

**FORUM REPORT Achieving
Equity and Inclusion in Water,
Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):
The Role of the Ghanaian Youth**
**ORGANISED ON THURSDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER, 2011 IN
ACCRA, GHANA**

Submitted to:



Ghana

Submitted By:



Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND)



ACHIEVING EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH): THE ROLE OF THE GHANAIAAN YOUTH

I. OVERVIEW

In September 2000, world leaders both from developed and developing as well as least developed economies produced the Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) achievable by the year 2015. Goal 7 stipulates the need to enhance or ensure environmental sustainability. In achieving this goal, a key target is to half the proportion of persons with sustainable access to improved water resources.

Out of these global goals, countries have developed their respective programmes to achieve them. In Ghana, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) produce reports notably the Annual Progress Reports (APRs), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Reports etc. According to Ghana's 2009 APR *"As a result of increased investments, the proportion of the rural population with access to safe drinking water improved from 57.1% in 2008 to 58.97% in 2009. The proportion of the urban population with access to safe water also increased from 55% in 2008 to 56% in 2009. Though more recent data is not available, user-based data from the 2008 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) shows that national coverage for improved sanitation has increased from 8% in 2003 to 11% in 2008. Coverage in urban areas improved marginally from 15% to 16% between 2003 and 2008, while access in rural communities improved from a very low base of 2% in 2003 to 7% in 2008. Also open defecation has declined marginally from 24.4% in 2006 to 23.1% in 2008. This includes defecation into drains, fields, streams, bush and the beaches. With current population estimates for Ghana being about 23.4 million (2008), this implies that about 5.4 million people practice open defecation. The practice is also more widespread in the Northern, Upper West and Upper East Regions"*. Progress can arguable be attributed to the support of other key partners such as Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations, and the Private Sector.

Inspite of these gains made the issue of Equity and Inclusion has not really featured. Most often than not, the pro-poor or indigenous people in communities are not 'properly' consulted during such consultative processes that are expected to lead to community development. The physically-challenged, young people and women are also very important but marginalized groups of people in the quest to achieve development objectives with respect to achieving WASH. Mainstreaming Equity and Inclusion in development is a recognition that rights are universal and special measures need to be taken to protect and promote the rights of the pro-poor.

In July 2010, the UN General assembly declared safe drinking water and sanitation to be a human right. This means that:

- Access is an entitlement, not a charity
- Action can and should be accelerated
- The least served should be better targeted
- Communities will be empowered to take part in decision-making processes

It is for this reason that this forum which was to mark the International Youth Day celebration (though belated) has been organized to ensure active participation of young people in achieving WASH. According to the National Youth Policy of Ghana, Youth is defined as "persons between the

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ages of 15 – 35years”. Youth are believed to be about 33% of the Ghanaian populace which clearly indicates that they constitute a large force possessing energy and talents which if well identified, harnessed, nurtured and directed can significantly lead to the achievement of WASH in Ghana.

Therefore Equity and Inclusion with respect to youth should be the key consideration not only at all the various institutional levels but in policy development and/or formulations, overall programme framework especially for implementing community-based approaches in achieving WASH.

II. GOAL & OBJECTIVES

Goal:

“Achieving Equity and Inclusion in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) through the active engagement of the Youth”

Objectives:

1. Educate the youth on the concept of Equity and Inclusion.
2. Establish a Ghana Youth Environment Platform to champion the cause of achieving WASH
3. Identify and enter into communities to engage in various educational and advocacy activities on WASH
4. Provide opportunity for youth to engage all stakeholders such as Government Institutions, Development Partners, CSOs, Private Sector etc in ensuring good and sustainable WASH

III. SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS

1ST Presentation by Chibeze Sunday Ezekiel (Executive Coordinator of Strategic Youth Network for Development):

Mr. Ezekiel started with an overview and analysis of some of the key existing approaches and frameworks for ensuring WASH nationally and internationally. He indicated that, according to the 2009 Annual Progress Report (APR) in Ghana, the following measures were implemented by water delivery agencies. In the rural sub-sector, the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) completed the following water systems:

- 588 new boreholes completed
- 40 boreholes rehabilitated
- 17 hand-dug wells constructed
- 1 small community new pipe systems completed
- 18 small towns new pipe systems completed

The report further states that in the urban water sub-sector, the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) completed the following water expansion projects during the year:

- Building and rehabilitation of water treatment plants in Kumasi, Tamale, East and



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West Accra pipeline interconnection, Kpong, Koforidua, and Bolgatanga;

- Rehabilitation of and expansion of medium capacity water treatment plants in district capitals; and
- Rehabilitation and expansion of low capacity (minor) water treatment plants at Axim, Breman Asikuma, and Kpando.

Moreover, he stated that records show that Ghana will probably reach Target B of Goal 7, that is, half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015 even though there is a strong supportive environment to this cause. According to a Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) made up of WHO & UNICEF, only about 2.2 million people in Ghana have access to decent household toilets. This means the remainder are using shared facilities or engaging in open defecation

With reference to, *Dawuro 24* (the official newsletter of WaterAid Ghana) he reiterated that Nima's population is estimated to be around 69,000 with the number of houses in the town calculated to be the region of 2,400. Accra New Town is also estimated to have 45,130 as population size with 1,738 houses. These two communities are bedeviled by very severe sanitation challenges.

