



Urban water and sanitation in Ghana: How local action is making a difference

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This paper is an output of the Sida, DANIDA and DFID funded project entitled: Improving urban water and sanitation provision globally, through information and action driven locally. This project was carried out by IIED and five of its partners in Angola, Argentina, Ghana, India and Pakistan. The project aims to document innovative and inspiring examples of locally-driven water and sanitation initiatives in deprived urban areas. The project provides a basis for better understanding of how to identify and build upon local initiatives that are likely to improve water and sanitation services. The project also looks at how local organisations in those countries have managed to: scale up successful projects; work collaboratively; finance water and sanitation schemes; and use information systems such as mapping to drive local action and monitor improvements.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AMA	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
AVRL	Aqua Vitens Rand Limited
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CDR	Committee for the Defence of the Revolution
CHF	Cooperative Housing Foundation
ComNet	Community Network
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
GHAUFUP	Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor
GHPF	Ghana Homeless Peoples' Federation
GIPC	Ghana Investment Promotion Centre
GPRS	Ghana Poverty reduction Strategy
GWCL	Ghana Water Company Limited
HDI	Human Development Index
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Centre
JAFED	Joint Action for Environmental Development
KVIP	Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MLGRDE	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PDG	Peoples' Dialogue, Ghana
PURC	Public Utilities regulatory Commission
SAEMA	Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Area
SCALE UP	Slum Communities Achieving Liveable Environment with Urban Partners
SDI	Slum Dwellers International
SSS	Simplified Sewerage System
SUF	Slum Upgrading Facility
UESP	Urban Environmental Sanitation Project
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPDF	Urban Poor Development Fund
WAC	Water for African Cities

Urban Water and Sanitation in Ghana: How local action is making a difference

PREFACE

The provision of water and sanitation services in deprived urban settlements is a challenge faced by many countries in the South. The growth of towns and cities together with the rapid increase in urban populations has meant that peri-urban areas are growing much more quickly than formal urban centres. Low levels of services such as water supply and sanitation are the result. The lack of these services threatens not only the health and the environment of people in peri-urban areas, but also that of people living in formal urban areas (see McGranahan, 2007¹; Mulenga et al., 2004).²

The adoption of the international water and sanitation targets within the Millennium Development Goals is laudable. The problem, however, has been the failure to give attention to indicators, financial mechanisms and institutions that are designed by local organisations at local level. The dominant response to water and sanitation problems, has been to look to internationally comparable indicators to monitor improvement, international financial mechanisms to fund projects, and internationally endorsed institutional shifts (e.g. more private sector participation) to drive change. And yet, there are many innovative and inspiring examples of locally driven initiatives that improve water and sanitation provision in deprived urban areas, some of which have reached considerable scale. Although efforts to replicate local success have been disappointing, there have been important advances in local-level information collection, financing, and organisation.

The World Bank (2003)³ World Development Report on 'Making Services Work for the Urban Poor' and the report on the Millennium Development Goal Task on Water and Sanitation (2005)⁴ conclude that a prerequisite for success is that deprived residents and their organizations drive efforts to improve water and sanitation. Building on the success of existing locally driven initiatives, can bring international water and sanitation targets closer to realization. Many of these local innovations not only improve water and sanitation services, but do so in a manner that better involves and responds to women's needs and priorities than conventional water and sanitation projects.

Successful local initiatives are sometimes documented as best practice and attempts are made to develop replicable models that can be promoted more widely. However, a best practice in one setting can be bad practice in another, and even highly relevant examples rarely provide the basis for directly replicable approaches. Moreover, the qualities needed to deliver improvements to local residents are not the same as the qualities needed to engage in international promotion or to attract the attention of the institutional promoters of best practice.

Locally successful initiatives can, however, provide the basis for horizontal learning (whereby local teams learn directly from each other). They can also provide a better understanding of how to identify and build upon local initiatives that are likely to improve

¹ McGranahan, G. (2007). *Urban environments, wealth and health: shifting burdens and possible responses in low and middle-income nations*. Working Paper, International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

² Mulenga, M. Manase, G., & Fawcett, B. (2004). *Building Links for Improved Sanitation in Poor Urban Settlements: Recommendations from Research in Southern Africa*. University of Southampton, Southampton.

³ World Bank (2003). *World Development Report 2004: Making Services work for Poor People*. World Bank, Washington.

⁴ UN (2005). *The Millennium Development Goals Report*. United Nations, New York.

water and sanitation provision in deprived areas (through careful research founded on an analysis of a range of different cases studies). Furthermore, by combining forces, local initiatives can also become more visible and influential in both national and international arenas.

This paper is one of five case studies that were part of an IIED coordinated research project funded by Sida, DANIDA and DFID entitled 'Improving Water and Sanitation Provision Globally, Through Information and Action Driven Locally'. The main goal was to contribute towards the improvement of water supply and sanitation in low-income urban settlements so that the water, sanitation and slum improvement targets of the Millennium Development Goals can be achieved.

The immediate objective was to strengthen successful locally-driven water and sanitation initiatives, starting with a network based on a selection of ongoing initiatives. Five local organisations actively engaged in local water and sanitation initiatives were identified, these were: Development Workshop (DW) in Angola, IIED-America Latina in Argentina, People's Dialogue Ghana (PDG) in Ghana, the Orangi Pilot Project Research and Training Institute (OPP-RTI) in Pakistan and The Society for the Promotion of Area Resources Centre (SPARC) in India. Partners were identified based on their innovative experiences and efforts to improve conditions in urban poor communities, including local water and sanitation. The project also aimed to enable partners to learn and share experiences directly from each other, and influence the efforts of international agencies to improve water and sanitation in deprived urban communities.

Although the teams may have adopted different strategies, there are striking similarities and common principles. All the partners also work outside the water sector, and have a deep understanding of the conditions and politics of urban poverty. Each team designed their part of the project so that it contributed to the local agenda, but also so that they could all combine to have an important impact internationally. Building on these advances and sharing them among localities are critical to achieving international water and sanitation targets. Although most of the partners are already performing well it was the intention of the project that, the teams involved in the network would increase their capacity to address local water and sanitation deficiencies through what they learned from other successful initiatives.

One of the motivating factors that led to the project was the need to develop a better understanding of how to identify and support successful locally driven initiatives to improve water and sanitation provision in urban poor communities. To allow for effective dialogue and sharing of information between the five teams working on this project, a web based discussion forum was set up. The discussion forum offered a platform through which any common themes, common approaches, sharing of experiences and resources could be debated and the knowledge shared easily. The sharing of ideas also enabled the teams to inspire each other.

From the five country case studies, the following issues were identified as being key to the improvement of water and sanitation services in deprived urban neighbourhoods:

- Working in collaboration
- Financing water and sanitation improvements
- Using information to drive local action and monitor improvements
- Going to scale

Working in collaboration

Partnership has always been recognised as a key component for achieving development in communities. It must be noted that community-driven water and sanitation improvements are very limited if they are pursued by communities acting on their own. The same applies to private, market-driven improvement efforts, and to government-driven schemes, at least when it comes to improving conditions in the most deprived urban areas. Much depends on the relations among these communities, government authorities and water and sanitation providers, both formal and informal. A great number of development projects are designed and implemented by professionals which permit urban poor groups no influence and which rarely produce the hoped for improvements in water and sanitation. Many professionals object to community-driven projects because their own role and importance is diminished – and because their professional training did not equip them to know how to work with urban poor groups and to support their initiatives. And in most cases, the official development assistance agencies find it difficult to support community-driven development because their structures and procedures were never designed to do so.

However, new and interesting methods and institutional structures have emerged in urban poor communities, sometimes leading to the establishment of new institutions such as water boards or community-based organisations with legal standing, and the development of new “paperwork” (including contracts, charters, licences and regulations).

Financing Water and Sanitation Improvements

Financing and cost recovery are key issues for sustainable water and sanitation schemes. Considering the importance of household and community action and investment in improving water and sanitation, there is a need to develop appropriate finance mechanisms. The impact of better local financial systems on improving the provision for water and sanitation may be direct - as they fund these improvements – or indirect as, for instance, they finance acquiring official tenure for urban communities, which then allows official water and sanitation utilities to serve them. In one sense, loan finance might seem inappropriate for low-income households, especially the poorest, since they have the least capacity to repay. But experience from some countries has shown that if loan packages are designed and managed in ways that match the needs and repayment capacities of low-income households, limited funding can go much further. In addition, when a small loan is combined with community-driven initiatives that strive to keep down unit costs, its potential becomes much greater. Collective loans can have particular importance – for instance by allowing savings groups formed by urban poor households to purchase land together and on which new housing can be developed. Subsidies too can play a role, at least when they are part of a viable financing strategy.

Using information to drive local action and monitor improvements

One of the major reasons given by water and sanitation agencies for their failure to extend services to slums and squatter settlements has been the lack of baseline data about these settlements. A survey and documentation of physical conditions, social actors and relationships, economic conditions is very important because this will show what already exists and what needs to be improved on. It must also be noted that, in the absence of such documentation, realistic and cost effective planning cannot take place (Hasan, 2006)⁵. All of the partners on this project have used locally gathered or processed information to help drive local action. Some involves using high-tech equipment, much of it is map-based, and almost all of it serves a clear strategic purpose.

⁵ Hasan, A. (2006). Orangi Pilot Project: The expansion of work beyond Orangi and the mapping of informal settlements and infrastructure. *Environment and Urbanization*, 18(2), pp451-480.

Scaling up

Despite the observation in international development circles that urban poor communities are badly served with water and sanitation services, local authorities have in most cases remained unresponsive. The majority of the urban poor have ended up building their own water and sanitation facilities which are often of poor quality due to lack of support from the local authorities. However, there are numerous small-scale models of successful sustainable community managed water and sanitation projects, but most remain models. The common criticism of many such innovative water and sanitation projects is that they cannot deliver at scale. At one level, this is supremely unfair. In many of the most deprived urban communities, local groups collaborate to improve water and sanitation services, often under very difficult circumstances. Authorities and donors should be striving to find ways to support and link up to such initiatives, and not just criticise them for not going to scale. If these initiatives do not all follow the same reproducible blueprint, this may be because adaptability is a critical element of success. The obstacles to expanding community-driven programmes are as likely to lie in the policy environment as in the community-level strategies. Both the duration and nature of the community engagement vary considerably among the partners to this project, as do their strategies for going to scale. Among partners this may be a value in sharing strategies.

There are a few examples of donors who are supporting replication and providing adequate capital for well-conceived strategies, but many more are needed if the challenges facing the majority of the urban poor are to be addressed. If scaling up is to occur and proven ideas are to spread, support is needed at both community and national levels. Failure to work in more coordinated approaches, pooling resources to work with governments on a coherent agreed set of policy reforms has contributed to the inability to scale up successful water and sanitation projects. Project approaches have also been divisive of international agencies, often leading to competition rather than coordination, and resulting in fractured policy agendas. The funding patterns which promote short duration projects also conspire against building strong organisations ideal for scaling up processes. Further, there has been a concern that the project approach has 'tended to accelerate rather than retard the deterioration of local institutions and to undermine the foundation needed for long-term sustainability. Problems include bypassing local capacity development, creating small islands of excellence promoted under special conditions not shared by those institutions or providers outside the project environment, and reducing a push for nationally developed and owned policy strategies that signal long-term commitment to change.

