



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Achieving Development through Local NGO Partnerships

The Ghana WASH Project (GWASH) is interested in more than just short-term improvements in water, sanitation and hygiene in rural and peri-urban communities; the project is built on the belief that long-term sustainability requires strong local partnerships and capacity building to meet its goals.



GHANA WASH PROJECT



Vincent Darkey-Mensah (EDSAM Director) facilitates a community education discussion on proper excreta disposal and household latrine usage.

Across five regions, the Ghana WASH Project is working alongside nine local NGOs to carry out its development activities. Through these local organizations, the project has a direct link to connect with and support rural and peri-urban communities.

In order to work with local communities throughout the country, GWASH has established strong partnerships with a network of local non-government organizations (LNGOs). These partnerships allow GWASH to not only address pressing water, sanitation and hygiene issues, but also provide long-term sustainable development through trainings, workshops, seminars, and on-site training.

In 2006, Mr. Vincent K. Darkey-Mensah and his wife, Mrs. Esinu Darkey-Mensah, created the Engineering and Development Services Administration and Management (EDSAM) Social Network. They founded the NGO on their passion to promote social and economic advancement in rural communities, on the need for water, sanitation, health, and business development for the rural poor and with a mission to provide comprehensive support services. With these themes in mind, the couple based their organization in Ho Municipality, the capital of the Volta Region. They also worked in five other districts -- Hohoe Municipality, Kadjebi District, Akatsi District, South Tongu District and North Tongu District.

Since its start six years ago, the or-

ganization has grown substantially in both size and scope. Today, EDSAM's team includes 11 staff members, including four field staff. It has deepened its experience in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector, focusing both on facilities and promoting positive hygiene and behavior change.

In its efforts to promote water and sanitation development and health education, EDSAM mobilizes, educates and trains communities. In addition, EDSAM promotes household latrine construction, usage, and provides user education on proper operations and maintenance.

In order to execute its community development and engagement activities, GWASH identifies and links with LNGOs as a key part of its sustainability model. EDSAM, with its experience and organization strengths as well as high recommendations, made it a strong contender for partnerships. In five years, EDSAM has developed a strong track record for making a difference in local communities. The organization also possessed key local knowledge and experience in the WASH sector, from work with hardware (improving and providing facilities) and software (promoting positive hygiene and

behavior change). Over time, the organization had developed experience in contract management, administration and procurement. Additionally, EDSAM had high recommendations from the Ho General Assembly. So in 2010, EDSAM became an LNGO partner with the project, which meant continuing to serve communities throughout the Volta Region, and also expanding its scope, which would require building its organizational and staff capacity.

In the Volta Region, the Ghana WASH Project has lofty water, sanitation, and hygiene goals: constructing five boreholes, three small-town piping systems, three institutional latrines, and 531 household latrines. These facilities, and the corresponding and complementary BCC activities, have the potential to impact dozens of communities and thousands of people in rural and peri-urban areas. The partnership is working to making a difference in the lives of more than 4,200 people through household latrine construction and more than 2,500 students through the construction of three institutional latrines, ensuring access to improved sanitation facilities. GWASH expects to benefit 7,500 people through improved water infrastructure and improved access



Esther Nyonator (EDSAM Field Officer) gathers community data from a community member in Abutia Kpota, Volta Region. The Ghana WASH Project is undertaking community-led total sanitation activities in this community.

to potable drinking water.

The project is also implementing Behavior Change & Communication (BCC) activities in 33 communities and four schools across Volta. These activities will strengthen the impact of the physical facilities; the aim is to empower individuals and communities with an understanding of the role of water, sanitation and hygiene in their lives and the knowledge and skills to support and maintain their facilities.

Building a Local Organization's Capacity

The partnership with EDSAM began with a heavy focus on capacity building trainings for the organization's team, to ensure the project could obtain its projected water, sanitation, and hygiene goals. This type of capacity building provides EDSAM staff with practical information and resources to better support their local communities. EDSAM staff is trained on how to facilitate community mobilization, capacity building, monitoring/follow-up, organizing community meetings, BCC delivery, SHEP activities, and to report monthly and quarterly to the Ghana WASH team. EDSAM's ability to learn and effectively apply these

skills has a significant impact on both EDSAM and the communities in which they work.

