



GAMA-SWP AF News



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- GAMA SWP Wins Engineering Excellence Award For Innovative Solutions.
- ALL 30,000 Household Toilets Promised Will Be Delivered.
- GAMA SWP Exceeds Targets For Institutional WASH Facilities.



**A COMPLETE
TOILET AT**
GH¢1,200



FOREWORD

Dear readers, gradually, we have started drawing down the curtain on the current phase of the GAMA Sanitation and Water Project. To sum up our performance, I would say, as usual, we will excel once again come December 2024.

As we enter the last six months of the project, some of our expected targets have already been met and even exceeded. Our target of 150 institutional toilets for schools and healthcare facilities, for instance, has been exceeded by 42 more toilets with 63 in Greater Accra and 129 in Greater Kumasi. The 12,000-household toilet target for Greater Accra has long been exceeded by more than 4,000. In fact, it was exceeded in 2023, compelling the project to pause the Accra campaign and focus attention on Greater Kumasi, where more needed to be done. Given the current rate of more than 1,400 per month, we are most likely to meet the 30,000-household toilet target for Greater Kumasi by October, three months ahead of the deadline.

One major contribution that the project has made, beyond its core targets and mandate, is the establishment of a Biodigester Construction and Installation Training Centre (BCITC) at the Ada

College of Education. As the biodigester toilet system has been the project's number one technology choice for household sanitation, we have made every effort to support its development and spread in the country. The first major effort, apart from 'indirectly' training hundreds of artisans, was to develop a biodigester construction and installation manual. Academics, for example, have found this manual quite useful. Establishment of the BCITC is a step forward to ensure a more refined and continuous training for every prospective biodigester artisan. The Centre, managed and operated by the Ada College of Education, will therefore be producing more certified artisans to promote and spread the biodigester toilet system countrywide.

Our field engineers have also built on the biodigester toilet system, developing and successfully testing the alternating digester. The objective was to minimize hazards endured by households in waterlogged areas, where the system fills up earlier than normal, to make room for a second chamber when the first is full and undergoing emptying and maintenance.

Still on the biodigester, the project has developed a manual for emptying and safely transporting the sludge for treatment elsewhere. With the rapid spread of the biodigester toilet system in Ghana, the project has thought of the possible environmental risks when they are unprofessionally emptied and treated. The project is therefore working with a local partner to set up a biodigester sludge treatment plant in the Greater Accra Region. Installation of this plant will be completed by the end of the year.

Another area where the project has made a lot of effort is menstrual hygiene management (MHM). In addition to the routine campaigns and advocacy to raise the profile of MHM, the project has facilitated the development of related learning materials for awareness, with particular focus on differently abled persons. For instance, awareness creation materials produced have a version for the visually impaired targets. This is not to ignore that fact that every institutional toilet facility we have provided has a special changing room for menstruating girls.

Priority works on the Asafo Sewerage System has started in Kumasi. This includes securing the existing site to ward off encroachers and squatters and resettle those who will be affected by the project, as well as rehabilitating/replacing broken sewer lines. However, as indicated in the last edition of the newsletter, the main expansion work will have to be done during the next phase of the project.

Thinking beyond 2024, negotiations are currently ongoing for possible extension of the project through additional financing from the World Bank. Confirmation of outcomes from the negotiations will be provided in the next edition and through other communication channels of the project.

Please find out more details and other interesting information in the beautiful stories captured in this edition.

Ing. George Asiedu
Coordinator, GAMA/GKMA SWP



HEADLINE NEWS

Hon Issahaku Amidu Chinnia (extreme left) with some of the traditional leaders and other dignitaries after commissioning the centre.

MINISTRY COMMISSIONS A BIODIGESTER TRAINING CENTRE AT ADA

The Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR), through the World Bank Funded GAMA Sanitation and Water Project (GAMA SWP), has facilitated the establishment of a Biodigester Construction and Installation Training Centre (BCITC) at the Ada College of Education in the Greater Accra Region.

Officially commissioning the Centre in March 2024, the Deputy Minister

for Sanitation and Water Resources, Hon. Issahaku Amidu Chinnia, said the move had become necessary because of the increasing trends in the adoption of biodigester toilets by households and institutions in the country.

He said that the use of biodigester toilet facilities had been given a boost across Ghana partly through the Ministry's initiatives to encourage household adoption of those

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“Through the training, participants would not only gain valuable skills but would become ambassadors of sanitation solutions in their communities,”

technologies, notably, through the GAMA Sanitation and Water Project in Greater Accra and Greater Kumasi. Private sector participation in sanitation service delivery, he said, was key and hence the need to facilitate their access to quality training facilities so that they can play their role more effectively. "Through the training, participants would not only gain valuable skills but would become ambassadors of sanitation solutions in their communities," Hon Issahaku said.

Corroborating the assertion of the Deputy Minister, Sanitation Engineer of the GAMA SWP, Ing Kwadwo Gyasi, said "the 2021 census data revealed that at least 130,251 biogas digester toilet facilities are being used in Ghana with 57 per cent in the Greater Accra Region alone. Yet this technology was rarely known in Ghana ten years ago."

The objective of establishing the Centre, according to the GAMA SWP Coordinator, Ing George Asiedu, who also spoke during the commissioning ceremony, is to train and certify artisans to produce quality biogas digesters and to counter the proliferation of sub-standard facilities that some less skillful artisans are producing for unsuspecting households and other beneficiaries.



Ing George Asiedu (right) explaining some of the technical processes in biogas digester construction to dignitaries during the commissioning ceremony

Ing Asiedu said even though the Ada area is currently outside the geographical scope of the project in terms of provision of sanitation and water infrastructure, the move is in line with the project's objective to build the capacity of institutions in the country to enable them to play their expected roles effectively. He said the project, in addition to direct provision of sanitation and water facilities in the Greater Accra and Ashanti Regions, has also supported the capacity development of several public and private institutions so that the impact would be more widespread.