This paper documents community-based water and sanitation provision initiatives that have been pioneered by People's Dialogue (PDG), in Ghana's urban areas. PDG is a community-based NGO that works in partnership with the Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor to find permanent solutions to urban poverty through the improvement of human settlements and shelter conditions.

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Urban Water and Sanitation in Ghana: How local action is making a difference

1 Introduction

The provision of water and sanitation services in poor urban areas remains a critical challenge for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals but more importantly for poverty reduction. In Ghana today, at least 50 percent of the population resides in urban areas of which only 18 percent have access to improved sanitation and 90 percent to improved drinking water sources.⁶ Although accessibility to improved drinking water sources look encouraging, only 30 percent have access to piped water which in most cases is supplied intermittently. The remaining 60 percentage depend on other improved sources such as standpipes, protected dug wells, protected springs and rainwater harvesting. Poor access to improved water and sanitation in Ghana is attributed to a number of reasons which include weak sector policies, lack of political will, weak local government capacity and inadequate financing⁷.

This paper documents the community-based water and sanitation provision initiatives pioneered by the People's Dialogue Ghana (PDG). PDG is a community-based NGO that works in partnership with the Ghana Homeless People's Federation to find permanent solutions to urban poverty in Ghana through the improvement of human settlements and shelter conditions. Since its formation in 2003, PDG has been working in slums and informal settlements in Accra, Tema, Kumasi, Takoradi and Afram Plains and seeks to extend its work to low-income communities throughout Ghana.

People's Dialogue Ghana is affiliated to Slum Dwellers International (SDI), a loose network of people's organisations from many countries that seek to organise and unite the urban poor to influence the way governments, international NGOs and multinationals discharge their obligations to the poor. For both effectiveness and relevance, people's Dialogue Ghana in partnership with the Ghana Homeless People's Federation employs the SDI model which involves the following strategies and activities:

- Building and organising poor communities
- Facilitating the savings / federation process
- Strengthening the poor communities' negotiation power
- Establishing and providing a support base
- Bringing together organised communities of the poor and local local government authorities

The paper demonstrates how community led savings, enumerations and exchange programmes, which form the core of PDG's mobilization tools, have strengthened local capacity empowering communities to lead the change process. It also identifies and discusses the principles and approaches for community mobilization through which relations are established between government and international organizations. The various stages through which communities and especially women are empowered to take up the water and sanitation challenges in their communities are clearly outlined in the paper with the view to demonstrating how women can make a change even in traditionally male-dominated societies.

⁶ WHO/UNICEF (2010). Progress on Sanitation and Drinking-Water: 2010 Update. [WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation](#). Geneva and New York WHO/UNICEF.

⁷ Larbi, E. (2006). Sanitation in Ghana. [DANIDA Water Sector Seminar - Accra, Ghana](#).

1.1 Country Profile

Ghana is a West African country located on the Gulf of Guinea, and bounded by Côte d'Ivoire to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, and Togo to the east. The Volta is its largest river (Figure 1). With a total land area of 238,537 km² (92,100 square miles) stretching 672 km north to south and 357 km east to west, Ghana is about the same size as Great Britain. Out of a total area of 23 million hectares, 13 million hectares (57 percent) of land is suitable for agriculture of which 5.3 million hectares (39 percent) is under cultivation. Ghana is the second largest producer of cocoa in the world, second only to Côte d'Ivoire. It is also the third largest producer of timber and the second largest exporter of wood and wood products in Africa.⁸

Ghana's population is estimated at about 23.9 million⁹ and is growing at an annual rate of 1.9 percent with a fertility rate of 4.4.¹⁰ It has 10 administrative regions which, in descending order of population, are: Ashanti; Greater Accra; Western; Northern; Brong Ahafo; Volta; Central; Upper East; and Upper West. The country can be divided into four broad geographical zones defined by climate and vegetation – the coastal belt, the forest zone, the transitional belt and the northern savannah zone. Most of the population is concentrated in the southern part of the country – the coastal and forest zones – (Figure 2) with the highest density occurring in urban and cocoa producing areas.

Figure 1: Map of Ghana Showing Major Towns and Water Bodies



Source: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/maps/maptemplate_gh.html

⁸ Ghana: Africa's Golden Gateway. Briefing paper on investment opportunities in Ghana. Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, 2007.

⁹ The Population Reference Bureau 2008, World Population Data Sheet

¹⁰ Ghana: Demographic and Health Survey, 2003. Ghana Statistical Service, 2004.

Ghana¹¹ has a tropical climate with temperatures ranging between 21°C and 32°C (70-90°F). The forest, transitional zones and parts of the coastal zones have two rainy seasons, from March to July and from September to October, separated by a short cool dry season in August and a relatively long dry season from mid-October to March. The northern savannah and the coastal plains of Accra, however, are relatively dry with a Sahelian climate characterized by two distinct seasons: a prolonged dry season from November to March, accompanied by severe water shortages; and a wet season from April to September. Annual rainfall in the south averages 2,030 mm, but this varies greatly throughout the country, with the heaviest rainfall in the south-west. In terms of vegetation, the northern zone is predominantly savannah, the transitional forest belts (extending to the south-west) is typical rainforest, while the coast has thicket interspersed with savannah.

Ghana has a multiparty parliamentary democracy based on a constitution. This Fourth Republican Constitution, which came into force in 1992, provides for a unitary state governed by a President (and Cabinet) and a Unicameral National Assembly. The constitution entrenches the separation of powers and offers appropriate checks and balances. The presidency has a four-year term and an incumbent can serve for a maximum of two terms. Parliament is made up of a 230-seat National Assembly with a four-year term. A decentralized government administration has been established at local level with 10 Regional Co-ordinating Councils, 126 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies which facilitate grassroots participation in the formulation and implementation of government policies and the general development of their areas.¹²

Ghana ranks 152 out of 182 countries on the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) 2009 Human Development Index. It is one of the highest ranked countries in West Africa. According to the UNDP, life expectancy at birth is 57 years and 74 percent of the population is likely to survive past the age of 40. In terms of education, the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio is 56.6 percent and the adult literacy rate is 65 percent.¹³ Primary school enrolment rose from 79.5 percent in 1999 to 92.1 percent in 2005 and for every 100 boys in primary school there are 95 girls. In terms of health, 18 percent of the population does not have access to an improved water source, about 87 percent do not have access to improved toilet facilities¹⁴, and as much as 80 percent of the population still practice traditional methods of solid waste disposal. In addition, 22 percent of children younger than five are underweight.¹⁵ The maternal mortality rate is 540 for every 100,000 live births and 47.1 percent of births are assisted by a skilled attendant.¹⁶

¹¹ Dickson, K. B. & Benneh G. (1988). A new geography of Ghana. Second edition. Longman, UK. This pioneering work provides detailed information on the geography of Ghana including its peoples, culture and natural endowments.

¹² Ghana: Africa's Golden Gateway. Briefing paper on investment opportunities in Ghana. Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, 2007.

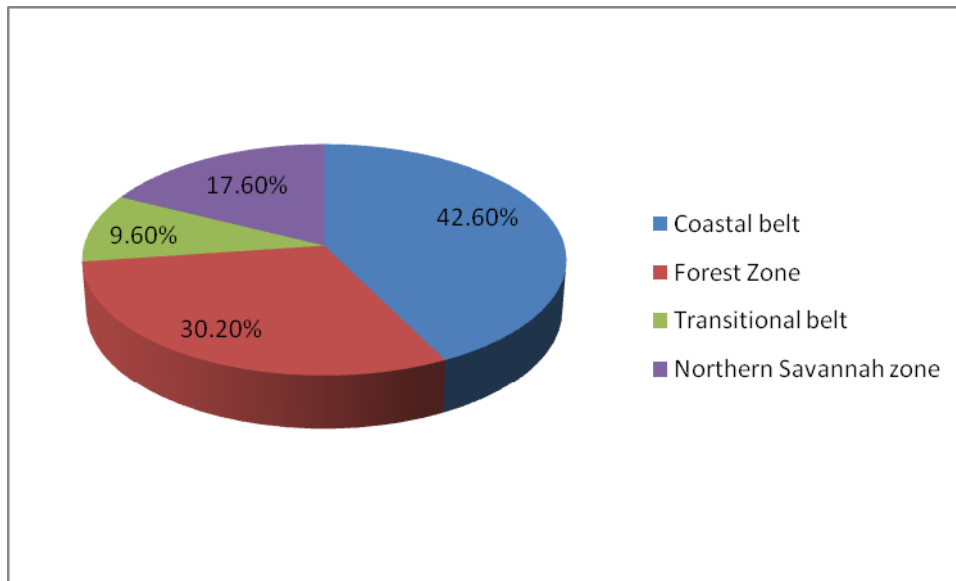
¹³ UNDP, Human Development Report, 2009.

¹⁴ WHO/UNICEF (2010). Progress on Sanitation and Drinking-Water: 2010 Update. WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation. Geneva and New York WHO/UNICEF.

¹⁵ The UK's Department for International Development (200). Assessment of Ghana's Performance for Attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

¹⁶ Ghana Statistical Service (2004). Ghana: Demographic and Health Survey, 2003.

Figure 2: Distribution of Ghana's Population by Zones



Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2002). Population and housing census 2000: Summary of Special Report on Final Results. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

Although, women constitute more than 50 percent of the population and contribute substantially to the survival of many households, traditional patriarchal views continue to limit their rights. Women's low status is reinforced by religion, marriage and cultural norms. Customary law frequently denies women the right to inherit property or land from a husband or other family members, even when children are involved. At times, this leaves women and their children destitute. In marriage, women are often regarded as property. Some parents see their daughters as a means of gaining wealth and force marriages upon them.¹⁷ Because of these conditions and women's generally low level of education, they are often left out of decision making processes even in matters which directly affect their well-being, such as household environmental management. These norms are, however, undergoing radical change especially in urban areas where women's movements are most active and where women as principal managers of the home have organized to enhance their neighbourhoods together with their male colleagues.

1.2 State of Urban Development in Ghana

Since 1950, Ghana's urban population has been rapidly increasing. Between 1950 and 2000, it grew almost threefold, from 15.4 percent to 43.5 percent¹⁸ as a result of rural-urban migration and high birth rates among urban residents. The urban population is currently estimated to be at 50 percent according to the 2010 WHO/UNICEF report – Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water. Urbanization in Ghana dates back to colonial development policies and post-colonial import-substitution strategies. The colonial administration oriented the country's economy toward international trade by specializing in cash crop production and mineral extraction, importing capital and labour to exploit these resources. This led to the development and growth of mining towns, regional administrative centres and numerous commercial towns.

In addition, port towns which linked local economies with international markets, finance and other services also grew and other interior settlements were developed to channel export

¹⁷ Amenga-Etego, R. (2003). Water privatisation in Ghana: women's rights under siege. Accra: Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC).