The EDSAM team learned about the various project approaches and tools, such as using Participatory Health and Hygiene Education (PHHE) tool kits, a set of sketches depicting both positive and negative hygiene behaviors that facilitators use to communicate, collect, educate, and monitor communities' water sanitation behavior. The team's training included skills in community entry, building a strong rapport with community members and leadership at the beginning of a watsan project; and they also honed skills in facilitation, for their field staff to serve as BCC agents and communicate and dialogue with communities concerning behavior change messages.

"Working with GWASH has helped with staff retention," Mr. Darkey-Mensah said. "With GWASH, we have regular cash flow to carry out our activities in the communities. The staff have also benefited from training programs."

Faith Amevor, an EDSAM field staff officer new to the community development field, explained how her

new experiences, knowledge and confidence are impacting her work. "I have never worked in this field before," she said. "With the training provided by GWASH, I am confident holding community meetings with chiefs and high-level officials."

She went on to describe her new skills, including conducting trainings for both small and large audiences. "My colleagues and I have learned about effective leadership, facilitation, accurate record keeping, monitoring/follow-up and working with diverse groups," she said. "The greatest benefit is that we are also able to train others in our community on these skills."

Leading Community Development with Local Knowledge

For Volta Region project activities, EDSAM is essential to ensuring sustainable, high-level impacts are realized, and the project works through EDSAM in numerous ways to implement software activities and facilitate and monitor hardware activities in the Volta Region.

These activities include experience-sharing workshops, where experienced and novice field agents share stories and experiences from the field. The organization also facilitates the formation and training of water and sanitation (watsan) committees in communities; these committees created to administer, operate, and maintain the water, sanitation and hygiene facilities – the boreholes, hand-dug wells and latrines – that they receive through the project. The watsan committees identify and recruit community-based health promoters, who deliver effective behavior change messages, such as on stopping open defecation, and taking up proper hand-washing techniques to the communities. These promoters also assist in monitoring and evaluating these behavior changes in the community.

With GWASH, we have regular cash flow to carry out our activities in the communities. The staff have also benefited from training programs.

— Vincent Darkey-Mensah, EDSAM Managing Director

Watsan committees organize community savings accounts that is used to fund future maintenance and if necessary, to expand the water system. The creation of watsan committees provides a dynamic means of capacity building. Through creation, EDSAM and GWASH field staff train the community leadership team on the skills needed to create committees, on record keeping, organization, administration, and perhaps most importantly, problem solving for the watsan issues that may arise in the community. EDSAM also trains agents in behavior change communications, and these agents in turn conduct School

Health Education Program (SHEP) activities in area schools. The LGNO partner also monitor the food vendors who provide food to students on school campuses, and the teachers and staff on the premises, with the aim of encouraging the adoption of appropriate food hygiene behavior.

Organizational Development and New Opportunities

EDSAM's progression is evident on the GWASH side of the partnership. Avril Kudzi, GWASH Deputy Chief of Party, oversees LNGO contracts, their monthly and quarterly reports

of field activities and monitors their budget activities. "We have seen tremendous improvements in project reporting and financial management," she said.

She went on to describe how far along EDSAM has come since first joining the project. "The field staff is more confident at community activities," she said, "and through this, EDSAM was awarded a small grant to train more artisans for household latrine construction."

In March 2012, EDSAM was awarded a small grant to carry out a series of trainings for latrine artisans,



Angela Owusu-Adama of IMPACT, a Ghana WASH Project local NGO partner in Awutu Senya District, Central Region, leads a capacity building training for local water and sanitation committee members.

“With the training provided by GWASH, I am confident holding community meetings with chiefs and high-level officials”

— Faith Amevor, EDSAM Field Officer

local masons who are employed by communities to construct household latrines. The Small Grants Facility is a source of funding that can be used to support local solutions to the challenges facing the WASH sector. The facility provides seed funding for innovative, locally-driven solutions and activities, and proposals for small grants are reviewed by a committee.