"Even though located in Ada, the Centre will provide training services for any interested person who registers for a training session," he said. Prof. Prince Boateng, Principal of the Ada College of Education, said the

newly established training centre would bring great relief to the various Districts and Municipal Assemblies. He noted that the youth to be trained would have a source of livelihood through job creation and it would also contribute to reducing unemployment and rural-urban migration. Nene Agudey Obichire III, Manklalo of the Ada Traditional Council, who chaired the occasion, expressed gratitude to the Ministry for establishing the training centre in the area, an initiative that would improve sanitation in and around the communities.

The Centre will be operated by the Ada College of Education and will receive initial technical support from the GAMA Sanitation and Water Project. Trainees will pay a fee to be determined by the school and it is open to funding support from interested entities and organizations.

GAMA SWP WINS ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

The Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) Sanitation and Water Project (SWP) has been recognized for its groundbreaking contributions to Ghana's WASH sector with the prestigious Engineering Excellence Award.

The Ghana Institution of Engineering (GhIE) presented this accolade to the project under the projects/practitioners category at the 2023 Engineering Excellence Awards ceremony held at the Labadi Beach Hotel in Accra on 22nd March 2024.

Ing. George Asiedu, the Coordinator of the GAMA SWP, expressed surprise and gratitude for receiving this esteemed award, emphasizing the project's core mission of ensuring universal access to sanitation facilities by 2030, with a specific focus on reaching marginalized communities.

Facing challenges with traditional sanitation solutions like septic tanks and KVIPs, the project team embarked on a journey of innovation to improve on and promote the biodigester toilet system - an environmentally sustainable and cost-effective alternative, which was invented by a Ghanaian and has garnered widespread acclaim.

The impact of the GAMA SWP extends far beyond infrastructure provision, encompassing significant improvements in public health, environmental sustainability, and community well-being.

With over 65,000 household toilets installed, 598 modern school facilities provided, sewerage

systems enhanced, and water access expanded to thousands of households, the project has set a high standard for urban sanitation initiatives in Ghana.

Ing. Asiedu's visionary leadership and commitment to collaboration with experts have been instrumental in the project's success, showcasing the transformative power of innovative engineering solutions in addressing complex societal challenges.

The project's achievements have been widely recognized across various sectors, including NGOs, media outlets, and engineering bodies, solidifying its reputation for excellence and positive impact.

The GAMA SWP's success has sparked interest nationwide, with calls for its replication in other regions, highlighting its potential to drive nationwide change in sanitation practices. Notably, the project was previously honored by the umbrella body of WASH NGOs and CSOs in Ghana as the most impactful project over the decade.

In 2023, the media in Kumasi also bestowed another award on the project, recognizing it as the most impactful WASH project, further underscoring its legacy of excellence and transformative impact in the sector.



GAMA SWP STEPS UP INTERVENTIONS IN MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT



MHM Champions expressing pride and excitement after one of the training sessions.

The GAMA SWP has taken menstrual hygiene interventions to higher levels this year. According to the Head of the Capacity Building Team, Charlotte Akwaah Adjei, the project attaches equal importance to menstrual hygiene as it does to sanitation and water. Briefing the AF News crew in June this year, Charlotte enumerated a number of innovative interventions that the project had undertaken during the year.

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"The GAMA Sanitation and Water Project believes that every female person is bound to menstruate every month for close to forty years of their lives.

We also believe that menstruation, when properly managed, does not have to limit any girl, or any woman, or any differently abled female, from making a meaningful contribution to society and humanity as a whole."

*Ing. George Asiedu, Project Coordinator,
GAMA/GKMA SWP.*



KAPs in Menstrual Hygiene Management

The project has conducted a knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) assessment of in-school adolescent girls toward menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. She said subsequently, intervention strategies had been developed to guide menstrual hygiene interventions for all stakeholders. The findings and the strategy had been shared with the respective stakeholder institutions including SHEP, Girl Child Coordinators, Department of Community Development, Department of Social welfare and the Ghana Health Service. The strategies, she said, were developed with the socio-ecological framework as the guide. The framework covers determinants of KAPs from the personal, family, community, and structural levels. From the determinants, key strategic activities were outlined, and key expected outcomes outlined.

Special interventions for Special Schools

Another breakthrough intervention, she said, was a focus on special schools, where differently abled and menstruating girls were identified as beneficiaries. While the project already provides disability-friendly WASH facilities for every beneficiary school, the new dimension was to develop MHM-related educational

materials for visually impaired girls in all the ten visually impaired schools in Ghana so that they could read and understand literature and information on effective period management. In collaboration with the Special Education Division and the School Health Education Programme of the Ghana Education Service, the project will also target provision of gender and disability-friendly WASH infrastructure, menstrual health education, as well as combat stigmatization and discrimination through behaviour change communication approaches in special schools.

The relationship with Special Schools also led to the selection of two of them to commemorate the 2024 International Menstrual Hygiene Day in Kumasi and Wa. The selected venues were the Garden City Special School at Asokore Mampong in Kumasi, and the Wa School of the Blind. Speaking at the ceremony in Kumasi in May 2024 on the theme 'Period Friendly World, the Differently Abled Counts,' the Coordinator of GAMA SWP, Ing. George Asiedu, said 'monthly menstruation when properly managed, would not limit any girl, or any woman, or any differently abled female, from making a meaningful contribution to society and humanity.' It was for this reason that the project had a special focus on MHM in every management decision and every WASH facility provided, he said.