At the global level, he also noted a UNICEF/WHO report saying that *"every day 231 million men, women and children in Africa and 716 million in South Asia defecate in the open"*.

Chibeze indicated that efforts been made to achieving WASH in Ghana cannot be guaranteed if young people are not actively involved especially when young people represent about 33% of the Ghanaian population thus make up a considerable size or embodiment. He further defined the concept of Equity and Inclusion to the understanding of the participants.

* What is equity? According to the Oxford Dictionary of Current English (3rd Edition), it is the quality of being fair and impartial.

* What is inclusion? It is also defined as the action of including or the state of being included.

Therefore, in achieving WASH, young people (including young women) must be fairly treated and included in all deliberations. In spite of the numeric strength of young people, they seem to be marginalized in matters like this. Evidently, more young people in the employment sector are renting homes or apartments thus do pay for the provision of safe drinking water not to mention generation of wastes also.

Arguably, young people are the key originators of e-waste in this era of unprecedented electronic advancement.

In conclusion, he stressed on the fact that, giving young people the opportunity to showcase their ability to help achieve safe drinking water and good sanitation is extremely essential. They can play a role by:

1. Developing concepts or proposals that can lead to clean environment, proper management of waste as well as provision of safe drinking water

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2. Promoting the culture of good behavior to conform to acceptable standards on good waste management and personal hygiene.
3. Advocating for the need for safe drinking water and good sanitation through social media such as facebook and twitter.
4. Engaging community leaders (such as Chiefs, Opinion and Religious Leaders, Community Based Organizations and Politicians)
5. Networking with other like-minded young people nationally and globally through the cross-pollination of ideas and ideal, best practices and experiences to achieve common goals.

2nd Presentation by Mrs. Sandra Cletcher-King (WaterAid Ghana):



Mrs. Cletcher-King introduced WaterAid as being a non-governmental agency working and providing support to achieving Target B of Goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), i.e., half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015.

Reading on behalf of the Country Representative of WaterAid (Ms. Afia Zakiya), Mrs. Cletcher-King conceded that the youth make up a considerable size and hence should participate actively in promoting good hygiene starting from our communities.

Moreover, she advice that the youth can advocate and create awareness on good sanitation through the formation of peer groups as learning is easier and faster among peers. Furthermore, the youth were urged to take part in decision making processes, make interventions and voice out on essential issues concerning water, hygiene and sanitation. The youth can also call on government to meet promises.

IV. SOLIDARITY MESSAGES

The youth (participants) were advised to utilize their God giving talents to enhance their personal development. They should also voluntarily take up the responsibility of campaigning and cleaning up their homes, communities and surroundings.

Again, they should develop and have a positive attitude towards achieving good sanitation and hygienic environment. They should also learn to share information and campaign on good practices of keeping our environment clean.



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V. DISCUSSIONS/QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



During this session, some participants shared their personal experiences, knowledge and some ideas on WASH. The speakers encouraged their colleagues to stay committed to this worthy cause if we are to achieve satisfactory results.

VI. CHALLENGES

Some of the challenges faced include:

1. Inadequate funds for publicity. For instance, provision was not made for extra banner to direct people since other meetings were also on-going at the facility. Some participants mistakenly joined other sessions.
2. Most of our Partner organizations were not able to attend even though they accepted the invitation in principle.
3. Some participants still trickled in when the event was well over.

VII. OPPORTUNITIES/WAYFORWARD

SYND after the forum organized a meeting at the Knowledge Space Conference Room of the World Bank Institute (Ghana) on Monday, 12th September 2011 to further strengthen the platform made up of youth leaders from different organizations to mobilize and engage other young people in committing to achieving Equity and Inclusion in WASH.

- An Action Plan has been designed by members of the platform to mobilize colleague young people in schools, churches, mosques, community centers etc in some selected communities. Activities proposed are as follows:

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Organization	Activity/Location	Time frame
1. Concern health Ghana	Clean up exercise in La	To be Agreed Upon
*2. Dream Hunt	Education/Advocacy on WASH for Senior High School students in Tema such as Datus, TEMASCO, IPMC, Olams, Chemu, Desk, ASHASEC, Tema Presec, and Medes Secondary	Beginning from 28 th September to November 2011
3. Jesdan Hope for the Future	Community Youth Forum on Health and Vocational Skills at Teshie	To be decided
4. Global Ideas	Education on WASH	To be decided
5. United Youth Club	Clean up exercise in Kpando-Konda (Volta Region)	December 2011

**Dream Hunt's educational tour seeks to engage the schools individually then climax it with a massive gathering involving all the schools. Dream Hunt has in principle agreed to provide some 30 minutes for education on Equity and Inclusion in WASH in each of the school as well as in the final forum.*

- SYND is proposing a Training of Trainees for youth leaders in some selected communities on Community Development and Mobilization Skills for effective and efficient implementation of Equity and Inclusion in WASH activities in their respective communities.

In pursuance to achieving Equity and Inclusion in WASH by young people, SYND looks forward to partnering with key stakeholders from the Government Institutions, Private Sector, CSOs, CBOs, Development Partners, and Community Opinion Leaders (notably the Chief, Elders, Religious Leaders and Influential Individuals).

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