ghana.

The approach of PRA has been elaborated to ensure the highest commitment of the beneficiaries towards a new project. The involvement of the communities from the very beginning of a project, through the District Assembly decision taking its final implementation in collaboration with communities, is based on continuous efforts to ensure sustainability. The approach of PRA is therefore very much in line with the new National Ghanaian Policy for the Rural Water and Sanitation Sector.

The Village Project Implementation Approach Under the Community Water Supply Division (CWSD)

The 'Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation' was formerly the line agency responsible for both urban and rural water supply and sanitation in the country.

Due to the very different approaches and inputs necessary for rural and urban water supply, the Ghanaian Government has embarked on a new policy for the rural sector, which made a structural separation of the rural sector necessary.

This approach was developed over 1992 to 1994 with the participation of foreign and local donors plus implementing agencies and NGOs. The source of finance for the programme is mainly IDA, but other donors are to work in close co-operation with the Ghanaian 'Community Water and Sanitation Division' (CWSD).

The corner stones of the new approach are:

- Community ownership and management of water and sanitation facilities

experience. Since this means a partial loss of power, some government officers are sometimes a bit 'reluctant' to inform representatives of rural communities about technical backgrounds. This is one of the problems faced in getting this approach working. Another problem which sometimes has been observed, is the missing 'feedback' from the district administration to the communities. In the process of democratisation, it is hoped that District elections will become more and more a contrib-

uting factor to an improvement in the relationship between beneficiaries on one hand, with their political representatives and sector departments on the other.

As a first step of ensuring sustainability for development projects, 'participation' of beneficiaries in the planning process has in future to be redefined as a 'decision-taking'. A stable political environment in a development country has to be seen as an imperative pre-condition to guarantee the success of this process.