MHM Training for Coordinators

The project has also organized a Menstrual Hygiene Management training for SHEP Coordinators, Girl Child Coordinators, and Community Development Officers in the Ashanti Region. About 40 participants drawn from these institutions attended the training. The training focused on equipping them with essential knowledge and skills to address Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) challenges, particularly, period poverty and stigma among school-age girls. It also introduced various basic sanitary products for girls. Participants also learned how to produce reusable menstruation management products.

Establishment of a Regional Pad Bank

The Regional SHEP, Girl Child, Community Development and Social Welfare with support from the GAMA SWP have created a Regional [menstrual] Pad Bank to stock different sanitary materials available to feed the district Pad Banks to supply the target girls. This is to enable them to menstruate hygienically and confidently so that they would remain in school. This initiative is meant to address issues of period poverty in the Ashanti Region and to support vulnerable girls to have access to adequate, safe and hygienic sanitary products during menstruation.



GAMA SWP FIELD ENGINEERS DEVELOP ALTERNATING BIODIGESTERS

A sample alternating biodigester toilet

Field Engineers working with the GAMA Sanitation and Water Project have developed a sustainability enhancement version of the biodigester toilet system. This move was necessitated by practical field observations and experiences during project implementation.

The Sanitation Engineer on the project, Ing Kwadwo Antwi Gyasi, told

GAMA AF News that sustainability of project outputs was always an ultimate vision, therefore, his field teams were always on the lookout for anything that would impede that vision. He said even though the biodigester toilet system was generally an excellent product providing on-site safely-managed household toilet solutions, there are instances where, due to bad user practices, extremely

high number of users and unstable soil conditions, some of them fill up earlier than expected due to delays in digestion of faecal matter. This, in his view, would limit beneficiary confidence in the facilities and probably lead to abandonment and deter others from investing in it. In response to this menace, Ing Gyasi said he discussed with his team of field engineers to explore possible enhancements to the existing system.

One of the very first enhancements to the existing system was to develop the alternating biodigester system. This means that this time round, a biodigester has two compartments. While the main compartment is in use, the supporting compartment is

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“This means that this time around, a biodigester has two compartments. While the main compartment is in use, the supporting compartment is locked.”

locked. When the main compartment is full or is undergoing maintenance routines, it is locked, and the supporting compartment is opened to ensure continuous use. The two compartments are linked with a control valve, so it is just a matter of turning a valve to complete this switch. For instance, in an instance where the main compartment is full or is due for maintenance but the biosolids are not fully digested, it may be locked and left to fallow for some time to fully digest, while the supporting compartment is opened for use.

According to Ing Gyasi, the alternating system has numerous benefits. He said the system may provide a solution to over usage of biodigesters because the two compartments are not used simultaneously. It is also a safe back-up mechanism to the biodigester in case of minimal decomposition of biosolids. Also, it addresses problems associated with servicing when a biodigester gets full. It is easy to operate the control valve, easy to construct, and allows enough time for biodigester to decompose well before servicing is done. The alternating bio digester

can work effectively in a household with a large user population.

According to Ing Gyasi, the alternating biodigester system was first constructed and successfully tested at Bortianor in the Ga South Municipality in Greater Accra, and it worked perfectly. Subsequent alternating bio-digesters have been installed in densely populated households in Ash Town, Dechemso, Krofrom, Bantama and Amakom in Kumasi.



FROM THE FIELD

ALL 30,000 HOUSEHOLD TOILETS PROMISED WILL BE DELIVERED: ING KWADWO GYASI

All 30,000 household toilets promised by the GAMA SWP for the Greater Kumasi Metropolitan Area (GKMA) will be delivered by the end of 2024, according to the Sanitation Engineer of the project, Kwadwo Gyasi. He maintained his assertion that the project would even exceed this target about three months ahead of the deadline. Providing progress updates at a Project Management Meeting, Ing

Gyasi said 25,821 of the toilets had been provided as at the end of June 2024 and given the monthly average construction rate of about 1,400, the target of 30,000 household toilets would be met by end of September 2024.

In terms of full household payments for toilets, the project had already exceeded the target by 74, indicating that demand for the toilet is very high

and even increasing. Management was still yet to decide whether the Assemblies should continue to receive new household payments for toilets or stop as the target had already been met and what was left was to complete construction within the earliest possible time. This decision could only be made after a thorough budget analysis to ascertain the availability of funds for any additional number of toilets beyond the 30,000 originally budgeted for. A similar situation arose in 2020, when the target of 19,100 toilets was exceeded by about 50% by the closure of that phase of the project.

Ing Gyasi attributes this success rate

to the hard work of the respective Household Toilet Teams in the Assemblies, buoyed by effective coordination from the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU), through ambitious target-setting, technical and capacity building support.

“Publishing the Household Toilet League Table every month has also introduced a level of indirect healthy competition among the Assemblies, and it is in fact one of the underlying factors for this aggressive and steady household toilet promotion,” says Ing Gyasi. He said the project implements

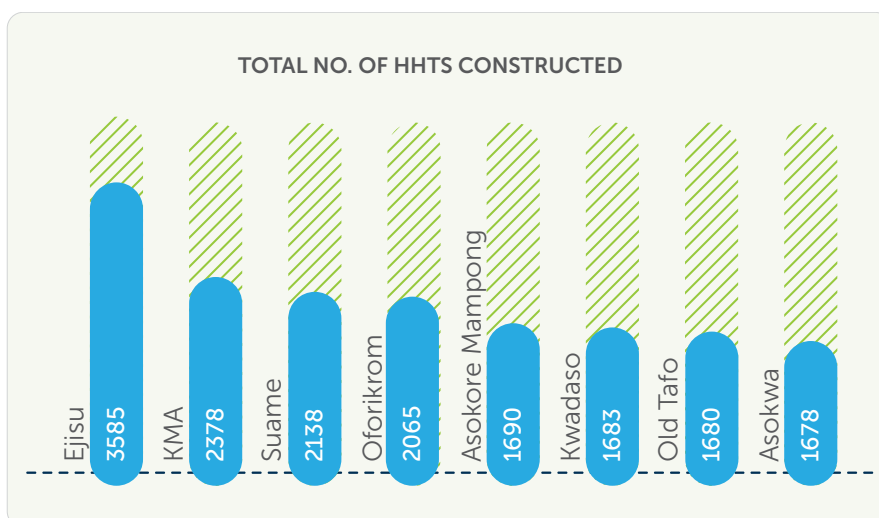
an open-target approach for participating Municipal Assemblies. This he said, implies that even though all the participating Assemblies together have a collective target of 30,000 household toilets by end of 2024, and it is up to each of them to grab as many as they can without restriction until the overall target has been met. This approach, in itself, also engendered a certain level of competition for a greater share by each Assembly.