The small grant funded the training for 43 latrine artisans, increasing the number of overall artisans to support the construction of household latrines in Volta Region, as well as Central Region and Western Region; 11 others made up of LNGO staff,

Peace Corps Volunteers and environmental health assistants also participated in the training.

Evidence of Positive Community Impacts

Communities are seeing the impact of the GWASH project and EDSAM is playing a remarkable role. Above all, the communities, who are at the heart of the project, are experiencing the greatest gain from this successful partnership.

The support to School Health Education Program (SHEP) activities in the beneficiary schools is reaping benefits. In communities, school

compounds are cleaner, and students are adopting the proper techniques for hand washing, personal hygiene, and the maintenance of the institutional latrines. Food vendors are also changing their behaviors, including adopting proper hand washing practices and improving the hygiene of the food they sell and serve to the students, teachers and staff.

Recently, the community of Asukawkaw in the Krachi East District inaugurated a water treatment center, a water purification system that takes water from the nearby water source and treats it to provide potable, safe drinking water for the community. The members of the com-



Faith Amevor (EDSAM field staff) and Vincent Darkey-Mensah (EDSAM director) perform latrine user education.

munity no longer queue or fight for water at the fetching point. Some community members have mentioned that they now have more time for their farm work. In the community of Tsyome Lomnava, the community members said the stomach aches associated with the stream water they used to drink has stopped now that they are drinking treated water.

The Essentiality of Capacity Building for Long-Term Community Development
Capacity building is an integral part of the Ghana WASH Project's work

with its LNGOs and its communities, because these collaborations with LNGOs like EDSAM represent an opportunity to build the local capacity of homegrown organizations that can then take charge of their community's development, contributing to long-term sustainability. In many cases, such as that of EDSAM, these LNGOs are already making strong, positive impacts in communities. In addition, these collaborations and partnerships are opportunities to organizations creates a cadre of skilled, local NGO professions who have the ability to see their community needs, can access funding to support their communities' activities,

and can monitor and evaluate their activities to ensure effective, sustainable impacts.

Across its five regions, the Ghana WASH Project partners with nine LNGOs, including EDSAM, who provide services for pro-poor development in more than 160 communities. Like EDSAM, these LNGOs are focused on creating solutions and establishing partnerships to implement these solutions.

In Nyive, Strengthening EDSAM is Shaping Positive Impacts for Community Sanitation

Nyive is a small town located 10 kilometers east of Ho, the capital city of the Volta Region. When approaching the unassuming community, it is hard to imagine that it is home to 2000 people. Driving into the center of town, the presence of external aid is evident: One of the first sights is the USAID/Rotary International built water tower, which provides not only potable water to this community, but also provides shade on sunny days to the vendors of tomatoes, dried fish, and soap.

As with most small, rural communities in this region, there is the familiarity with development aid coming from outside. As our Ghana WASH Project vehicle pulled up into town that sweltering afternoon, the community greeted us without fanfare. The purpose of this visit was to follow-up on the impact of Ghana WASH and EDSAM activities and their benefits to communities, and to verify the number of constructed household latrines.

Nyive, like many rural communities outside of Ho, experiences tremendous challenges with water and

sanitation access, and community hygiene. Nyive's water infrastructure challenges are being addressed, in part, through a partnership between USAID and Rotary International: With EDSAM, the partners are addressing the water and sanitation challenges with infrastructure and hygiene with behavior change communications, and have a water pump, water tower, and a small town piping system.

Mr. P. K. Nyame, Water Board Chairman, says that the biggest challenge is that some people don't understand or see the need for proper sanitation, and it is difficult to make them understand the system, because they don't see or understand the harm that poor sanitation

practices cause.

EDSAM is increasing the understanding of the Nyive community on watsan issues, such as open defecation, through intense positive behavior change communication messages. This task is designated to hygiene promoters within the Nyive community. Hygiene promoters are community-based volunteers who are taught how to effectively deliver behavior change communication messages. They are also taught and assist EDSAM in monitoring and evaluating the progress of the community.

EDSAM's training with Ghana WASH enables them to successfully source and select people who are engaged and committed to changing the

Nyive doesn't just have visions; they have plans on how to attain their goals, thanks to the training and mentoring they have received from EDSAM.