¹⁸ Ghana Statistical Service (2002). Ghana: Population and Housing census, 2000: Summary of Special Report on Final Results.

commodities to the port towns. As commercialization became more important and opportunities arose many people migrated to port towns and interior settlements. With commercial, financial and other services well established in the capital city and rural non-farm entrepreneurship largely destroyed, local governments encouraged the growth of these regional centres, which after political independence became major cities.

Today most urban growth in Ghana is happening outside of traditional municipal boundaries.¹⁹ Peri-urbanization is largely driven by residential developments and, sometimes by the establishment of squatter settlements, as well as by the increasing informalization of commercial activities. Peri-urbanization generates social costs in terms of low environmental quality and inadequate services. Government fails to deliver the infrastructure services necessary for providing acceptable living standards to their ever-increasing urban populations. The residents of peri-urban settlements are usually not captured in urban population statistics and yet they exert enormous pressure on services without contributing to the municipal budgets. Forming part of an invisible city, squatter settlements are generally located along flood-prone areas, railway lines and near a few industrial estates and commercial centres. Finally, government's tendency to tackle the symptoms rather than the cause of a problem exacerbates urban sprawl.²⁰

The majority of people from rural areas looking for jobs in urban centres are unable to find full-time employment or even to earn wages sufficient to support their families in both the city and in their place of origin. Thus while some rural-urban migrants have jobs, housing and access to services, the majority do not. An increasing number of urban residents are forced to seek jobs in the informal sector. Those who do not have accommodation in limited formal housing, become homeowners or tenants in informal shack settlements which are characterized by a variety of insecure tenure arrangements. The many households that cannot access the few available physical and social services, have to rely on themselves, by using relatively costly informal providers or by illegally tapping public sources. Generally, the problem in Ghanaian towns and cities is not a lack of shelter, but the overcrowded, poorly serviced and flimsy dwellings that constitute a living place. Productivity gains in urban areas are limited by congestion and environmental deterioration, the result of failed government policies for infrastructure provision and management.

Although poverty in Ghana has usually been described as a rural phenomenon, recent trends show urban overshadowing rural poverty. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2007)²¹ poverty in the Greater Accra Region, the country's most populous city, more than doubled from 5.2 percent in 1999 to 11.8 percent in 2006. Moreover, higher population densities, combined with unequal access to adequate piped water, sanitation and refuse collection, mean that a large proportion of less affluent urban populations are at risk from faecal contamination and other environmental hazards.

Ghana experienced an economic crisis in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as a result of a combination of rising world oil prices and interest rates, falling prices of export commodities and a breakdown in public sector delivery. These were coupled with pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to restructure its economy. Consequently, the government adopted structural adjustment programmes to liberalize the economy. Currency devaluations and the deregulation of trade and foreign direct investment increased the production of raw materials for export and expanded the service sector in urban areas but failed to produce the expected reductions in poverty and improved

¹⁹ Nabila, J. S. (1988). *Urbanisation in Ghana*. Accra: Population Impact Project (PIP).

²⁰ Osumanu, I. K. (2007) Environmental concerns of poor households in low-income cities: the case of the Tamale Metropolis, Ghana. *Geo Journal* 68, 343 - 355.

²¹ Highlights contained in the Pattern and Trends Poverty in Ghana: 1991 – 2006. Published by the Ghana Statistical Service, April 2007.

standards of living. This resulted in the massive informalization of urban economies and of the provision of shelter and housing. The concentration of investment in cities and trade further crippled the small farmers and manufacturers vital for improving farm-non-farm linkages at the local level and rural-urban linkages at the national level.²²

1.3 Urban Water Supply and Sanitation in Ghana: Past Trends and Current Issues

The main sources of water supply to many urban areas of Ghana are conventional treatment plants where surface water is taken from rivers. Generally, groundwater sources are limited to only a few areas in the forest zone. Historically, a major feature of these treatment plants has been their inability to produce enough water to meet growing urban demand. The Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation was not able to provide efficient and effective services to urban populations and the public became frustrated, some even losing faith in the company. The corporation faced a number of challenges. These included high rates of water loss (about 40 percent), the inability of the supply system to meet rising demand, non and low payment of bills and illegal connections leading to high operational costs and low revenue returns as well as the vandalizing of water pipes and other facilities by people who were tapping water illegally.²³

Over the past decade, attempts have been made to address the constraints to the sustainable development and management of Ghana's urban water supply and sanitation services. These interventions have mainly been targeted at streamlining the role, functions, and decision-making processes within the water and sanitation sectors. The first of these initiatives was the Urban Water Reform, which transformed the Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation in 1999 into a limited liability company – Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL), as an initial step towards the introduction of private sector operation and management of urban water supply systems. As part of the reform, the regulation of urban water has been shifted away from government to an independent body, the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC). The Commission is responsible for the protection of consumer interests, while at the same time maintaining the balance between tariff levels and investment, operation and maintenance costs of the water supply system to encourage private sector involvement. This policy also shifted responsibility for sanitation and wastewater management to impoverished local governments.

Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies which are responsible for sanitation were required to promote aggressively the construction and use of domestic latrines, and enforce by-laws on the provision of sanitation facilities by landlords. The construction of public latrines was to be restricted to public places. Simplified sewerage systems were to be introduced for poor areas with high population densities as well as technological options for the installation of KVIPs (Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pits) in poor areas with unfavourable terrain.

As part of the reform, a Water Sector Rehabilitation Project was put in place. Its purpose was to repair the country's major urban water supply systems, to restore broken down smaller urban systems, and to provide spare parts, plant and equipment to ensure sustainable operations. Subsequent to this project, a Water Sector Restructuring Programme (2003-2009) was implemented to increase urban water availability. Current attempts by the government to reform the water sector focus on public-private

²² Songsore, J. (1992). "The ERP/Structural Adjustment: Their Likely Impact on the "Distant" Rural Poor in Northern Ghana," Aryeetey, E. (Ed.), *Planning for African Growth and Development: Some Current Issues*. Proceedings of the ISSER/UNDP International Conference on Planning for Growth and Development in Accra – University of Ghana, Legon: 421-450.

²³ Osumanu, I. K. (2008). Private sector participation in urban water and sanitation provision in Ghana: experiences from the Tamale Metropolitan Area. *Environmental Management*, 42: 102 – 110.

partnerships in the form of management contract arrangements. The Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) has entered into a management contract arrangement with Aqua Vitens Rand Limited (AVRL), a private company formed by a merger between Vintex of Holland and Rand Water Company of South Africa, to operate urban water supply systems. These contracts require that tariffs be structured so that cost recovery, and therefore financial sustainability is ensured. Even though reform of the urban water system is still underway, it has not yet had much of the desired results, and it is anticipated to have a negative impact on the poor by restricting their access to clean water supplies as a result of high tariffs.²⁴

Whilst attempts are being made to improve water supply, sanitation has largely been neglected. In most instances, sanitation facilities are almost non-existent. Even in informal settlements where they have been provided by communities themselves, local authorities refuse to extend disposal services due to reasons that may relate to the legality of the settlement, overcrowding, or a lack of recognition in the city's development plans. Sanitation has received far less attention partly because of a legacy of under-investment in the sector. Services are still provided either publicly via the main city-wide sewerage system combined with informal self provision at the local level, or through various mixes of public-private partnership which can range from contracting-out delivery and franchising through to joint ventures with companies or co-production with beneficiary-communities and user groups.

Policy on sanitation has been particularly affected by the political implications of changes in modes of provision. Since the early 1990s, local assemblies have been trying to reduce dependence on public latrines and move towards household facilities, mainly through supporting families to construct private latrines in their homes. Most funding for this initiative has come from external sources. A major development in the sanitation sector was the UNDP/World Bank Water and Sanitation Programme which, in 1985, began subsidising the installation of KVIPs (see box 1 below) as the cheapest and most acceptable way to provide household level sanitation.²⁵

Box 1: UNDP/World Bank funded urban sanitation programme – Urban IV

The provision of household KVIPs under the Urban IV Phase Project was started in Kumasi and later extended to other major urban centres. It was implemented through the metropolitan and municipal authorities. The provision of these facilities was, however, demand driven. Interested households paid 50 percent of the total cost of construction, which was provided as credit to be paid over a period of 2 years at an interest rate of 10 percent, whilst the assembly absorbed the remaining 50 percent. Between 1985 and 1995, when the project came to an end, over 200,000 household KVIPs had been constructed countrywide, increasing the urban sanitation coverage from 16 percent to 54 percent.

More than 500,000 KVIPs were made available under Phase 2 but demand for the facility dropped considerably as most households could not afford the 50 percent contribution to the construction cost. Additionally, some households who benefited from the credit facility under Phase 1 were not able to fully repay their debt

Source: Ghana, Republic of (2002). *Upgrading of Low-Income Settlement: Country Assessment Report*. Accra: The World Bank, AFTU 1&2. January 2002

²⁴ Amenga-Etego, R. (2003). *Water Privatisation in Ghana: Women's Rights under Siege*. Accra: Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC).

²⁵ *Upgrading of Low Income Settlement: Country Assessment Report*. Accra: The World Bank, AFTU 1&2. January 2002.

More recently, the latest phase of the UESP (Urban Environmental Sanitation Project) has been extending Simplified Sewage Systems²⁶ (SSS) from a few middle class housing estates to the more densely populated areas with multi-occupied large housing blocks. The maintenance of these systems requires partnership between the residents' associations and the city government. But there has been very little success in the pilot areas as it is difficult to get either landlords or groups of households to agree on contributing to the cost. Landlords want the city to ease rent controls before they will invest in the project. Although rent controls in Ghana are not very effective, they are meant to ensure rent uniformity in the informal housing sector and they are used to determine taxes payable by landlords on rent. Under the SSS landlords are required to bear the cost of acquiring the KVIPs but there have been attempts to shift this burden to tenants. Unsurprisingly, these attempts have been resisted. House owners are asking local authorities to ease rent controls to allow them to finance the construction of KVIPs in their homes.

Public toilets, upon which the majority of the population are dependent, continue to be an important element of overall sanitation provision. This is despite the fact that privatization policies have turned public toilets into crucial revenue earners for beneficiaries of the city government's political patronage networks. Public pit latrines were originally provided free by city governments throughout the country. In the mid 1980s, the toilets fell under the control of local revolutionary committees; the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR), a move which was thought would bring a more dynamic approach to their management and maintenance. The CDRs were able to charge user fees as a reward for the maintenance of toilets. With the formation of the elected Metropolitan Assemblies in 1989, management of toilets was decentralized to elected unit committees. However, as with any other kind of service which provides a revenue, the management of toilets became a source of conflict between CDRs and elected Assembly Members as the former continuously blamed the latter for inefficient management and refusal to pay monthly levies to the local assemblies.²⁷ To address these problems, toilet management and maintenance was formally privatized in 1994, on the basis that only registered local companies which had the requisite capacity could be given contracts for installing and running public toilets which included a revenue sharing agreement. This reform did not, however, take public toilets out of the political arena as CDR leaders and assembly members formed companies to take on the contracts.

²⁶ Simplified sewerage is an off-site sanitation technology that removes all wastewater from the household environment. Conceptually it is the same as conventional sewerage, but with conscious efforts made to eliminate unnecessarily conservative design features and to match design standards to the local situation (<http://www.efm.leeds.ac.uk/CIVE/Sewerage/>).

²⁷ Crook, R. (2002). *Urban Service Partnerships, 'Street Level Bureaucrats' and Environmental Sanitation in Kumasi and Accra, Ghana: Coping with Organisational Change in the Public Bureaucracy*. Paper Presented at the 'Making Services Work for Poor People' World Development Report (WDR) 2003/04 Workshop held at Eynsham Hall, Oxford. 4-5 November 2002.

Figure 3: An example of the KVIP built under the World Bank/UNDP Programme



Source: Photograph by PDG

In 2006, 76 percent of households in urban areas of Ghana had access to potable water (defined as reliance on any source apart from wells or natural sources). The proportion of urban households having access to adequate toilet facilities (a flush toilet or a KVIP toilet) was 56 percent.²⁸ Table 1 shows the trends in access to potable water and adequate sanitation in urban Ghana between 1991 and 2006. The large increase in sanitation provision between 1991 and 1999 is predominantly due to increases in the use of KVIP toilets (see box 1). Accessibility to improved drinking-water in urban areas in 2008 was estimated to be at 90 percent and 18 percent for improved sanitation according to the WHO/UNICEF (2010) report – Progress on Sanitation and Drinking-water. The remarkable reduction in the number of people with access to improved sanitation in urban areas between 2006 and 2008 is not clear but may be due to the fact that most of the KVIPs built between 1991 and 2006 are no longer in operation.

Table 1: Percentage of urban households with potable water and adequate sanitation, 1991-2006

Year	Potable water	Adequate sanitation
1991/92	68	16
1998/99	69	54
2005/2006	76	56

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2007). Pattern and Trends of Poverty in Ghana, 1991 – 2006. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service, pp. 24 & 25

Of concern is that those likely to be deprived of improved water and safe sanitation are poor and vulnerable groups living in neglected communities – those least able to cope with it. As a result new approaches using community based micro-enterprises and community based joint ventures have emerged to provide water and sanitation services for deprived urban

²⁸ Ghana Statistical Service (2007). Pattern and Trends of Poverty in Ghana, 1991 – 2006. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

communities. Many NGOs and CBOs are currently involved in several initiatives to improve urban water and sanitation provision in the country. Notable amongst these are WaterAid, Action Aid, Christian Aid and Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC). Several low-income urban dwellers have gained access to improved water supply and sanitation through these organisations' schemes.

Today, there are also many other initiatives to improve urban water and sanitation provision in Ghana. However, the role of the informal sector is crucial. Residents of deprived urban communities depend on private water vendors and toilet operators. On the negative side, the provision of water by vendors is expensive, irrespective of whether they obtain water from Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) or tanker supplies. Generally households served by vendors pay higher charges for water than those directly connected to the piped system. Beyond price considerations, water from vendors can be contaminated leading to health problems.²⁹ The advantages are that it provides a valuable service for communities with no access to piped water. It saves a lot of time compared to fetching water from other sources. It also creates jobs and the simple technologies used can be easily maintained at the local level.

Although the government of Ghana has incorporated the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in its Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS),³⁰ it is highly unlikely that the country will come close to reaching these targets. According to the World Bank's Country Assessment Report,³¹ to upgrade basic infrastructure in the urban water and sanitation sectors would require an investment of approximately US\$75 million at today's costs, about US\$80 per person. This situation presents daunting challenges to achieving the MDGs for a country like Ghana. The importance of interventions by civil society, NGOs and CBOs to complement government's efforts to increase access to water and sanitation services in urban areas cannot therefore be over emphasized. Local action to improve urban water and sanitation provision is vital.

2 Where People's Dialogue Ghana works: Community Water and Sanitation Profiles

The approach for this study involved detailed and extensive discussions and interviews with representatives from the communities where the People's Dialogue on Human Settlements (PDG) operates, with members of the Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor (GHAFUP) and with government department officials, e.g. metropolitan/municipal assemblies and the water company. Background information was also obtained by an extensive study of PDG's documents and summaries from the routine community enumeration exercises.

After field trips to the areas where PDG works and interviews with the relevant water and sanitation providers, the team identified three communities for the final stages of this study. These communities are Old Fadama and Sukura, both located in the Accra Metropolitan Area, and New Takoradi in the Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Area (SAEMA) in the Western Region. The diverse nature of water and sanitation provision in these three communities represents the water and sanitation situation in low-income urban areas of Ghana. Moreover, PDG is implementing projects in Old Fadama and New Takoradi and would like to replicate this work in Sukura. Brief profiles for Old Fadama and New Takoradi are presented in the table below. The data was obtained from community-led enumeration surveys facilitated by PDG. Similar information for Sukura is currently not available, but PDG

²⁹ WHO (2004). Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality. Geneva, WHO. 1.

³⁰ National Development Planning Commission, Ghana (2006). *Ghana: Promoting Growth, Reducing Poverty – Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II), 2006 – 2009*, Accra.

³¹ Upgrading of Low Income Settlement: Country Assessment Report. Accra: The World Bank, AFTU 1&2. January 2002.

plans to undertake a detailed settlement profile in the future.

Table 2: Summary of water and sanitation facilities in 2 Federation Communities

Community	Population	Water Points	Commercial Toilets	Bath Stalls
Old Fadama	35,000	135	347	616
New Takoradi	15,000	79	7	112

2.1 Old Fadama

Old Fadama³² was founded in the early 80s. It is derogatively called ‘Sodom and Gomorrah’ and is undoubtedly Ghana’s largest squatter settlement located in the heart of the capital city, Accra. The settlement is now home to over 53,000 people. Residents migrated predominantly from northern Ghana seeking safety and security and/or employment and other economic opportunities (PDG/GHAFUP, Settlement Profile, 2006). Because it is an informal settlement, it lacks legal status and recognition and is therefore not on the city’s planning and development agenda. Access to basic services like electricity, water and toilet services are provided by residents themselves. However their attitude towards waste management is poor, as they have other pressing priorities such as land tenure and meeting basic human needs.

Residents of Old Fadama have been living under the constant threat of forced eviction since 2002, when the local authority issued an eviction order to the residents with no provision for alternative land or housing. A failed attempt by the community, with support from a local NGO, to seek a court restraining order to prevent local authorities from carrying out the planned eviction resulted in the need to explore a more feasible means of engagement. The community therefore formed a Federation (now known as Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor, GHAFUP), supported by People’s Dialogue Ghana (PDG), to engage and negotiate with local authorities in the hope of preventing such evictions.

Three years later, PDG and GHAFUP succeeded in establishing a formal engagement between Federation members and the government/local authorities. As a result, an agreement was reached to stall the eviction, thereby marking the beginning of a shift from forced eviction to dialogue, engagement and partnerships.

There is now a government plan to relocate residents of Old Fadama under a planned Adjin Kotoku New Town Development Project. This relocation is collaboration between the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment, Tourism and Diaspora Relations, and the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing and Relevant Departments and Agencies.

PDG and GHAFUP are members of the relocation project’s Implementation Task Force and have been commissioned to collect socio-economic and physical base data of both the Old Fadama area in Accra (one of the communities to be relocated) and of Adjin Kotoku. With support from Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI), a settlement profile has been completed. Other activities of PDG and the Federation in Old Fadama towards the implementation of the relocation project include:

- Mobilising the people in the settlement and preparing them for the relocation project.

³² A video of Old Fadama and the work of PDG can be accessed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G98teplqUFw>

- Facilitating engagement and acting as the community ‘interface’ between the government and people of the Old Fadama settlement to discuss issues on the relocation project.
- Conducting community mapping and enumeration exercises in Old Fadama and producing a detailed report on the settlement.
- Supporting the smooth re-establishment of the Old Fadama community in the resettlement area of Adjin Kotoku.

Water Supply

Households do not have direct access to piped water. Informal vendors are the sole providers and they get their supplies from Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL). When GWCL is short of water, a few vendors obtain supplies from private tanker operators who store water in concrete ponds. All water vendors also operate bathroom services with some commercial operators boiling water in aluminium cans for sale, especially during the harmattan season.³³

A major constraint to water vendors, and indeed, the whole community is insecure tenure as the settlement is considered illegal and faces the constant threat of eviction by city authorities. Information gathered from residents indicates that the land on which the whole community is located was a farm belonging to the father of a man called Billy who gave this land to people to settle on. This was done with the understanding that the arrangement was temporary, since government could expel the settlers at any moment. No documentation was provided on the land acquisition deals. A few vendors have acquired land by buying it from residents who left for their home towns.

Vendors get piped connections by contacting GWCL directly without the involvement of any intermediaries. Estimates for the connection are given by the water company and the vendors are connected after payments have been made. Currently, the connection fee is US\$450 and all other costs are borne by the vendors. Meters are installed to determine monthly bills which range from US\$84.00 to US\$150.00. A 34 litre bucket of water sells at US\$0.07, but when used for bathing in the vendor’s bathroom, the same quantity costs US\$0.10. However, if vendors obtain supplies from tanker operators, they sell same quantity for US\$0.15. Users understand the reasons for these price differences as vendors only buy water from more expensive tanker operators in times of severe shortages from piped sources. Water for ablution and other small containers do not attract any charge. However, using several small containers to fetch water is not allowed. Vended water is the only source in the community making the situation critical for the very poor.

Vendors raise money to start their businesses through savings from activities such as farming, driving, food vending, etc. and, in a few instances, through loans (interest free) from relatives and friends. Some water vendors belong to the Ghana Homeless People’s Federation (GHPF) so they benefit from PDG’s micro-credit facility. Respondents stated that they preferred micro-credit to bank credit because the banks charge higher interest rates. Generally vendors do not attempt to secure bank credit.

The major operational cost for vendors is the monthly bill from GWCL. Other costs include caretakers (or sellers), cleaners and plumbers. These workers are paid a monthly wage of US\$60.00 each and a daily feeding allowance of US\$1.00 per person. A few vendors also depend on free family labour.

³³ The harmattan season falls between November and February each year which is also the dry season in Ghana. The season is characterized by low temperatures, especially in the night and early morning.

According to water vendors, the major constraints to their operations are:

- ◆ Irregular water supply.
- ◆ Absence of drains for effective sullage disposal.
- ◆ Frequent outbreaks of fire leading to the destruction of pipelines as people try to control the spread of the fire.
- ◆ Absence of access roads for tankers to supply water.
- ◆ Low pressure as a result of congestion on the main water supply pipeline.
- ◆ Illegal disconnection of pipes by drivers who use the water to wash their vehicles.

Sanitation

The only toilet facilities in this community have been constructed and are operated by individuals on commercial basis. They are generally bucket latrines, with a few WCs and KVIPs. Many toilet operators report that they started their business in response to large scale outdoor defecation as there were no facilities. Outdoor defecation is still very pronounced, especially along the banks of the Korle Lagoon. This practice predominates because of the cost involved in using commercial toilets. Some residents also feel that toilets are not clean and have many house flies, a nuisance to users. There are virtually no sewage drains in the community.

The conventional means of disposing of faecal material in Old Fadama was to dump it into the Korle Lagoon until the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) issued an order prohibiting the practice. Now, some operators dig pits to dispose of the waste while others defy the order and continue to deposit waste into the lagoon.

A user fee of US\$0.07 is paid by people attending the toilet and taking paper from operators. US\$0.05 is charged to those who have their own paper. The cost components are: US\$35.00 a month for the manual emptying of buckets; US\$30.00 a month for emptying buckets into the lagoon; and US\$50.00 each time for the use of a private cesspit emptier. Other costs include: cleaners at US\$60.00 a month plus a daily feeding allowance of US\$1.00; and caretakers at US\$30.00 a month plus a daily feeding allowance of US\$1.00. Some toilet operators also use family labour.

Figure 4: A Typical Toilet in Low-income areas of Ghana



Source: Photograph by PDG

Land tenure arrangements and access to investment capital for toilet operators is the same as that of water vendors. However, unlike water vendors who occasionally benefit from micro-credit, no toilet operator has ever tried accessing credit. The major problems facing

toilet operators are the inability to empty pits and buckets using cesspit emptier because of the lack of access roads and flooding in the toilet areas caused by the Korle Lagoon Restoration Project.

Main Actors in Water Supply and Sanitation Provision

People's Dialogue Ghana worked closely with a number of individuals and organizations in Old Fadama in the collection of information for this paper. These included:

- i. Selected informal water vendors and toilet operators.
- ii. The Association of Water Vendors in Old Fadama.
- iii. Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor (GHAFUP).
- iv. Accra Metropolitan Authority (AMA).
- v. Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL).

2.2 Sukura

The name Sukura comes from the Arabic word 'Shukran', which means 'thank you'. The settlement was founded in 1950 by a Frafra man from northern Ghana, called Atia. Oral tradition has it that the then Sempe chief gave Atia this land. The settlement is made up of Muslim migrants mainly from northern Ghana and other parts of West Africa. The 2000 National Population and Housing Census, (Ghana Statistical Service, 2005), shows that Sukura has 30,197 residents of which 15,177 are male and 15,020 female. It is a settler community where over 60 percent of landlords do not have legal title. Despite Sukura being described by city authorities as a formal settlement, there is very little investment in infrastructure especially for water and sanitation. Although 46 percent of households have pipe connections, less than 20 percent of these are functional, meaning that over 80 percent of households get water through other means like vendors. In terms of sanitation, most of the residents appear to be more concerned about the lack of toilets even though there is a clear lack of solid waste and wastewater management in the area.

Water Supply Situation in Sukura

There are two sources of household water supply in Sukura:

- i. Private stand pipes, which provide an irregular supply. Water flows once a week and only at midnight or early dawn. Most households dependent on stand pipes supplement their water needs through water vendors.
- ii. Informal water vendors: These are generally individuals who obtain a water connection from the GWCL to meet domestic needs (cooking, washing, drinking, etc.) but eventually begin to sell water. They get connected to the GWCL pipe system through agents/intermediaries. In general, people start by selling water from stand pipes and later construct or acquire ponds or tanks for water storage.

Water vending in this community appears to be very lucrative. The operational costs are monthly water bills which average US\$150.00 and are calculated using a meter system and a caretaker's wage of US\$12.00 per month. Investment capital for establishing a water selling business is mainly saved by carrying out income generating activities such as food selling, petty trading and other informal activities. Vendors generally do not benefit from any credit facilities, but they are willing to accept credit if the terms of repayment are flexible.

A 34 litre bucket of water is sold at US\$0.03 while the shower service is charged at US\$0.07. The difference in cost when compared to Old Fadama comes from the lower demand for water. In Sukura some households have private connections and only buy water from vendors when their water is cut off but in Old Fadama vended water is the only source

available for all households. Vendors meet occasionally to review prices, especially when the GWCL increases water tariffs. There are, however, individual price variations when the taps are closed, and most vendors begin to ration water supply until the GWCL resumes water supply. There are instances when the GWCL turns off water for a longer period of say 1-2 weeks, and in exceptional instances for a month. When this happens, the water vendors who can afford to resort to buying from water tankers, whose prices are higher. This necessarily increases the price of water for consumers. In these cases, prices are solely determined by individuals without any recourse to rules or conventions. Constraints reported by water vendors include over billing, intermittent water supply and unscheduled water cuts.

Sanitation in Sukura

Three types of toilet facilities are available in this community.

1. Private in-house toilets, mostly VIPs (ventilated improved pits), provided by the Accra Metropolitan Authority (AMA) based on a 50-50 cost sharing arrangement. But due to the high cost involved, only a few (24 percent) households could afford the 50 percent contribution to the total cost of construction.
2. Two AMA franchised pit latrines. These facilities are not well maintained and are generally on the smelly side and not surprisingly community members tend not to use them. Users pay a charge of US\$0.07 per adult and US\$0.04 per child on each visit. These facilities were constructed by AMA about 5 years ago and after 2 years of operation they were to be handed over to the community to manage under a build, operate and transfer (BOT) arrangement. However, after this 2 year period AMA franchised them to local individuals with strong political affiliations to the ruling government rather than to the community. These owners employ caretakers and cleaners and are also responsible for emptying the pits as well as maintaining the facilities. The toilets are swept once a day and the pits are emptied once a month.
3. Commercial toilets constructed and operated by private individuals. These are made up of WCs and VIPs. They charge user fees of between US\$0.07 and US\$0.10 per use. Most community members depend on these facilities. The toilets are generally owned by local businessmen, who also have similar facilities in other communities in Accra. The lands on which the toilets are located were legally acquired for this purpose and construction was financed by money obtained from previous operations elsewhere in the city. Such facilities are cleaned 4 or more times in a day and the pits emptied once every 2 weeks. The facilities are clean with little or no stench. The major challenge to operations is the irregular flow of water to flush toilets. To address this an operator in Zaminama Lane, a suburb of the community, has dug a well and fitted it with an electric pump to supply water for his business, but because he charges a slightly higher fee (US\$0.10) than the other operators, patronage of his facility is quite low.

Main Actors in Water Supply and Sanitation Provision

The stakeholders identified in the Sukura community are:

- i. Private water vendors and toilet operators
- ii. Operators of the AMA franchised toilets
- iii. Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA)
- iv. Community Network Initiatives (ComNet), a local NGO
- v. Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL)

ComNet is a local organisation in Sukura which was formed about 7 years ago with 10 members as the United Welfare Youth (UWY) group to take care of the welfare of its members. As a social association, UWY concerned itself with members' marriages, sicknesses and funerals. Two years ago, it registered as a local NGO under the name ComNet and it now has over 50 members including some community opinion leaders. ComNet's activities cover the following areas:

- i. Public education on efficient use of water to reduce tariffs
- ii. Hygiene education
- iii. Championing the campaign against water privatisation
- iv. HIV/AIDS campaigning

ComNet works in partnership with organizations such as Christian Aid, ISODEC and ActionAid. However, ComNet's activities are largely funded by member contributions as each member pays monthly dues of US\$1.00.

2.3 New Takoradi

New Takoradi is a coastal community located to the east of the Takoradi Harbour, the second biggest seaport in Ghana. The community was relocated to its current site, when the Takoradi Harbour was constructed in the early 1920's. The main economic activity is fishing, employing about 90 percent of the population. Unfortunately, fishing is a seasonal activity, which means that almost the entire population is unemployed during the lean season. An enumeration exercise conducted by PDG and the Ghana Urban Poor Federation in 2006 puts the population of New Takoradi at about 27,564 with approximately 60 percent being male.

Historically, the settlers in New Takoradi migrated from Techiman in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. They began their journey following Nana Yaw Nketsiah I in the 15th century entering the western side of the Gold Coast to Nzimaland under the leadership of Kwaku Aka. They first settled at Apollonian, Princes Town, Adiewaso and finally at the Ahanta traditional area. The current Takoradi settlement was initially called Toworase, meaning a big tree where people sat to take decisions. With the arrival of the Europeans, it was changed to Takoradi due to the difficulties in pronouncing the name.

New Takoradi covers a land area of about 53.95 sq. miles or 34,571.25 acres. It is bounded on the south by the Atlantic Ocean, on the west by Apowa stool land (traditional land), on the East by Sekondi Stool land and North by Odum Dominase.

Water Supply in New Takoradi

Water supply in this community is dominated by private vendors who store water in polytanks. A few households, who have domestic pipe connections, also sell water directly from the stand pipes to raise money to pay their bills. The Member of Parliament (MP) for the area, Mrs Gladys Asmah, provided a water storage tank fitted with a pump to supply water for the community, but this facility has not been operational since 2004. Additionally, the Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor (GHAFUP) has acquired a pipe connection and a water storage container with support from the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment (MLGRDE), through the Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly (SAEMA) and PDG. This water supply is operated on commercial basis by the Federation.

Water vendors initially acquired pipe connections for their own private use. They explained that their children used to walk as far as 12km out of the community to obtain water, and some of them were often knocked down by vehicles in the process, so they did everything

within their means to get their own pipe connection. The long distances to the water sources also led to children reporting late to school and mothers spending much of their time fetching water at the expense of their businesses and domestic chores. Later other households who could not obtain their own pipes forced the households with private connections to start selling water. In the beginning, water was sold directly from the taps but later water storage containers were acquired to even out the irregular flow of water.

Vendors, who operate within or very close to their homes, have space on family lands for their operations. They connect to the public water supply network by contacting GWCL directly and paying the appropriate fees. They pay monthly bills of between US\$75.00 and US\$150.00 through the metered billing system. Water is sold to the public at US\$0.05 per 34 litre bucket, but in times of severe shortages when vendors purchase water from tanker operators, the same quantity sells for US\$0.07. Vendors complain that sometimes they do not cover their operational costs due to the irregular flow of water as well as the large quantities of water used by family members who do not pay. Personal savings and, in a few instances, loans from friends and relatives are the only sources of capital for investment in the water vending business. Water sellers attribute this to high interest rates, lack of collateral and lack of adequate knowledge about loan procedures as the main obstacles to obtaining bank loans. Many vendors claim that they would be willing to accept credit on flexible terms of repayment to improve their operations.

High water bills, irregular water supply (sometimes water flows only once in 2 weeks) and discrimination in water distribution in favour of rich urban communities are some of the challenges identified by vendors in their business.

In March 2006, GHAFUP made a proposal to the Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly (SAEMA) for water to be provided to New Takoradi to ease the water supply problems the community was facing. SAEMA responded positively by providing a polytank, estimated at US\$800. PDG also contributed by constructing the concrete stand and getting the pipe connection at a total cost of US\$1,000.

The facility is managed by a four-member management committee with the GHAFUP volunteers acting as caretakers. Obtaining water from this facility is open to everyone in the community at the same price as is available from other sources. Between March 2006 and April 2007, total profit from this facility amounted to US\$370. GHAFUP members, however, expressed concerns about corruption on the part of caretakers. They complained that caretakers do not correctly report the amounts they collect daily from the sale of water. Additionally, caretakers' families fetch water from the facility without paying.

Sanitation

Public latrines, bucket latrines and WCs, are the main kinds of toilet in this community. There are a total of 7 public toilets in New Takoradi. These are managed under 2 different systems, by the community and by Joint Action for Environment and Development (JAFED). Open defecation on the beaches is also practiced by a substantial number of people, especially children.

Community Managed Public Toilets

There are 6 toilets in all, 5 bucket latrines and 1 WC. These facilities were managed by the Metropolitan Assembly but with decentralization and privatization in 1994/95 they were handed over to Unit Committee members. Later because of the closure of one toilet due to numerous challenges, the Assembly franchised them out and private individuals bought them through an open tender process. Successful bidders pay US\$10.00 a year for each facility and were given a management contract period of 3 years. However, ownership and

management of these facilities is still communally oriented. Toilet owners are sometimes required to contribute some of their proceeds towards community activities such as providing lamps for street lights, providing refreshment after community organized work, etc.

The maintenance of facilities, cleaning, emptying buckets, etc., is the responsibility of the franchise owners, who employ their own cleaners and caretakers. A user fee of US\$0.04 is paid by people visiting these toilets on each occasion. Caretakers reported that community members do not patronize these facilities as most of them use the beach. Women are the only group who cannot defecate on the beaches and therefore often visit these facilities.

The Joint Action for Environment and Development (JAFED) Toilets

JAFED is an environmental action group made up of the Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly, EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), NCCE (National Commission for Civic Education), Friends of the Earth and representatives of Chiefs and Clan Heads. This organization started as a CBO, formed by opinion leaders in collaboration with Friends of the Earth. As a result of its success, SNV (Stitching Netherlands Vrijwilligers), an international NGO based in the Netherlands, provided support to the organization which led to the formation of JAFED.

JAFED initiated the construction of a communal latrine with the support of SNV³⁴, GHACEM (Ghana cement company) Ltd and timber companies in the region (see Figure 5 below). The facility is managed by local JAFED executives, who have employed a caretaker and a cleaner. The user fee is US\$0.04. The caretaker deposits the money she collects in a bank on a weekly basis. Currently proceeds from the JAFED toilet are being used to build a new toilet facility in the community with the support of GHACEM.

JAFED and SNV also initiated the construction of low cost in-house VIPs for households. Initially, 12 household toilets were constructed free of charge for chiefs, assemblymen and some opinion leaders. The purpose was to determine the cost of construction, efficiency and community acceptance. This was to be followed by a cost sharing arrangement with households contributing 50 percent of the construction cost of their own toilets, to be paid in monthly instalments for a maximum period of 15 years. However, the project was halted as many households could not afford the 50 percent cost.³⁵ Construction itself was also technically problematic because of the high water table.

³⁵ This is certainly not an issue of affordability but one of reluctance. As it has always been the case in urban Ghana, communities which are situated along the beach are very reluctant to invest in toilet construction since the beaches always offer a no cost alternative.

Figure 5: A JAFED Communal Toilet under Construction in Takoradi



Source: Photograph by Martin Mulenga

JAFED intends to include drainage and solid waste collection in its initiatives. In recent times, however, the organization's activities have slowed down. Even the new communal toilet being constructed has not progressed as expected. JAFED members blame the agreement and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between JAFED and SAEMA, which allows JAFED to fund itself independently of the Metropolitan Assembly. Consequently, JAFED has not been able to attract enough funds for its activities.

Main Actors in Water Supply and Sanitation Provision

The stakeholders identified in New Takoradi are:

- i. Selected water vendors.
- ii. Franchised toilet owners.
- iii. Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor (GHAFUP)
- iv. Joint Action for Environment and Development (JAFED).
- v. Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly (SAEMA).
- vi. Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL).

3 People's Dialogue Ghana: Local Initiatives to Improve Water and Sanitation

3.1 People's Dialogue, Ghana (PDG): Origins, Principles and Processes

This section presents a brief profile of PDG and its work with low-income settlement dwellers. The organization is an affiliate of Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI), a network of support organizations working with community-based social movements to address settlement challenges across the developing world, especially in the areas of land, housing and infrastructure. As an affiliate of the network, PDG's approach is strictly in line with the SDI 'Rituals' approach. SDI rituals are established practices or activities associated with a specific event that have been adapted by SDI affiliates and replicated and

institutionalised as a strategy.³⁶

People's Dialogue on Human Settlements, otherwise known as People's Dialogue, Ghana (PDG) was established in December 2003, to find alternatives to forced evictions and to establish well organized and recognized federations of the urban poor in deprived areas of Ghana. Following success stories in other low-income developing countries, PDG also worked with federations in Ghana to promote the socio-economic development of people living in slums and informal settlements through improvements in housing, shelter and infrastructure provision. Supporting community-led initiatives are critical to its delivery processes.

PDG supported the formation of the Ghana Homeless People's Federation (GHPF) made up of members from Ghana's largest squatter settlement, Old Fadama. Over time, this Federation has expanded to several slum communities in Ghana's major urban centres (Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi and Tema). By December, 2003, the Federation had registered a total membership of over 7,000 families in 83 communities in six out of the ten regions of Ghana.

This membership drive went beyond the Ghana Homeless People's Federation to include two other important grassroots organizations, namely the Kayayo Youth Association and the Ghana Railway Dwellers Association. The incorporation of the latter two organizations led to the adoption of a more inclusive and embracing name as the Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor (GHAFUP). The GHAFUP (henceforth referred to as the Federation) now enjoys national visibility with a track record of partnerships, dialogue and negotiation to influence public policy and decision making. With financial and technical support from PDG, the Federation has achieved remarkable success in pioneering community-led innovative practices on shelter improvements and housing development.

Today, PDG and the Federation have extended their activities to include 4 more low-income communities in two cities. In these communities, PDG has partnered with Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) International to implement the Slum Communities Achieving Liveable Environments with Urban Partners programme (SCALE UP). This programme supports low-income communities and house/structure owners in Accra and Takoradi to improve infrastructure especially accommodation, water and waste management. Additionally, PDG is working with WaterAid, Ghana and UN Habitat to implement the Water for African Cities (WAC) project in Sabon Zongo, a low-income community in Ghana. The WAC project is formulating and using an integrated approach to build effective institutional frameworks and establish financing mechanisms that rely on households' and communities' resources to improve neighbourhood services. The objective is to increase sustainable access to good quality drinking water and improved sanitation facilities and services in poor urban communities in Accra. The project also seeks to empower communities to effectively contribute to development process in their areas.

A Unique Approach to Working with the Community

The Federation bases its work on a set of principles and approaches otherwise referred to as federation rituals. These rituals are drawn from the experiences of the network of shack/slum dwellers which spans over 24 countries. They are used to facilitate and broker agreements with government and city authorities as well as landowners and landlords by developing different land sharing arrangements and alternatives to forced evictions. Federation members are supported and encouraged to use their savings to invest in land. They are trained in the relevant skills and dialogue and negotiation techniques necessary for

³⁶ Patel, S., Burra, S., & D'Cruz, C. (2001). Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI)—foundations to treetops. *Environment and Urbanisation*, 13(2), pp45-59.

dealing with government, city authorities and property owners to develop secure tenure agreements. Additionally, PDG negotiates with financial institutions on behalf of the Federation to acquire loans at concessionary rates for housing infrastructure development and economic empowerment.

Globally, Federation groups and support organisations have a vision of an alternative world. This vision is backed up by practice, customs and approach. The tools used are simple enumerations, savings groups and community meetings. How can these simple tools bring about change? They achieve this by helping to develop a new culture of care and nurturing. For example, savings programmes build a strong culture of accountability and openness because every week community members meet to reconcile their accounts. And when enumerations are carried out this information is shared with the community for analysis. By collecting savings on a regular basis Federation members move from structure-to-structure collecting money, talking to residents, gathering information, identifying problems and seeing how as a community they can begin to solve problems.

For example, using the community's different resources the Federation and PDG are able to identify and address the problem of the woman who does not have food in her house for that day. Because of her savings, she is able to say: 'Today I was not able to get work, can you give me a bit from my savings, so I can buy food? And if I don't have a bit from my savings, can this community give me a bit of money for today so I can put food on my table?' This approach develops communities of caring and sharing, from the ground up.

Another strength of the Shack Dwellers International (the international network of which the Ghana Federation is a member) movement is the development of strong organizations at every level, at the community level, at the national level and at the international level. Although support organizations are important for mobilizing both technical and financial resources, the management and control of these resources rests within the Federations. Political opportunities are also important and here again support organizations help to identify and utilise the opportunities that exist by opening doors that would otherwise remain closed.

3.2 Going to Scale

A number of small scale innovative and successful approaches have been used to improve living conditions for low-income urban dwellers. But for wide spread change these must be scaled-up and sustained. PDG builds on and fosters community-led initiatives to meet the basic housing needs of the urban poor. So far, the approach has had significant impact not only in terms of generating household and community demand for housing and related facilities but also in terms of fostering individual behaviour which facilitates access to services and promotes the development of a self-sustaining demand and supply mechanism. This section outlines the various strategies that PDG has used to scale-up its projects over the years.

Initially, PDG facilitated the establishment of the Ghana Homeless People's Federation (GHPF) in the country's largest informal settlement, Old Fadama. The goal of the GHPF was principally to mobilize residents to engage government and city authorities in exploring alternatives for resolving an eviction notice that was served on the residents in the late nineties. Community-driven mobilization tools and strategies were developed to harness their energies and resources, processes for dialogue and negotiation were instituted between the city authorities, government and residents. Eventually, the Federation succeeded in influencing a shift of government policy from forced evictions to relocation. In 2005, after the World Urban Forum in Vancouver, Canada, a platform was created for squatters, government and city authorities to meet and plan the relocation project. In addition to tenure security, over the years the Federation has been engaged in other urban

development challenges such as water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS, women's economic empowerment, human rights and others.

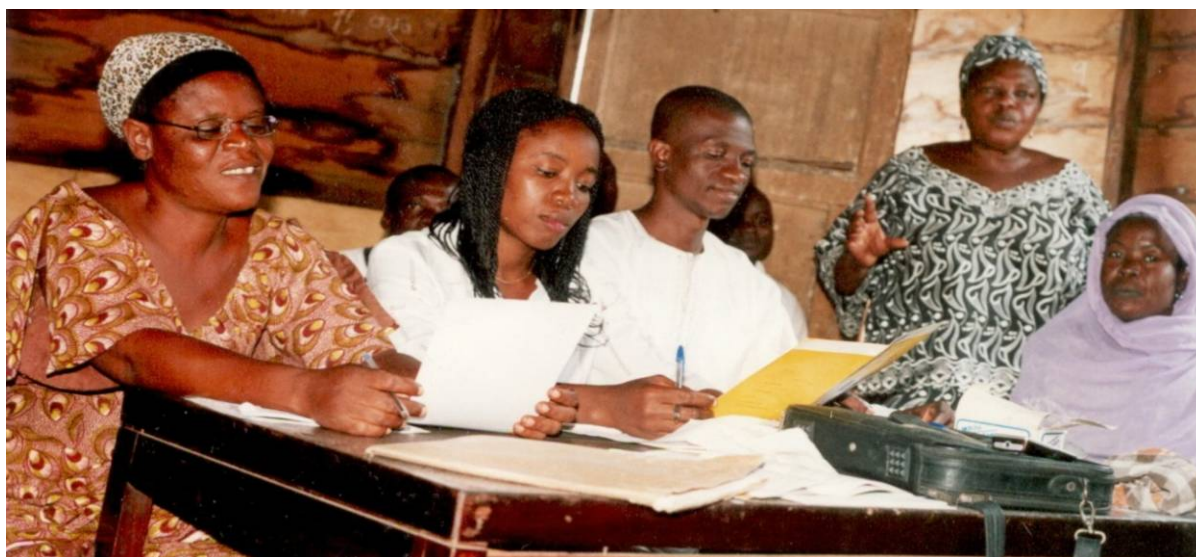
This remarkable achievement in Old Fadama is an inspiration to other settlements which face similar challenges of tenure insecurity and lack of access to basic infrastructure and services. The interest in and the demand for new Federation groups in Ghana's slums and informal settlements were strengthened by the achievements in Old Fadama. Over time, the Federation has expanded to several other slum and squatter communities in Ghana's urban centres, and by December 2009, the Federation had established active groups and functional offices in Ghana's five major urban centres, Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, Takoradi and Tema.

In terms of scale, the Ghana Federation currently has over 8,500 family members belonging to about 95 savings groups and covering seven out of the ten administrative regions of Ghana. The growth in size and nature of the homeless people's federation in Ghana required a change in name to the Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor (GHAFUP), which has been duly registered as a network of community-based organizations (CBOs) engaged in savings for housing development and settlement improvement. The Federation now has national visibility and is recognised by urban state and non-state actors.

Exchange programmes are a crucial tool for scaling up the Federation's activities. Just as world leaders visit other countries to exchange political strategies or business men and women meet to share frustrations and concerns, residents of poor communities should have the opportunity to do the same. Where one development strategy works in a particular community, it is evaluated, adapted and applied to other struggling communities. The Federation's most important tool for learning is the direct exchange of information, experience and skills between the urban poor people themselves. Within the last 12 months, new water projects have been initiated in Old Fadama and in New Takoradi. The project in New Takoradi is implemented in collaboration with the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL), in Old Fadama projects are wholly community-driven and financed. Taking lessons from these experiences, the Federation in the Abotoase community in the Volta Region of Ghana has also initiated a project to develop a small town water system to benefit over 6,000 people.

In December 2008, an exchange programme involving Federation members from across the country was held in Accra. They met to review progress and plan the coming year. Eight savings groups and communities requested financial assistance to implement various forms of water and sanitation projects. It is worth mentioning, however, that going to scale on a learning agenda extends beyond water and sanitation to include micro credit and income generation, health and HIV/AIDS, capacity building on land, housing and inheritance rights, land acquisition and housing development.

Figure 6: Federation Members Meeting to Discuss their Records and to Share Ideas



Source: Photograph by PDG

Community exchange activities take place at the city level, between cities, across countries and across regions. Today, homeless Federation members from communities from across Ghana have, under the umbrella of the slum dwellers network, participated in over 35 international exchange programmes, conferences and workshops. Locally, not less than 180 exchange programmes have been organized for federations. Additionally, the Ghana Federation has hosted over 23 international exchange programmes. These do not only involve the urban poor but also professionals and academics working on urban poverty. Some of these programmes take the form of group meetings, community durbars and technical exchanges on the construction of infrastructure as well meeting with professional, government and city authorities.

Women's participation in these exchanges is a critical element of the learning process. Sixty percent or more of those who go on these exchanges are poor women. Exchanges also present participants with a wide range of options to choose from and negotiate for in meeting community goals, and links with other groups ensure that individual Federations are not left alone in their struggles. The end result is the strengthened capacity of each community to plan, manage and execute their own development agenda. See Box 2 below which provides further insight into the SDI exchange programmes.

Figure 7: Federation Members Meeting their Counterparts from India, Kenya and South Africa



Source: Photograph by PDG

Box 2: SDI Exchange Programmes

When professionals enter settlements of urban poverty to teach, the focus of learning is often taken away from the community. Even the most participatory approaches generally seek to ensure the acquiescence of the group to the ideas suggested by the "experts." As a result, communities are unable to advance their own strategies to address their own problems, and very often professionals provide solutions that are just too expensive and inappropriate to the needs on the ground.

Horizontal exchange, then, is the primary learning strategy of SDI. Participants within the savings networks learn best from each other - when one savings group has initiated a successful income-generating project or has replanned a settlement or has built a toilet block, SDI enables groups to come together and learn from intra-network achievements. The community exchange process builds upon the logic of 'doing is knowing' and helps to develop a collective vision. As savers travel from Khayelitsha to Greenpoint or Nairobi to Colombo, the network is unified and strengthened - not only at a street level but between towns, regions and provinces, and nation-states. In this way, locally appropriate ideas get transferred into the global milieu through dialogue amongst slum dweller partners.

Community-to-community exchanges allow participants to see themselves and their peers as experts, thereby breaking isolation to create a unified voice of the urban poor, reclaiming sites of knowledge that have frequently been co-opted by professionals, and strengthening solidarity to increase critical mass. The pool of knowledge generated through exchange programmes becomes a collective asset of the SDI network - so that when slum dwellers meet with external actors to debate development policies, they can draw from international examples, forcing government and other stakeholders to listen.

Cont over

One of the most powerful aspects of exchange then, is when government ministers travel with SDI partners to learn about development from another context. As former South African Housing Minister Lindiwe Sisulu commented on her trip to Thailand: "I was exposed to a unique programme that forms partnerships between communities, government, and other stakeholders in identifying and developing suitable land for housing.

Source: <http://www.sdinet.org/ritual/exchanges/> [Accessed: 27/04/2010]

3.3 Financing Water and Sanitation Projects

Financing and cost recovery are key issues for sustainable water and sanitation schemes. Considering the importance of household and community action and investment in improving water and sanitation, there is a need to develop appropriate finance mechanisms. The impact of better local financial systems on improving the provision for water and sanitation may be direct - as they fund these improvements – or indirect as, for instance, they finance acquiring official tenure for urban communities, which then allows official water and sanitation utilities to serve them.

Financing water and sanitation delivery for the urban poor can provide attractive cash flows and risk profiles. Sponsors, therefore, have strong incentives to ensure that projects are structured and implemented in such a way as to ensure stable revenue streams. Further, a more coordinated, coherent approach to water and sanitation financing is essential if the needs of millions of people are to be met on a sustainable basis.

Working in close collaboration with the Federation and using donor funding, PDG has implemented a number of water and sanitation projects in selected slum communities. Over the past 3 years, PDG has supported Federation members to establish and operate water and sanitation services on a commercial basis. This includes water vending which is mainly patronised by food sellers and households who need water for domestic use as well as for bathing; while sanitation services are generally limited to pit latrines.

As of May 2010, PDG, in collaboration with the Federation, has financed over ten water and sanitation projects in informal settlements in Accra, Tema and Takoradi. This financing has taken four forms.

- i. Loans given to individual Federation members to set up water points or pit latrines or in most cases both. Loans are provided on a commercial basis to ensure effective delivery and cost recovery. Money for loans comes from Federation savings groups, i.e. members take loans from their group's savings. It must be noted, however, that given the poor level of savings in low income areas PDG supplements the amount of money available.
- ii. Loans and subsidies are jointly provided to community initiated projects, but this is normally executed through a Federation group within the settlement.
- iii. Partnerships with government and/or local authorities. Some slum settlements have secured water facilities through joint partnership with government. The government of Ghana provides a small grant, while PDG and the Federation raise the remaining balance to implement the project. In the New Takoradi community, an urban slum in the Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly (SAEMA), PDG in partnership with the Federation and with support from the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment have installed water service points in selected parts of the settlement. These facilities are owned and operated by the Federation. The

accounts of these facilities are currently being audited, while plans are being made to establish more water points in other parts of the settlement.

- iv. The latest form of financing for water and sanitation projects is through grants. For example, the IIED documentation project which funded this study provides money to the residents of New Takoradi to extend water supply to parts of the community which are not connected to the public supply. This initiative has won the support of the traditional authority and the GWCL, ensuring its successful implementation. The traditional authority released a piece of land for a reservoir and the GWCL is providing technical assistance.

Figure 8: A toilet Facility Provided by Peoples' Dialogue Ghana



Source: Photographs by PDG

The sustainability of these projects is dependent on their effective operation and maintenance. Since these projects are community driven their ownership is clear, and in order to ensure sustainability Federation groups and communities take absolute responsibility for the provision of these services. Management committees have been established to supervise operators and caretakers. Accounts are opened for all projects, weekly meetings are held to check on financial records and to make deposits at the banks and, if need be, pay loans.

Financial discipline in the operation and management of these facilities increases groups' ability to recover the cost of investment. Remarkably, since 2004 the Federation's loan portfolios have recorded a default rate of less than 5 percent. This achievement is partly a result of the free hand given to Federation members to design their own credit administration systems which take into account their particular circumstances.

3.4 Working in Collaboration

Community participation and building partnerships among savings networks and stakeholders in water and sanitation delivery is a key component of sustainable development. For the Federation of the urban poor, this not only brings about physical infrastructure but also strengthens a bond of trust and fellowship among members of the community. This is very significant given the need to develop a shared identity as a group of people without tenure security or adequate access to basic services.

For PDG and the Federation, the use of dialogue and negotiations to change public policy from forced eviction to relocation in Old Fadama marked the beginning of the success story. Following this outcome, PDG and the Federation started investing in basic infrastructure. Apart from water and sanitation (public latrines) services, access roads, pavements, schools and classrooms were also constructed.

Daily savings and regular meetings provide an opportunity for collaboration among

Federation members and other stakeholders at the community, national and international levels. The Federation's savings process is designed to maximize the amount of contact that people have with each other. When they interact on daily basis, whether it is over savings or loans or an impending demolition, their sense of being part of a community is strengthened. Trust, cooperation and collective action are maximized when the savings networks begin to support one another through crises using their savings as loans and scheduling their own repayments.

Through daily savings programmes, the networks of the Ghana Federation are able to initiate and seek partnerships to design and implement projects to address their needs. Accumulated savings at the group, community or national level are often used as leverage to draw external funds. This normally comes as a result of mutual circumstance and much more willingness to share risk at city or national level. The establishment of the Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF) pools the financial resources of savings groups into a national fund. This gives the Federation the capacity to provide counterpart funding for projects. The UPDF is still being developed and is expected to register with a management board.

Community savings in New Takoradi have been used to leverage funds from the Government through the local assembly to extend water supply to the upper parts of the settlement. Residents made an appeal to the Government, when they hosted the national World Habitat Day celebrations in 2007. Similarly in Old Fadama, the UPDF was used to finance the construction of water and sanitation projects. Today, these services are a real benefit to residents and a way to generate income boosting their savings and their commitment to build the capacity of the UPDF.