Outlining more factors that contributed to the impressive

uptake of household toilet, Ing Gyasi indicated that provision of branded vehicles to the Household Toilet Teams in the Assemblies and accepting demand from boundary communities also contributed significantly to progress. “Even though contractors had been assigned to specific zones to respond to demand, we had to step in sometimes with back-up contractors in order to minimize delays in construction whenever necessary, especially when there were complaints of excessive delays he said.”

GKMA HOUSEHOLD TOILET LEAGUE TABLE - 3rd JULY 2023

Position	Change in Position	MMA	Total No of HHTs Constructed
1		Ejisu	3585
2		KMA	2378
3		Suame	2138
4		Oforikrom	2065
5		Asokore Mampong	1690
6		Kwadaso	1683
7		Old Tafo	1680
8		Asokwa	1678
		Total	16,897



Among the eight Municipal Assemblies involved in the project, Ejisu has consistently been at the forefront in providing household toilets, starting from November 2021 through to the present. As of the end of June 2024, Ejisu maintained a significant lead in the household toilet provision league table with 3,585 units, surpassing the closest competitor, KMA. Even the least performing Municipal Assembly, Asokwa, demonstrated substantial progress by constructing 1,678

toilets, highlighting commendable efforts across all participating Assemblies.

In 2023, the Project Coordinating Unit acknowledged and acted upon repeated requests from communities neighboring the primary project assemblies, granting them access to essential toilet facilities. This decision was pivotal in fostering inclusivity and meeting the sanitation needs of these boundary communities. By the end of June 2024, these

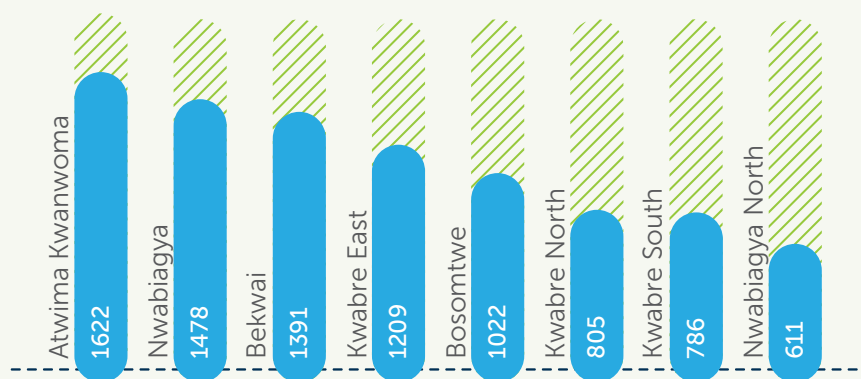
communities had collectively contributed a substantial 8,924 units towards the overall project target, underscoring their proactive involvement and commitment to improving local sanitation conditions.

The GKMA household toilet project has mobilized over GHS 25 million from low-income households towards the cost of improved toilets since November 2021.

GKMA Household Toilet League Table - June 2024 (Boundary Assemblies)

Position	Change in Position	MMA	Total No of HHTs Constructed
1		Atwima Kwanwoma	1622
2		Nwabiagya	1478
3		Bekwai	1391
4		Kwabre East	1209
5		Bosomtwe	1022
6		Kwabre North	805
7		Kwabre South	786
8		Nwabiagya North	611
		Total	8,924

TOTAL NO. OF HHTS CONSTRUCTED



GAMA SWP EXCEEDS TARGETS FOR INSTITUTIONAL WASH FACILITIES



External view of a typical GAMA SWP school toilet facility

The GAMA SWP has provided a total of 192 institutional WASH facilities against the target of 150, six months before the end of the project. One hundred and twenty-nine of the facilities were provided to eight Metropolitan/Municipal Assemblies (MMAs) against a target of 120 and 63 were provided to 13 MMAs in Greater Accra against a target of 30. This is Component 1B of the Additional Financing (AF) phase of the GAMA SWP. The AF is an extension of the parent project from 2021 to 2024. At a management briefing in June 2024, the Sanitary Engineer of the project, Gabriel Engmann, reported that all the targets had been met for both GAMA and GKMA. In GKMA, 13 of the facilities were provided to healthcare facilities and the remaining 116 were provided to mostly

public basic schools and a few public Senior High Schools. Only six of the facilities were rehabilitation of old structures – all the others were new structures. In GAMA, out of the 63 facilities, 60 were new facilities while three were rehabilitation of old structures. Five of the new facilities were provided to healthcare facilities. The 13 beneficiary MMAs in Greater Accra are Ablekuma North, Adenta, Ayawaso East, Ayawaso North, Ga North, Ga South, Ga East, Ga West, Kpone Katamanso, La Nkwantanang Madina, Tema, Tema West, and Weija Gbawe.

Beneficiary MMAs in Greater Kumasi are Asokore Mampong, Asokwa, Ejisu, Kwadaso, Oforikrom, Old Tafo, and Suame Municipal Assemblies, as well as Kumasi Metropolitan

Assembly.

Each typical GAMA SWP institutional WASH facility is disability and gender responsive, taking care of facilitative

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“Each typical GAMA SWP institutional WASH facility is disability and gender responsive, taking care of facilitative access paths and additional fixtures to facilitate usage”

access paths and additional fixtures to facilitate usage. Every school facility also has a changing room for menstruating girls. All toilet facilities also have separate chambers for males and females, and, in case of schools, separate chambers for male teachers and female teachers.

In addition, every facility is provided with access to electricity and water. In schools where it is impossible to extend the public utility pipes to the facility, a borehole is drilled to provide uninterrupted access to water. They are all water closet flush toilets, each of which is also provided with

two water storage tanks to ensure a constant supply of water. In addition, each toilet comes with handwashing facilities to promote good hygiene and control the spread of infections. The project also provides waste bins and other waste management facilities.

The project is very particular about effective operation and maintenance of the facilities provided to ensure sustainability. The project has therefore been providing technical support and advisory services to all beneficiary schools on how to effectively operate and maintain the

facilities. Support includes development of facility management plans, establishment of facility management committees, engagement forums involving school management, Municipal Assemblies, parents, and the Ghana Education Service, among other stakeholders, on a way forward to sustaining the facilities.

Overall, the GAMA Sanitation and Water Project's efforts in Greater Accra and Greater Kumasi have not only enhanced infrastructure but also fostered sustainable practices and addressed specific sanitation and hygiene needs within the institutions.

**THE 129 FACILITIES
WERE DISTRIBUTED IN 8 GKMA MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLIES AS FOLLOWS:**

No.	MMA	Number of Beneficiary Institutions				Total
		Schools		HCFs		
		New	Rehabilitation	New	Rehabilitation	
1	Ejisu	17	-	2	-	19
2	KMA	10	-	-	-	10
3	Suame	10	1	4	1	15
4	Oforikrom	16	1	-	1	17
5	Asokore Mampong	16	-	2	-	18
6	Kwadaso	12	2	2	2	16
7	Old Tafo	17	1	2	1	21
8	Asokwa	13	-	-	-	13
Total		111	5	12	5	129



GAMA SWP CONNECTS 6,700 MORE LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS TO PIPED WATER

The Ghana Water Limited has connected 6,700 more low-income households to pipe-born water since 2021.

2021 through the GAMA Sanitation and Water Project. The Low-income Community Support Department of

the public utility has been implementing component two of the project, which aims at extending piped water to the premises of low-income households in project areas.

By the end of the parent GAMA SWP

in 2020 the company had provided 10,900 households with piped water in Greater Accra. This was against a target of 3,500. As at the end of June 2024, through the first Additional Financing phase of the project, the company had connected an additional 3,800 households in Greater Accra, and 2,900 in Greater Kumasi against a target of 5,000 households each in both locations. "This represents about 70% of progress and we expect completion of the remaining 3,300 by the end of August 2024," says Ing Somuah Tenkorang from the Ghana Water Limited and Team Leader for Component two of the project.

In terms of extension of pipelines, Ing Somuah said the project had exceeded the target of 30km in GAMA, where 58km had already been completed, almost double the target! In GKMA too, the project had already completed 95km against the target of 90km as at the end of June 2024.

By these achievements, about 47,000 more people have directly gained access to piped water on premises, while several thousands have also gained access through the improvements in and extension of existing pipelines around the target communities.



COMING SOON

PRIORITY WORKS ON ASAFO SEWERAGE REHABILITATION AND EXPANSION TO START SOON

Ing Gabriel Engmann (right) on a site visit with officials from the World Bank and the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly.

All is set for the commencement of the rehabilitation works on the Asafo Sewerage System in Kumasi. According to the Sanitary Engineer of the GAMA SWP, Ing Gabriel Engmann, there are only a few social safeguards issues to clear to pave way for the works to begin. According to Ing Engmann, the land for the site has been secured by the KMA, environmental and social impact assessments have been conducted, project affected persons have been identified, mobilized, and sensitized about the project and how they would be affected, and engineering designs have been completed.

Ing Engmann said that there are just a few stakeholder consultations and further public education on the

project, including expectations on some of the expected nuisances during construction works to minimize public apprehension and interferences. These consultations and public education will take place in July and works are expected to commence by August 2024. Priority works after the final lap of consultations will include ridding the site of all squatters and clearing all intruding structures, fencing off the secured land to prevent encroachment, and rehabilitation of the ponds and sewer lines around the Asafo area from the Kumasi Technical University through the Asafo Market to the stabilization and treatment ponds around the Abinkyi Market.

After the priority works, it is expected that the current situation where

sewer flow from several households ends up elsewhere other than the treatment site will stop, while the site would have been secured from encroachment and prepared for expansion to cover other communities and some prominent institutions within the KMA. Expansion works on the facility will, however, commence as another phase between 2025 and 2026.

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“After the priority works, it is expected that the current situation where sewer flow from several households ends up elsewhere other than the treatment site will stop.”



Access to modern WASH facility: Headteacher makes a special thanks offering in church

The headteacher of Nyankyereniase Methodist B Primary School, Mr. Kwame Amponsah, says he made a special thanks offering at church after the GAMA SWP provided a modern toilet facility to his school. "Of all the three schools in this cluster, my school was the one selected to benefit from this facility. I believe it was an answered prayer, so I even made a special thanks offering at Church to thank God for answering our prayer.

I was posted here in 2019. We are a cluster of three schools – Primary A, Primary B, and the Junior High School and we were all sharing one old toilet facility which lacked so many things. There were more than a thousand children sharing this facility so there was a lot of pressure on it especially during break time. Some of the little children especially could not withstand the pressure and would even sometimes soil themselves in the queue, while others even defecated in various corners to pollute the environment.

