



Three-year-old Ransford brushes his teeth with clean water taken from his community's new water treatment center.
(Photo Credit: Monica Jeannormil/GWASH)

USAID and the Coca-Cola Africa Foundation bring clean drinking water to households in Asukawkaw

It is still early in the morning, but Cornelia Nketia, a mother of four, is up and already in the queue for water. Six months ago, her only option would be to fetch the murky, brown water from the nearby Asukawkaw River, 15 minutes away. Tainted by the livestock that enters in slowly to drink and cool down from the hot and arid December air, it was the community's water source for all household activities, from drinking to bathing to washing dishes.

"We know the water isn't clean and makes our children sick, but we didn't have any other choice until this water center was built,"

she says in the local language Ewe, as she looks off in the distance.

Today, Cornelia and others can pay a modest fee for clean, potable water, thanks to the water treatment center that her community received through USAID and the Coca-Cola Africa Foundation's Water and Development Alliance. The alliance marks a commitment with communities to assist them in receiving potable water through the construction of Water Health Centers. The alliance also provides improved sanitation infrastructure to schools.

The water center, opened in May 2012, sources water from the same river, but treats it through a multi-step UV filtration process, which meets World Health Organization (WHO) standards before it is available for sale to the public. Cornelia and other community members arrive early each morning, carrying containers of various shapes and sizes with their money in hand, ready to purchase clean water.

The water center, one of the many across the country built by WaterHealth Ghana, sells water at 10 pesewas (\$0.05) for 20 liters and 20 pesewas (\$0.10) for

40 liters in Asukawkaw. As soon as the center opens (at 6:30 in the morning), community members begin to queue at this new, reliable source for clean, potable drinking water. Cornelia says her household purchases on average 80 liters of water a day, which they use for cooking, bathing, and drinking. They also keep water stored in a large, covered metal drum next to their house.

“The difference between the river water and the water facility is that the water facility is clean and safe for drinking than the river water,” she says.

While Cornelia and others are ready to patronize the new water center, there are still some who continue to source water from the river. Cornelia says these house-

“The difference between the river water and the water facility is that the water facility is clean and safe for drinking more than the river water.”

holds know that it is the water making their families sick, but it will take to change everyone’s behavior.

Cornelia believes that for now, cost is still a prohibitive factor for some: “For some, the cost of water is expensive, so they use the river, because it’s free.” Behavior change – the process of motivating and helping households to change their behavior – is a process that takes time, and it’s so for the people of Asukawkaw. For Cornelia and her household, the cost of health clearly outweighs the cost of water, but for others, it

will take time for them to see the situation through her eyes.

Asukawkaw is just one of three communities in this region that is benefitting from these water treatment centers. In the Volta Region, USAID and the Coca-Cola Africa Foundation, through the Water and Development Alliance, have also provided water treatment centers to the peri-urban communities of Dambai and Tapa Abotoase. In the Greater Accra Region, the alliance has brought this new infrastructure to the communities of Manhean and Nsakina.



The WaterHealth Center system in Asukawkaw includes a main water center (above) and two vantage points nearby. These water points provide clean, affordable, accessible water for community members. (Photo Credit: Sean Cantella/GWASH)



At right, Cornelia Nketia poses with her two sons, 11-year-old Dominic and 3-year-old Ransford, in front of their home in the community of Asukawkaw. (Photo Credit: Monica Jeannormil/GWASH)