Finally community exchange activities are important for building collaboration. As a result of exchanges Federation groups and communities build solidarity. They rally behind each other to build a critical mass of support for lobbying or advocating to change public policies that affect their welfare. Federation groups with specialized skills, for example, mapping and enumeration, building partnerships and community-led projects, have always been supported to visit other Federation groups to share their skills and knowledge. Federation groups are also funded and encouraged to visit and participate in the design and implementation of projects initiated by other communities.

PDG and the Federation see partnership and collaboration as a way to create consultative participatory relationships among stakeholders so that Federation members identify with and support efforts by government and development organizations in their settlements. As and when the need arises, Federation support can take the form of either cash or in-kind contributions to development projects. The examples below show existing partnerships and collaborative relationships.

- i. A housing improvement affordability analysis was conducted to explore possibilities for developing and providing housing improvement loans. This is being funded by CHF International³⁷ under the Slum Communities Achieving Liveable Environment with Urban Partners (SCALE UP) Programme. Water and sanitation is the most critical issue and the project will benefit the residents of four slum communities in two major urban centres in Ghana.
- ii. A social infrastructure audit was co-financed by the UN Habitat and the Government of Ghana, under the Water for African Cities (WAC) programme to evaluate the social infrastructure services provided in Sabon Zongo (a low-income community in Accra). The purpose was to see whether these meet expected levels of service and/or standards for such services as set out by either regulations and/or guidelines in their

³⁷ CHF International is an international development and humanitarian aid organisation.

respective service charters (including GWCL and Urban Roads). As a result of this survey drains, roads and a public latrine have been constructed. An environmental sanitation taskforce has also been established in the community. And there are plans to support female headed households to construct domestic latrines.

- iii. A Slum Upgrading Facility (SUF) project tasked Federation members to create their own settlement map and profile as well as to identify and develop intervention strategies to address the development challenges identified from enumeration data. SUF is a UN-Habitat project implemented in four slum communities located in the three biggest urban centres in Ghana. Settlement upgrading in terms of providing infrastructure such as access roads, water and sanitation are regarded key issues that the beneficiary community have identified to be tackled.
- iv. The water project in New Takoradi community is funded by the IIED documentation project. Although the project did not include the provision of a facility, the team felt that some funds should be set aside for the direct benefit of the Federation which provided much of the information for the documentation exercise.
- v. Community residents collaborated with the local authority to buy a garbage skip container for waste collection.

3.5 Information to Drive Local Action and Monitor Improvements

The importance of accurate and reliable statistical data for proper planning and development in poor communities cannot be overemphasized. As a principle and practice, the slum dwellers must carry out their own surveys so that they can appreciate the challenges their community faces and be an integral part of initiatives to address their circumstances.

Community-led mapping and enumeration is an important ritual and a regular Federation activity, especially when settlements are being upgraded. Mapping and enumeration is a 'self-surveying' exercise conducted at regular intervals by Federation members to elicit relevant and adequate information. The objective is to build a reliable and accurate settlement profile, which is used to negotiate with government and development partners.

It also guides the planning and design of intervention programmes. Demographic as well as socioeconomic information is gathered and generally data are captured under the following headings:

- Dwelling types and uses
- Water and sanitation
- Health
- Education
- Environment
- Employment, income and expenditure
- Length of stay in the community
- Factors influencing movement into a slum community
- Challenges and coping mechanisms
- Residents expectations and future plans

In the five years, PDG and the Federation have conducted mapping, surveys and enumerations in seven low income communities in Accra, Tema and Takoradi on: the affordability of housing improvements; social infrastructure; the Slum Upgrading Facility (SUF); and the Old Fadama Relocation project.

3.6 The need for Community-Based Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion

Increases in Ghana's urban population present great challenges for effectively managing large volumes of sewage as most of these communities have no household toilets nor adequate drains for waste water disposal. The lack of home latrines in many low-income communities and the use of communal and public toilets also contribute to increased volumes of waste which is discharged untreated into many water courses and streams. Currently, less than 15 percent of the septage generated in Accra is effectively treated.³⁸ As communities gain better access to water the amount of sullage and waste water generated increases as do water logging and the number of stagnant pools of water in residential neighbourhoods.

Growing urbanization and non-adherence to planning schemes and regulations has led to the unauthorized location of buildings along flood plains and reservations. Inadequate drainage facilities for sullage and storm water causes flooding in many localities during every rainy season. This is made worse by the increasing surface area of the built environment which reduces water percolation into the soil. The lack of effective refuse collection from premises means that the few available drains are used for refuse disposal further compounding the problem of drains being turned into open sewers with putrid smells.

This, in addition to the very low capacity of the central and local government agencies responsible for the enforcement of environmental sanitation legislation, pose another problem for residents. The provision of sanitary infrastructure alone is not sufficient to ensure improvements in environmental sanitation unless there is sufficient access to the facilities and they are properly used. Environmental sanitation education should therefore be an integral element of all activities. Education is complementary to regulation, which is ineffective unless coupled with explanation and persuasion.

Improved approaches to education on environmental sanitation based on problem-solving and active participation by the target community was the focus of the promotion of water and sanitation project. Ensuring sustainable environmental sanitation and hygiene promotion in the Old Fadama community was pursued on two levels. The first involved holding community meetings and sensitization programmes on individual responsibilities. Every individual or household is responsible for:

- i. Cleansing within and in the immediate environs of the property they occupy, including access ways and the drains and roads abutting the property.
- ii. Taking measures to prevent the breeding of pests and disease vectors within and in the immediate environs of the property they occupy.
- iii. Ensuring that the wider environment is not polluted or otherwise adversely affected by their activities.
- iv. Hygienically disposing of all wastes they generate in public areas by use of an authorised public toilet or solid waste disposal facilities as appropriate.
- v. Participating in all communal environmental sanitation exercises organised by the community or its representatives.

The second level was the establishment of a community-based environmental sanitation sensitization team to ensure that activities identified out in level 1 are carried out. The tasks of the team include but are not limited to:

³⁸ Government of Ghana. Revised Environmental Sanitation Policy, May 2007. Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment.

- i. Assisting in community mobilization.
- ii. Establishing community environmental norms in line with national sanitation policy.
- iii. Undertaking community sanitation and hygiene education to create awareness of environmental sanitation issues.
- iv. Maintaining a clean, safe and pleasant physical environment in their settlement.
- v. Organising participatory neighbourhood cleansing once every month on days determined by community members.

The first phase of the programme involved a community-wide survey to ascertain the types and levels of basic sanitation services available to the community. The survey revealed that the only toilet facilities in the community were constructed and operated by individuals on a commercial basis. The 347 facilities were mostly bucket latrines, with a few WCs and KVIPs. Outdoor defecation was still very pronounced, especially along the banks of the lagoon at the southern section of the community. Additionally, 85 percent of the households did not have bathing places in their homes and therefore used public bath stalls. There were a total of 616 bath stalls but virtually no drains in the community.

Following preliminary surveys, the second phase began in September 2007. This phase adopted the community managed toilets model making use of existing infrastructure along with supporting households to construct 'soak-aways' behind their houses to take care of domestic waste water.

Technical assistance was provided to households for the construction of these facilities with the collaboration of the environmental health unit of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA). The entire process was supervised and carried out by PDG and local community members. Individual households provided labour. The sense of community ownership was very high as they were actively involved in the construction.

Community mobilization through federations and savings groups has been the corner stone of the programme strategy and has played a vital role in ensuring effective community support and participation. Holding meetings in small groups and establishing small saving circles helped to overcome initial resistance and to build confidence and trust among community members.

In order to ensure that the small gains made in improved sanitation are translated into better health and improved well-being, the programme has been extended to include hygiene promotion in consultation with and with the assistance of the environmental health unit of the AMA. This involves creating awareness on hygiene, the need to address outdoor defecation and appropriate disposal of children's faeces as well as proper hand washing after defecation. Workshops to raise awareness and build the capacity of the community-based environmental sanitation sensitization team established by PDG were also held. Results have shown improved hygiene through reduced open defecation, regular hand washing after defecation and proper disposal of child faeces.

4 How Far Have We Come? Community Experiences with Capacity Building and Advocacy

In general communities are positive and confident in their ability to negotiate development interventions in the settlements where PDG and the Federations operate. Mobilization tools, such as savings groups, exchange programmes, training and community meetings with

experts and technical advisors have been very important in facilitating community-driven initiatives. Local people have been able to consider various possible alternatives to many current coping and management strategies. And they said that despite a lack of tangible evidence, the most important achievement has been revitalized public dialogue because for many years this has been missing. Meetings and community gatherings are important opportunities for people to voice their opinions in public.

Community members indicate that they have benefited from their involvement in savings groups, enumerations and exchange programmes, in relation to a range of issues from land tenure, education and micro-finance through to housing savings schemes. Some specific benefits identified by communities include the following:

- i. Dialogue on behalf of communities facing eviction by city authorities to secure tenure. Examples of such communities are Old Fadama and those settlements along the railway lines in Accra.
- ii. Community exchange programmes which allow Federations from one community to travel to other locations and learn about other locally initiated projects.
- iii. Through education and training, community members' leadership skills have been strengthened. Leaders of Federations claimed as a result they are now able independently to meet and talk with people in authority. They are also able to raise funds for programmes they initiate, even though they admit that this has not been easy.
- iv. Turning savings into micro-credit activities in areas such as bakeries, chair and canopy rentals, etc.
- v. Federation members have also appreciated the importance of savings through the housing savings scheme.
- vi. Linked to point v. above is support for communities to improve water supply and sanitation in their communities.

5 Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated how community led savings, enumerations and exchange programmes, which form the core of PDG's mobilization tools, have strengthened local capacity empowering communities to lead the change process. The paper focuses on one of the common challenges of urban development – how to help the poorer segments of urban society to secure adequate water and sanitation to meet their basic needs. It has identified and discussed the principles and approaches for community mobilization through which relations are established between government and international organizations. The various stages through which communities and especially women are empowered to take up the water and sanitation challenges in their communities are clearly outlined in the paper with the view to demonstrating how women can make a change even in traditionally male-dominated societies. What is remarkable about the work of PDG and the Federations of the Urban Poor in the low-income neighbourhoods of Ghana is that they come from outside the water and sanitation sector.

Authorities and donors should be striving to find ways to support and link up to such initiatives. It is important to recognize that the dynamics of poverty in urban Ghana in terms of actors, issues and approaches show a clear distinction from rural poverty. Indeed, the demographics of poverty are shifting to urban centres as a result of rapid urbanization. Therefore resource commitments to poverty reduction in Ghana must begin to recognize this reality and efforts must be made to redesign and repackage programmes to take into account the complexities of the urban terrain. Additionally, community-led initiatives that draw on the creativity and capacity of local people to take control of their change processes must be integrated into poverty intervention programmes.

Development partners and stakeholders can support community led initiatives by allowing the poor to take the driving seat and by providing them with adequate resources to enable them to plan and to implement their own projects. Conscious effort must be made to recognize and respect local dynamics in addressing the development challenges which slum dwellers face. Socio-economic and cultural diversity among people living in Ghana's slums and informal settlements, require that projects respond to the interests of these various groups to ensure inclusiveness in the ownership and management of development interventions. This, however, requires a great deal of time and financial support. Change processes are slow but if approached strategically and collaboratively they can be successful.

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