"This project emerged from nowhere – all the way from the World Bank to the Ministry of Sanitation, to Accra, then to Kumasi, then to Kwadaso Municipality, then to Nyankyereniase, then to our cluster, and finally to Primary B! Was this not a miracle in response to something we had always been praying for? I think I was the luckiest headteacher in this community!"

"Now we are very satisfied; we have four chambers for boys, four for girls, two for teachers, and one for people with disabilities. This is the vision which even amazes me; there are currently no such people in this school, yet they have provided a chamber that will accommodate any possible future enrolment of some of such people. Such a great vision by the planners of this project!"

"This special changing room for girls is another innovative concept and even this morning I learned that one Basic Six girl has taken advantage of the room.

Since when did people start constructing toilets with menstruation in the plan?”

Now, through a well-organized commissioning ceremony involving the Member of Parliament, the Municipal Chief Executive, the Municipal Director of Education, among several other dignitaries, this toilet has been handed over to me and I was told to ensure that it is effectively operated and managed. How can I fail them? We have subsequently put in place measures to ensure that the place is always as clean as it

was on the day it was handed to me. We have also employed a full-time janitor to ensure that the place is clean at all times throughout the day.

Once again, I give thanks to God, the World Bank, the Ministry of Sanitation and the Project Coordinating Unit, the Kwadaso Municipal Assembly, and everybody who played a role in making access to this facility possible. I wish this support and relief could be extended to every school in the country.”



Extension of water supply pipelines in Suame Kotoko: Akosua Agyeiwaa can't wait!

Akosua Agyeiwaa, a waakye seller at Suame Kotoko in Kumasi, says she cannot wait to see the extension of pipelines in her area.

“I am so excited to see this pipeline being laid right in front of our house. For so many years we have lived here with a tiny pipeline tapped from far away serving

all the neighbourhood. It has not been reliable at all; most times you don't even know whether it is the pipe that is choked, or whether it is burst, or whether it is Ghana Water that is not supplying.

Now with this big pipeline right here, I am ready to tap it directly into my room. I would then decide whether

I want to share it with anybody or not. I can't really wait to see myself not sharing water bills with anybody. I can't wait!

We have been told that when they finish, we will be paying only 600 Ghana Cedis for connection and they will provide the meter. Wow! Some people are even paying about 2,000 Ghana Cedis elsewhere to connect pipes. We are so lucky! Please tell them to hurry up and complete this work for us in time.

We thank God that Suame Kotoko area too has been identified for this support. We have suffered far too long for water. This is indeed our time. Truly there is time for everything!

We also thank the government and the World Bank for thinking about the people of Suame Kotoko. I wish everybody in this area would quickly register and get access to piped water right inside their houses. As for me, my money is ready. Hmm, a Suame Kotoko where no one shares a water bill."

A moment with **Charlotte Akwaah-Adjei** Head of Capacity Building Team



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

In this edition of the GAMA Sanitation News (GSN), we feature another long-serving project staff, who has been instrumental to the continuous success of the project. Mrs. Charlotte Akwaah-Adjei is the head of the Capacity Building Team and coordinates component four of the project. She also serves as the liaison between the project and the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR). She has overseen capacity development programmes for several sector institutions and promoted the project on several national and international platforms through presentations and participation in panel discussions.

Charlotte attended Konongo Odumasi Secondary School in the Ashanti Region and continued to Accra School of Hygiene to study

Diploma in Environmental Health. From the School of Hygiene, she continued to the Presbyterian University College Ghana, where she obtained a BSc in Environment and Natural Resources Management. Charlotte also obtained an MPhil in Environmental Science from the University of Ghana and later obtained a Masters in Business Administration from Wrexham University in the UK.

Charlotte was nominated to participate in the G20 Global Leadership Programme in Korea, 2018 and India Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) training in Urban Development and Human Settlement at the Human Settlement Institute in India. In addition to her multi-level degrees, Charlotte has pursued several short courses

to develop herself in the professional field including Environmental Monitoring and Climate Change from the United Nations University, South Korea. Charlotte is the first born of four siblings and is married with two beautiful girls.

GSN engaged Charlotte in a brief conversation and here we go with exciting insights into the professional life of currently one of the most impactful women in Ghana's WASH Sector:

GSN: How did you join the project, when, and in what capacity?

Charlotte: I joined the project in 2015 when I was working at the Greater Accra Regional Coordinating Council. I was mainly supporting the

baseline data collection for the household toilet component of the project. Then in 2017, I joined the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, and I was assigned to the Capacity Building Team of the GAMA SWP.

GSN: What specific role do you play within the Project?

Charlotte: I am the focal person of the Ministry assigned to the project as the Capacity Building Coordinator. The capacity building and institutional strengthening component of the project is managed by a Capacity Building Team (CBT) comprising a Ministry Focal Person, a Behaviour Change Communication Specialist, a Knowledge Management Expert, an Information Technology Officer, and an Administrator. CBT concentrates its efforts on capacity development of all stakeholders, provides technical assistance to MMAs, prepares terms of reference for consultancy assignments and manages contracts on component 4. The CBT also implements BCC and Knowledge Management activities. I coordinate communication of project status, challenges and programs to the ministry.

GSN: How critical is your role to the success of the project?

Charlotte: My role is critical as the Ministry representative on the project. I must collaborate with the Project Coordinator on a daily basis and follow progress for a successful project implementation, monitoring closely to check how implementation aligns with Project Development Objectives. I liaise with both the management of the Ministry and the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) and provide regular project updates to the ministry and convey the perspectives from the ministry to the PCU.

GSN: How is your typical day at the office like?

Charlotte: My day varies depending on the activities planned for the week. Mostly attending meetings or organizing meetings with partners, working with team members on assignments, writing TORs or reviewing consultants reports and preparing payment certificates. Sometimes I also join the engineers or safeguard teams on site visits and work with them to prepare for World Bank missions.



Charlotte addressing a typical capacity development forum in Kumasi

GSN: How is your typical day in the field like?

Charlotte: *I visit project sites mainly to check the status of implementation and quality assurance of works. These visits are mainly to beneficiary communities and institutions, as well as construction sites. It is always so refreshing hearing from beneficiary households and communities directly about how our interventions are changing their lives. For field visits, I liaise mainly with the Project Engineers and officials from the partner Municipal Assemblies to identify the most suitable communities and sites.*

GSN: What are your most interesting moments as a member of the project team?

Charlotte: *It is quite fulfilling to be among a strong team strategizing and working to provide access to improved sanitation and safe drinking water in low-income communities using all the appropriate systems to support the vulnerable in society. I am proud to be part of urban development that impacts on the basic needs of life. My most interesting moment is the monthly management meeting where we all report on our various activities and plans for the weeks ahead. One particular moment I am so proud of is winning the most engaging presentation at the All Systems Go Africa Conference in Accra, organized by IRC and other international partners, for the project. I am also proud of my nomination as a Steering Board Member (Inclusive Urban Sanitation Taskforce member) of International Water Association. The numerous international platforms and high-level programs and events where I seize the opportunity to*

share the success story of the GAMA Project globally. There are also great moments like meeting high-profile personalities like Presidents, Vice Presidents, Ministers, Country Directors and Ambassadors, some of whom have become personal friends in Ghana and abroad.

GSN: What will you fondly remember after the project has ended?

Charlotte: *I think my contribution to WASH sector institutional capacity strengthening may be described as significant. Development of the Ghana Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Sector Development Program (GWASHSDP 2021-2030), revision of the 2009 Environmental Sanitation Policy, and the development of Expanded Sanitary Inspection and Compliance Application (ESICAPPs) for the Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate. I also had the opportunity to contribute to Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) advocacy in the country especially for children with disability, supporting them through provision of infrastructure, educational materials and sanitary products to empower them to reach their full potential. I will for instance be profoundly proud of facilitating the development of the braille version of MHM educational materials for visually impaired children. I will forever miss the project team! I have enjoyed every moment with the team; we work as if we are members from the same family. In fact, we are one big family! The travels, the birthday parties, occasional heckling at management meetings, and the so many good times we have shared together, as well as the pampering, oh my God! I just love the GAMA Team. The best I could ever have worked with.*



TECHNICAL NOTE

PROVIDING MODERN WASH FACILITIES TO SCHOOLS IN GHANA: EXPERIENCES FROM THE GAMA PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

This section highlights the provision of toilet facilities to schools in Ghana through the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area Sanitation and Water Project (GAMA SWP). The main objective of the section is to share project experiences and the emerging challenges with regard to the provision of toilets to schools with like-minded projects and stakeholders.

BACKGROUND OF GAMA SWP

The GAMA SWP is a partnership between the Government of Ghana, represented by the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR), and the World Bank, which provides financial and technical support. The project is implemented by the beneficiary Metropolitan and Municipal Assemblies (MMAs), with coordination and technical support from the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) of the MSWR. The project focuses on low-income urban communities. However, provision of WASH facilities in schools is not

necessarily low-income biased. As at the end of June 2024, the project had constructed 580 toilets and handed them over to beneficiary schools. A hundred and sixteen of them had been provided in Greater Kumasi and 464 in Greater Accra.

WHY THE NEED TO PROVIDE SCHOOLS WITH MODERN TOILETS?

Available data from the Ghana Education Service (GES) indicates that about 25% of all public basic schools in the country do not have

a toilet facility at all, while there is no clear statistics about the state and adequacy of the available WASH facilities in the schools. Baseline information about almost all WASH facilities in selected schools for intervention by the GAMA SWP in both Accra and Kumasi indicated that existing toilets had one or more of the following traits: inadequate, gender insensitive, disability insensitive, unhygienic, wrongly sited, overaged, no handwashing component, and lacked water connection. Interactions with teachers and pupils revealed that some of them resorted to going back home to use a toilet or practised open defecation during school hours.

Other studies on the issue by WaterAid indicated that lack of clean toilets in schools kept some menstruating girls out of school during their period to avoid potential shame and trauma associated with menstruation. With imminent negative effects on children's health and their education, the GAMA SWP seeks to provide possible solutions through the provision of modern toilet facilities that correct all the above-listed wrongs to schools within the project locations.

WHO ARE THE MAIN STAKEHOLDERS?

Several stakeholders are involved in this particular component of the project. They include the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources represented by the Project Coordinating

Unit, which coordinates project implementation. The World Bank, which provides funding and technical support, the Ministry of Education represented by the respective Municipal Education Directorates and school authorities, the Municipal Assemblies, which are the custodians of the schools and for that matter the toilet facility, community leaders who participates in decision-making especially on siting of the facility, and the Parents Associations, who support in managing the facilities. The PCU is also supported in project implementation by consultants who support in designing and supervising the construction of the facilities, and contractors, who construct the facilities.

WHAT TYPE OF TOILETS ARE PROVIDED AND WHY?

The GAMA SWP provides toilets that meet all the minimum standards set by the Ghana Education Service. The toilets are modern, neat, and accessible to all intended users. All toilets provided are water closets with squat plates for pupils and seats for teachers and users with disabilities and located within the school compound.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN COMPONENTS AND ATTRACTIONS OF THE TOILETS?

The GAMA SWP modern toilets have separate chambers for males, females, and teachers. The toilets are also provided with separate chambers

with access support for persons with disabilities and changing rooms with showers for menstruating girls. To enhance privacy of users and ventilation, each chamber has a door and a window. Most toilets have squat plates for pupils and toilet seats for teachers. Hand-washing basins and mirrors are also provided in each toilet. A storage room is provided for toiletries, cleaning materials and tools. Every toilet also comes with a water source with water storage tanks. Due to absence of sewerage systems, most toilets are provided with septic tanks for containment. To facilitate cleanliness and hygiene, the interior floors and about 80% of walls are tiled. To minimize intrusion and vandalism, the main entrance has a fortified metal door.

HOW ARE SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR MODERN TOILETS?

The GAMA SWP works through the MMAs who provide a list of schools that lack toilet facilities. A consultant is selected to do a general assessment of the WASH situation in each school on the list and other necessary information. The assessment considers the school population size, availability of space, availability of a water source and power source, social and environmental safeguards issues, among others. The PCU, the MMA, and the Consultant will then collectively develop a shortlist based on the information generated.

WHAT FACILITY MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES ARE PUT IN PLACE TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY?

School toilets must be effectively operated, managed, and maintained to ensure that they adequately serve their expected lifespan. The project has recorded a few instances where newly provided facilities are poorly managed leading to breakdown of components, poor hygiene, and in extreme cases, close down. In this regard, the project coordinates the establishment of facility management structures and procedures to ensure sustainability. This process is coordinated by a facility management specialist from the consultants, who provides education to the school management and the pupils on how to use and maintain the facility. The School Management Committee therefore signs to assume responsibility for the sustainable operation and management of the facility. To compliment government efforts in maintaining the facilities, most schools seek voluntary support from parents to raise funds to support janitorial services, supply consumables, and fix minor damages.

WHAT LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNT SO FAR THROUGH THIS PROJECT?

Provision of WASH facilities to schools in the course of GAMA SWP implementation has uncovered a number of interesting lessons.

Minimum standards

It has been discovered that even though many of the schools in the project location do have toilets, majority of them do not meet the minimum standards prescribed by the Ghana Education Service. Many of them do not have connection to a water supply system; they do not have disability-friendly access, they do not have enough number of chambers to serve the increasing school enrolment, they do not have handwashing facilities, they do not provide adequate privacy, no consideration for menstruating girls, and no storage facility for cleaning tools and consumables.

Community involvement

Another lesson is the fact that providing a WASH facility to a school does not mean that community leadership structures can be overlooked. For instance, they should be satisfied with where the facility is sited before construction begins. They should also be educated on why they should stay away from the facility to ensure exclusive use by the pupils and their teachers.

Janitorial and security services

The majority of schools that do not have janitors find it difficult to ensure adequate cleanliness in the toilets. Even though some of them try to use that as an opportunity to provide practical training for the children, the end result is not enough to provide adequate cleanliness. For instance, children would not be available

during lessons to clean the toilet even though some of them would be using the facility throughout school hours. Where there is a janitor, the facility is always monitored for abuse and cleaned after every use. Janitors provide real time reports on any breakages to the school authorities for prompt attention. School WASH facilities also need to be protected against vandalism by community members who want to forcibly use them. In such instances, schools with night security person have an advantage in ensuring that such things do not happen to the facilities.

Inadequate budgetary allocation by government for operation and maintenance

Project analysis revealed that government allocation for operation and maintenance of school WASH facilities is about One Ghana Cedi per pupil per year through the Capitation Grant. Meanwhile experience has shown that it takes at least forty Ghana Cedis per child per year to ensure adequate operation and maintenance of school WASH facilities.

Support from parents

With the current level of government allocation for operation and maintenance of school WASH facilities, it takes voluntary support from parents through the Parents Associations to raise enough funds to operate and maintain the facilities. Wherever parents refuse to support, the facilities deteriorate.

The actual cost of a toilet

It has been learnt that the actual cost of a school WASH facility is far beyond construction and includes the cost of operation and maintenance over its expected lifespan. It is therefore essential to budget for and be assured of a sustainable source of financing for operation and maintenance of the facility over its anticipated lifespan before sustainability can be achieved.

WHAT CHALLENGES ARE BEING FACED?

There are a number of challenges that the project has faced in providing modern toilets to schools. They include the following:

Space and siting

Finding a suitable space to locate the facility is one major challenge for schools with limited or unfavorable space. Unfavorable space includes waterlogged or rocky soil conditions and closeness to nearby houses, which usually attracts community or neighbourhood resistance to siting the facility. There have been several

instances of litigation by community members living close to the school who fear that a toilet of that nature would emit stench to disturb them.

Community vandalism

Several beneficiary schools have encountered vandalism by community members who want to take advantage of the modern toilet as against the total absence of same in the community or paying money to use a public toilet in the neighbourhood as against using the school toilet for free.

Operation and maintenance

The most difficult challenge has been the inability of government to provide enough funds for operation and maintenance of the facilities after they have been handed over to the schools, as well as the inability of the school authorities to raise funds from elsewhere to perform same. This usually results in rapid breakdown of hygiene in the toilet or some of its components.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that even though there are a number of challenges associated with providing adequate WASH facilities to schools in Ghana, the GAMA SWP experience indicates that it is possible to serve every school in the country once there is the will and a national determination to do so. It is true that 75% of public basic schools may have toilets, however, it is also true that majority of them do not meet the minimum standards prescribed by the Ghana Education Service. In response to this phenomenon, the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources has, through the GAMA SWP, and with support from the World Bank, made a bold statement by providing relief to 580 schools over the past eight years. The project has been able to surmount most of the identified challenges and with the level of engagement made with the Ministry of Education/GES, it is hoped that there will be a favorable response with regards to finding a lasting solution to issues with operation and maintenance, which remains the biggest challenge.

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