At left, a walkway behind beneficiary's home in Nyive, Volta Region, before community cleanup. At right, the same walkway, after the community cleanup.

behavior of their community. Nyive currently has four hygiene promoters who are responsible for sensitizing the community on the harmful effects of open defecation, continuing "triggering" and education events, ensuring consistent messages to the community and assisting with the formation of school health education programs (SHEP). Hygiene promoters learn skills that can be used far beyond the reaches of watsan; they are trained on record keeping, monitoring and follow-up, how to deliver messages and presentations to effectively reach their audience, and conflict resolution.

In addition to supporting community hygiene promoters, the EDSAM team has used their skills to build the capacity of Nyive's existing Water and Sanitation Development Board. The board consists of a chairman, secretary, treasurer, plus six additional members. These individuals are democratically elected with the operational tasks of holding meetings, providing instruction on how to address community watsan issues, general clean-up of the community, ensuring there are trained personnel in the community to repair and maintain watsan facilities, and handling funds and fees. EDSAM has also worked with the Nyive board to build their capacity on effectively mobilizing the community,

disseminating water, sanitation and hygiene messages, generate demand for watsan infrastructure and promote proper infrastructure use and maintenance. Capacity building of the watsan development board also includes adopting and updating constitution and bylaws, instituting proper user-fee collection practices, and practicing transparent financial management and civic participation.

Mr. Nyame said that involvement with organizations like EDSAM enable communities to learn for themselves, so that they can provide for their communities in the future. Mr. Nyame continued that Nyive has land that could be used as financial resources, but because of the open defecation problems, much of the land went unused and the community was hurting as a whole.

Since the involvement of EDSAM and the Ghana Wash Project, the community is seeing a change for the better. Through a trickle-down effect, the Nyive community has benefitted tremendously from the training EDSAM received from the Ghana WASH Project: The board has learned skills like proper book-keeping, roles and responsibilities, how to manage committees, how to productively interact with the community and meet their needs. This knowledge makes everyone responsible for the success or failure of the

community, because they now have the education to do more.

When asked what changes they are seeing from these partnerships and what is Nyive doing to sustain their community, community members provided affirming responses. First, since the introduction of the project, the community has received 35 household latrines and one institutional latrine, and more and more people are requesting latrine construction, demonstrating a high demand for infrastructure and for the opportunity to improve sanitation access. Hygiene promoters are seeing fewer and fewer instances of open defecation on open land. The community has shown a more vested interest in cleaning up their community through clean up days, where the community gets together and cleans an area to make it free of trash, debris and open defecation.

The Nyive community has bigger plans than just clean up days; they want to build public toilets for those who cannot afford to build their own household latrines and also add piping to increase the reach of potable water to outlying areas. Nyive doesn't just have visions; they have plans on how to attain their goals, thanks to the training and mentoring they have received from EDSAM. Nyive currently charges for water by the bucket and that money is used to maintain and repair the water facilities, and a small portion is being saved to purchase piping for their goal of providing water to Nyive community members that are further from the town center.

"If we continue to clean up our land and become open defecation free, than we can sell or lease the land and use that money to build public toilets, and increase behavior change communication messages trainings to increase the health and cleanliness of our community" said Tefe Norfeli, a community hygiene promoter.



The [Ghana Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Project](#) is a four-year USAID-funded initiative to improve rural water, sanitation, and hygiene in Ghana. GWASH is implemented by Relief International, Winrock International, and the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA). Working with local actors and community members, GWASH is engaged in five regions, 22 districts, and more than 160 communities to assist in the achievement of Ghana's national WASH goals.

Relief International provides emergency, rehabilitation and development services that empower beneficiaries in the process. Relief International employs an innovative approach to program design and a high quality of implementation performance in demonstrating deep and lasting impact in reducing human suffering worldwide. ADRA was established by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to provide humanitarian relief and welfare. The agency's work seeks to improve the quality of life of those in need through emergency management as well as community development initiatives. Winrock International is a non-profit organization working with people in the United States and around the world to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources.