
31st WEDC International Conference, Kampala, Uganda, 2005

MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS FROM WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

Monitoring Of Five CWSP1 Districts In Brong Ahafo Region

Fati Mumuni, Ghana

One of the specific objectives of the Ghana Community Water and a Sanitation Agency is;

Strengthening community capacity to manage services, by assisting communities in planning, implementing and administering services, forming and training water and sanitation boards and committees, and training community members in better hygiene practices.

The Agency is therefore promoting community ownership and management, (com). CWSP1 ended in 1999 and all completed facilities belong to the communities. In August 2004, five out of eight participating districts and 61 out of 113 communities were monitored. Half of the communities of the communities could not be visited because of the rains. This paper presents the outcome of the study.

Introduction

The Ghana Community Water and Sanitation Project I started in 1994 and ended in 1999. One of the project's strategies was community ownership and management, (COM). Hence all facilities constructed under the phase belong to the beneficiary communities. In September 2004, the project decided to monitor these facilities. Of thirteen districts in the region, eight of them were actively participating in the project by the end of the phase. Of these eight districts, five of them were monitored and 61 out of 113 communities were visited since most of them were inaccessible. Below are the findings of the visits.

Methodology

Monitoring indicators were designed based on the following;

- Management issues
- Conditions of facilities
- Sanitation
- Hygiene.

This was applied by a member of the regional team and the district water and sanitation teams of the various districts visited. Three people were interviewed in each community namely; a watsan member, an opinion leader, and a woman.

Findings

Management issues

Most of the water and sanitation committee members were inactive. The management of the facilities was undertaken by the unit committee members or the executive members of the committees. This was because of the change in

government in 2000. Some of the committees were changed by some assembly men/women, others left because their party had lost, while some deserted. Those who took over management of the facilities held meetings as and when necessary but were not necessarily trained as in the case of the unit committees.

Reasons for meetings were to discuss;

- The contribution of money for broken-down facilities
- Weeding of pump sites
- Cleaning of pump sites
- Accounting
- Sale of water
- The need for a new borehole.

It was however found that a majority of those who managed the facilities did not account to the people even though most of the communities sold the water. Moneys from the sale water was said to be used for the following;

- Repair and maintenance of broken down facilities
- Construction of additional facilities
- Buying of pump site cleaning materials
- Saving in bank
- Other community projects. In one community the watsan money was used for the school building.

The highest amount in the bank books available was four million cedis, about US\$445. Most of the communities claimed they sold water but they did not have enough money in their account books which the project insisted they should open at the beginning of the project. Communities collected money when there was a problem.

Conditions of facilities

At the time of visit, it was found that where a community had

one borehole, it was well looked after. The few communities which had broken down facilities had more than one facility. Almost all the aprons had cracks but were neat. The water troughs were full and most of the surroundings were weedy. Three hand pumps had been stolen but the affected communities did not replace them, they were fetching water directly from the wells. The major borehole problem was loose nuts and worn out rubbers.

Sanitation

In CWSP1, sanitation was encouraged but it was not enforced in the beneficiary communities so most of them still used trench latrines. However, a few householders had ventilated improved latrines provided by the project and these were mostly clean. Some of the communities also used free range, the bush. Young children used chamber pots which were emptied by their mothers. The few latrines did not have hand washing materials but householders claimed they washed their hands after defecation.

Hygiene

All compounds were swept clean but there were weeds within houses. Water transporting materials were all neat and. Animal droppings were found in all the communities. The major disease was malaria. Only one community claimed it had bilharzias.

Recommendations

- Watsans who dropped out should be replaced and trained with the help of the district assemblies.
- By the District Assemblies watsan committees need to be given refresher courses on their roles and responsibilities
- The district water and sanitation teams should visit the old communities twice a year to help them solve their problems.
- Community members should be encouraged to collect tariff for safekeeping for operation and maintenance of the facilities
- Communities should be encouraged by the Environmental Health Officer on the District Water and Sanitation Team to clean and weed the pump sites all the time, be it rainy season or not.
- Cracked aprons should be mended by the watsans or their replacement.
- Area mechanics should be proactive .they should visit the beneficiary communities to check and repair broken down facilities at the cost of the community members.

Way forward

The District Assemblies, as managers of the projects, should see to the smooth running of community facilities but human and material resources are inadequate at this level. After the study, the Community Water and Sanitation Agency planned to get the private sector to revisit the communities and revitalize the WATSANs.

My proposals

The program strategy is the beneficiary communities pay 100% for operation and maintenance. It is for this reason that WATSANs are trained from the on start and the technical assistants are contracted to animate the communities with specific terms of reference. However despite all these, problems have arisen. My proposals are;

- The membership of WATSAN committee need not necessarily be numbered as CWSA does. CWSA suggests that the membership should be between 5 and 13 people. Five dedicated members is enough because from the study most of the WATSANs have dropped out perhaps because they are a voluntary organization. The study indicated that the WATSAN executives were the only operating members and they are four. One person could be included as a porter who calls for a meeting when there is the need.
- Monitoring of facilities by the district team should be twice a year but they are not doing it because the District Assembly does not provide resources; fuel, for field activities. My suggestion is the communities should be made to foot part of or all the transportation cost of such visits.
- Six years are too long a period between handing over facilities and monitoring them at the regional level. This should be done at least every two years to keep communities on their feet. We need not visit all communities at a time but we could randomly do so and information will go round that we will be around. Watsans will be up and doing if they know that we may visit them.
- Most of the communities were not selling the water so the bank books were empty. I suggest that these should be taken on visits to more successful ones to learn from them. WATSANs can be brought together by the district teams to share experiences and ideas.
- Area mechanics should be encouraged by being given motorbikes at hire purchase by Community Water and Sanitation Agency. These will be used for field visits.

Conclusion

The concept of community ownership and management is to enable the communities sustain the facilities. However most of the facilities are being managed by people who have not been trained. The DWSTs are negligent of their responsibility of visiting the communities in their districts. The districts should be up and doing so that the facilities would be sustained.

Contact address

Fati Mumuni
Extension Services Specialist, Box 1431-Sunyani-Ghana.
