

**39<sup>th</sup> WEDC International Conference, Kumasi, Ghana, 2016**

**ENSURING AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT  
OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL**

**A toilet in every compound: improving access to  
compound toilets in Kumasi and Ga West, Ghana**

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**BRIEFING PAPER 2463**

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*Levels of compound sanitation and access to private toilets are low in Ghana, with low-income communities especially reliant on public toilets. To address this challenge, Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP) is supporting Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly and Ga West Municipal Assembly with long-term strategies focused on legislation, enforcement, access to finance and developing the private market for compound toilets. It is hoped that by A) improving legislative capacity and B) promoting private sector involvement in the low-income consumer market, demand and supply for compound toilets will grow together, with the support of metropolitan and municipal assemblies. Following a period of monitoring, learning and adaptation, this approach could form a model to be expanded across Ghana.*

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**Introduction**

Across urban centres in Ghana, there is a high dependence on public toilets and a significant lack of sanitation at the household level, particularly in low-income communities which are mainly characterised by compound<sup>1</sup> housing (FREEMAN, F. 2010). This absence of toilets is despite longstanding national legislation stating that every house should have access to a private toilet (FRANTZEN, A. 1998). In Kumasi, the proportion of compounds with access to sanitation has been declining (MAZEAU, A. P., et al., 2014, 2), in part due to a high population growth rate of 5.4% (KMA, 2015), but also due to legislation outlawing the use of pan latrines (MAZEAU, A.P. 2013). While relatively easy access to public toilets contributes to a low level of open defecation, it also reduces the incentive for urban residents to invest in a compound toilet, or to demand toilets from their landlords.

Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP) is supporting Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA) and Ga West Municipal Assembly (GWMA) on compound, public and school toilets as part of a long-term commitment to improve sanitation in the respective cities. This paper will concentrate on the aspect of this support focused on improving toilet access in compounds. Previous efforts to improve compound sanitation are multiple, but have often been supply-driven, and with subsidy components that had minimal positive impact in terms of penetration and reaching the poorest families. In addition, they were often lacking in adequate checks and balances, in part because support for the private sector was not matched by efforts to build institutional capacity. KMA and GWMA, supported by WSUP, have each developed a 5-year Compound Sanitation Strategy to achieve increased access to toilets in compounds while attempting to address the lessons of the previous approaches. The strategies action the compound sanitation component of the nationally mandated Municipal and District Environmental Sanitation Strategy and Action Plans (MESSAP and DESSAP) of KMA and GWMA.

**Strategic approaches: stronger public sector role**

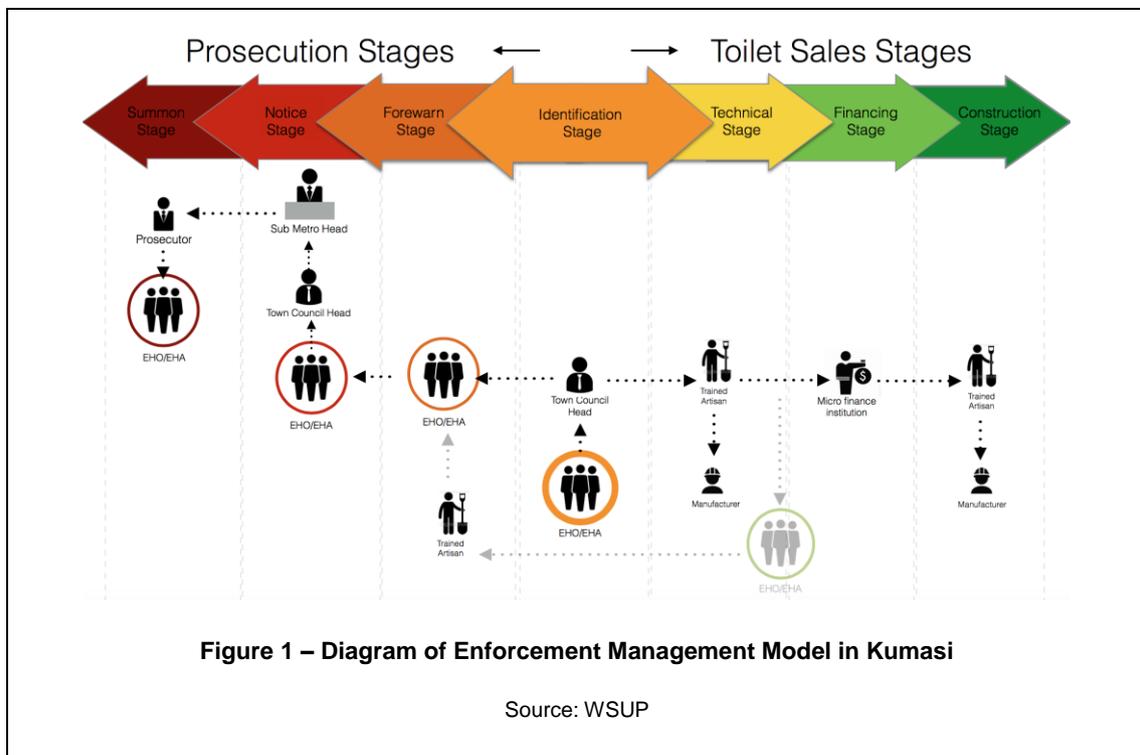
While the decentralisation process in Ghana has delegated sanitation issues to the local level, local capacity to implement and fund relevant activities is often weak (MAZEAU, A.P. 2013). KMA and GWMA's Compound Sanitation Strategies each incorporate four (4) aspects to strengthen the municipalities' role in improving compound sanitation:

1. **Better Enforcement by Local Government:** The strategies aim to make it easier for Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) to proactively play their role in ensuring public health. This includes (a) clarifying existing by-laws to make sure they are active and explicitly require toilets in compounds, (b) better training and clarification of the enforcement process, and (c) changing public and self-perceptions of EHOs.
2. **Trained and Certified Businesses:** A process is implemented by which the public sector is involved in ensuring those involved in the construction of toilet facilities have been trained, and that the facilities constructed by the private sector are safe to use.
3. **Advocacy by Traditional Leaders:** EHOs engage with traditional leaders and community organisations (e.g. women organisations) to get their buy-in to the Compound Sanitation Strategy.
4. **Monitoring-Learning-Adapting:** Municipalities put in place a monitoring framework for compound toilets to allow for learning and adaptation of the strategy on a regular basis.

In GWMA, the Compound Sanitation Strategy has already been adopted and the assembly has made a commitment to increasing spending on sanitation. However at KMA, the strategy and its financial commitments have yet to be adopted due to delays in local assembly elections.

**Better enforcement**

Strengthening the enforcement process is one of the ways in which KMA and GWMA are working towards enhanced compound sanitation. Improvements in the area of enforcement could lead to major changes in the behaviour of both landlords and tenants. Multiple pieces of legislation exist at both the national and municipal level that deal with sanitation-related issues and which can be used to enforce the existence of compound sanitation, while both landlords and tenants are frequently aware of the law that states each house must have access to a toilet. However, neither group genuinely believes that landlords who do not provide such access will face prosecution, resulting in both low supply and demand in relation to household toilets. While a tenant might see private access to a toilet as a bonus for their family when renting a property, the lack of a toilet would likely not be sufficient to significantly impact on their choice. Increased levels of enforcement would help to change these beliefs and the resulting outcomes.



Through the implementation of the strategy, an Enforcement Management Model is being developed which sets out the overall enforcement process, roles and responsibilities (see Figure 1). EHOs are being

given training to help them understand the model and the tools available to them in enforcing existing by-laws. For example, in Ga West the District Court has agreed to schedule one specific day each month to hear sanitation-related cases: the allocation of time to hear these cases represents a significant achievement, as enforcement of by-laws will not work if there is no possibility of prosecution for breaking the law.

In addition to external training, learning with peers is also being implemented through quarterly 'by-law lunches' in each Environmental Health office sub-metro. These help to improve EHOs' understanding of existing by-laws, enforcement-related challenges and potential solutions.

Figure 1 above presents the steps involved in the enforcement management model. The process begins with an inspection of the compound by an Environmental Health Officer (EHO), who is managed by the EHSD Town Council Head - to confirm that the compound has a safe toilet for use by live-in landlord(s) and tenant(s). If there is no safe toilet, the EHO interacts with the compound's residents to inform them of by-laws and to offer them support for getting a toilet. The process will then move towards the toilet sales stage (if the reception is positive) or the prosecution stage (if the reception is negative). Under the sales stage, the residents would be provided with technical and financial information and support, followed by a final construction stage. If the landlord and tenants refuse or fail to take action to have a toilet installed they will be warned, given a notice, and finally prosecuted if they remain non-compliant.

### **Mobilising municipal finance for sanitation**

One of the major pillars of the Compound Sanitation Strategy in Kumasi and Ga West is that each municipality increases its investment in sanitation (and in compound sanitation specifically). This is necessary to allow EHOs to better undertake their roles and to begin to unlock the challenges of enforcing by-laws. To promote this process, WSUP is supporting KMA and GWMA in mobilising Internally Generated Funds (IGFs) to help finance the increased financial commitment for compound sanitation. One of the IGFs being considered is property rates: payments levied on every building under the jurisdiction of the Assembly and payable by the owner of the property. Often these payments go uncollected: in Ga West only around 45% of potential known revenue (significant properties not yet valued) is collected. This is a significant loss for the Assemblies, as the property rate is the only source of income over which they enjoy sole jurisdiction and where they can choose how the income is spent.

A feasibility study into improving collection levels of property rates was completed in 2015, with particular attention paid to the sensitive nature of raising revenue in this way. GWMA is planning to impose a six month moratorium on the payment of property rates for those who are defaulting on their payments: this will enable the owners of properties currently lacking compound toilets to install them while avoiding the possibility of prosecution, and then to restart making payments once the six month period is over.

### **Building the supply side: private sector suppliers and financiers**

Along with a stronger public sector role and mobilising municipal finance, a third major component of the strategy is to support the private sector in its engagements with consumers and with low-income consumers in particular. WSUP continuously assesses the barriers faced by the private sector in reaching the market for these consumers. To increase toilets facilities in compounds, the private sector needs to regard low-income consumers as a viable market; to date, private sector suppliers have failed to activate demand or to deliver products which consumers in this segment of the market actively desire.

WSUP has engaged manufacturers, distributors and local artisans in order to address this disconnect between suppliers and consumers. Several local exhibitions by local toilet manufacturers and importers have been held and well attended by representatives of the municipalities as well as the communities being targeted. Private sector actors such as Biofilcom (manufacturer of the Biofil toilet), EnviroLoo, Duraplast (manufacturer of pre-fabricated septic tanks) and Clean Team are all involved in the strategy and are offering strong products and services to the market, as well as engaging with municipalities to ensure the quality of the installation of their products. Under the strategy, training and certification processes are being developed for builders of traditional septic tanks to improve their standards and performance, particularly in areas susceptible to flooding. Finally, a marketing campaign is being developed to support a more commercial approach to increasing demand, and aiming to increase awareness of the by-laws, technical options, financing options and overall process for getting a compound toilet.



**Photograph 1. Training of artisans in toilet construction**

Source: WSUP

WSUP and the partner municipalities have also sought to engage Micro-finance institutions (MFIs) and other traditional finance institutions to take interest in the compound sanitation market in both cities. WSUP has partnered with HFC Bofo: the MFI arm of HFC Bank focusing particularly on loans for home improvements. HFC Bofo currently offers approximately five (5) types of loan products, targeting different groups including landlords, tenants and merchants. Furthermore, other actors such as Fidelity Bank are now involved in this market. WSUP is working to increase the funding available within the market by assisting with demand generation and increasing knowledge among potential consumers of the opportunities available to them.

### **Empowering the vulnerable**

Low-income communities are the most likely to lack access to compound sanitation in Ghana, but this lack of facilities affects different demographic groups within that category to greater or lesser extents. Women, children and people with disabilities are the most affected by inadequate water and sanitation facilities in Kumasi and Ga West, as across the continent. Additionally, it is these groups that have the least influence over a household decision to invest in a toilet. As such, empowering the vulnerable by making their voice heard within the public and private sector response to the compound sanitation challenge is a core element of the strategy. Representatives of these groups are included in all committees involved in the strategy, except at the highest level (Compound Sanitation Steering Committee), and efforts are being made by both municipalities to ensure full representation.

### **Where next?**

The draft monitoring framework for the strategy, relating to EHOs in particular, is likely to be submitted at the end of February 2016 with implementation expected to start once formally accepted. The monitoring framework will allow for improved learning and adaptation of the strategy to make it more effective. Furthermore, WSUP is working to build stronger ties between local government, MFIs, toilets sales agents, and toilet manufacturers. This will take some time, with the aim of enabling KMA and GWMA to continue the implementation of their strategies with minimal external involvement by stakeholders such as WSUP. To do this, WSUP will continue to support capacity building in the Assemblies through activities including provision of management training for senior administrators. WSUP's ultimate goal is for a refined model to be developed such that could be replicated in other Ghanaian cities, and adopted nationally by the Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate at the ministry level.

## Conclusion

The compound sanitation strategy in both Kumasi and Ga West is still in the early stages of trial and adaptation. In each location, the strategy represents the most challenging and long-term component of a wider programme to improve sanitation. Complex tenancy arrangements, limited investment in low-income housing and high population growth only add to the challenges. By seeking to engage all stakeholders involved in this issue – including the Assemblies, the private sector, those undertaking the monitoring and the communities the project is trying to reach – a multi-pronged model has been created.

Developing a strategy that works requires iterative testing of approaches for both activating markets and strengthening mandated sanitation authorities. The common element in all such approaches is seizing the opportunity to focus on those at the bottom of the pyramid, and particularly those within that bracket who are often marginalised in the decision-making process for getting a toilet.

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## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to extend thanks to Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly and Ga West Metropolitan Assembly. In addition we thank Adrien Mazeau, Faustina Asante and Lawrence Ofori-Addo for generously giving their time during the writing of this paper.

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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> Compounds, also referred to as Multifamily Housing (Afram & Kroboe, 2009), are the predominant housing type in low-income areas in both urban and rural areas; in the former, households would often rent one or two rooms for their family. Compounds often have shared management of specific areas such as a central courtyard, bathroom and kitchen - where they exist (ibid). A major challenge in compound sanitation is the complexity of housing ownership. Compounds are often inherited and owned by multiple family members, making ownership complex and decision-making to invest in toilets even more so.

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