

# La Community

## Report on Strengthen Identifiable Citizen Groups in WASH Governance

---

*Global Neighbourhood Healthcare  
Development Organisation [GLONEHDO]*



NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organization
CONIWAS	:	Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation
GUWL	:	Ghana Urban Water Limited
GLONEHDO	:	Global Neighbourhood Healthcare Development Organisation
WWC		Water Watch Committee
AMA		Accra Metropolitan Assembly
GTF		Governance Transparent Fund
WASH		Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WAG		WaterAid -Ghana

## Introduction

Good governance implies the establishment of mechanisms that prioritize strong participation of stakeholders in decision making process. When the worth of the people, especially the poor, women and the marginalized groups is recognized and there exist consensus building in participation in WASH governance, there is no doubt that there will be development in WASH services in Ghana. Also the contribution of the poor, women and the marginalized groups if recognized and supported can increase good governance in the WASH sector. The coalition of NGO's in water and sanitation [CONIWAS] has its goal of building partnership with relevant stakeholders in order to increase access to water and sanitation for the poor and the vulnerable in Urban, Peri-urban and rural areas. CONIWAS in collaboration with its member, Global Neighborhood Healthcare Development Organization [GLONEHDO] and funding from WaterAid through its Governance Transparent Fund[GTF] has in the past worked with various identifiable groups in communities such as La, Bukom and Teshie in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana in ensuring effective WASH service delivery.

These identifiable groups, during engagement, have proven to be useful if given the technical support to effectively engage with service providers and agencies in their communities. As part of CONIWAS' programme are, it focuses on advocacy at both national and decentralized levels to strengthen and deepen its role of influencing policies and practices that hinders access to portable water, basic sanitation and hygiene in our communities.

In carrying out various programmes in the communities, the role of identifiable groups are essential. These identifiable citizen groups indeed represent the voice of the communities. But the question one needs to answer is how capable are these identifiable citizen groups to stand on their own when CONIWAS and other partners leave the community for them to continue with meaningful participation with Service Providers and other agencies in WASH service?

In 2010, CONIWAS and its member organization GLONEHDO, undertook an assessment of urban water supply in the La Community. GLONEHDO as part of its exit plan came out with an action plan to be implemented by a constituted Water Watch Committee (WWC) which was made up of identifiable groups in La Community. The action plan would address challenges in WASH delivery services and how best they could be handled. It is sad to say that the WWC is currently non-functional. It is evidently clear that there exist a gap that needs to close for these groups to play their role in good governance in the WASH sector. The programme, "To Strengthen Identifiable Citizens' Groups to participate in WASH Governance in the La community was a way of ensuring the following expected outcomes;

- Evidence of Identifiable Citizen Groups demanding accountability from Ghana Urban Water Company limited and other Service Providers in La community.
- Evidence of Identifiable Citizen Groups in La community invited to participate in meetings organized by Ghana Urban Water limited and other Service Providers beyond WAG / CONIWAS support.
- Evidence of a well mobilized and recognized Identifiable Citizens Groups participating in
- GLONEHDO in achieving these expected outcomes outlined a five phase programme in La community, and these are as follows:
  - Follow up meetings with Identifiable Groups and Service Providers in WASH Governance in La Community
  - Engagement with Service Providers in WASH Governance in La Community
  - Engagement with Identifiable Groups in WASH Governance in La Community
  - Public Hearing on Issues on WASH Governance in La Community
  - Monitoring, Evaluation and follow-ups on issues in WASH Governance in La Community

**Mobilizing and sensitizing of identifiable citizen groups on participation in WASH governance in la community**

The issue of WASH Governance in communities is a critical one because of the complexity of WASH issues in communities and the unending solutions to them. The increase in population generally and in the communities specifically with attendant increase in demand for social amenities and services without a corresponding release of same has brought some difficulties in the delivery and receipt of services by both Service providers and community members respectively. It is therefore pertinent for both parties to continually engage on issues to find solutions which will eventually improve WASH delivery in the communities and development in the lives of the people and the nation as a whole. Consequently there is the need for the communities to mobilize and organize themselves into a group that can dialogue with Service Providers on WASH issues

In mobilizing iIdentifiable Citizen Groups in La, the referencwas made to the action plan drawn from the previous engagement to be implemented by the Water Watch Committee made up of various identifiable groups in the community. Two years down the line the committee has not made any progress as to its engagement with service providers as promised to ensure plans outlined in the action plan are fulfilled. Follow ups made by GLONEHDO indicated that, there are some gaps and challenges, but were not officially noted due to the fact that the issues were raised by individuals from various identifiable groups.

The mobilizing and sensitization of identifiable groups on participation in WASH Governance in La community was to bring on board other identifiable groups to join those known and share with them what has been done so far and what is ahead. The objectives of this phase of the programme were as follows;

- To assess current status of identifiable groups and map out gaps and challenges.
- To sensitize other identifiable groups to join in participation in WASH Governance in la community
- To agree on meeting with each other to engage on how to address gaps and challenges in participation in WASH Governance in La Community.

The GLONEHDO Team met with selected Identifiable Groups in La Community such as the La Tebu Association, and the Abgawe Traditional Council. The reason for meeting with these selected groups was to create a focal group for the community to rally behind. The above groups agreed that a community meeting be held to invite other identifiable groups to share the value of participating in WASH Governance. They also expressed the need to meet with service providers to agree on how to participate in their WASH issues. The engagements with these identifiable groups helped the team identify some gaps that needed to be addressed in order to achieve meaningful participation and these are outlined in the recommendation of the report.



### **Phase Two: Engagement With Service Providers and Agencies in WASH Governance in La Community**

The GLONEHDO team engaged with officials from Ghana Urban Water Company Limited, AMA Waste Management Department, La, and the District Environmental office, La to seek their views on the participation of identifiable citizens groups in WASH issues in the La Community. In

this meeting the GLONEHDO team outlined the objectives as follows

**Objective:**



- To promote the provision of platform for effective participation of identifiable citizens groups with service providers and agencies;
- To identify barriers hindering participation of identifiable citizens groups in WASH Governance in La Community;
- To solicit support of service providers and agencies to promote meaningful participation of identifiable citizens' group in WASH Governance in La Community.

#### Expected Outcome

- Willingness of Service Providers and Government Agencies to create and operationalize a platform for identifiable citizens groups to participate in WASH Governance in the La Community.
- Identify hindrances that Service Providers face with regards to the delivery of WASH services and to provide access for identifiable groups to dialogue with them on WASH issues.

#### **Emerging Issues from Service Provider's [Ghana Urban Water Co. Ltd.]**

- G UWCL has no platform where it engages with communities on water issues affecting the communities.
- They hope to create such a platform in the near future where Identifiable Citizens' Groups will participate in their deliberations on water supply management in LA Communities.
- There is no occasion where communities have invited the G UWCL to dialogue on water issues in their community except that of the one reported on.
- Would appreciate if there is such a platform where issues on water supply in the LA Community will be given prominence during deliberations with communities

#### **Emerging issues with the District Environmental Health Officer [AMALa Sub -Metro]**

- Currently involved in one on one engagement on their daily routines but do not have any platform where they engage with identifiable citizens groups in the community on sanitation issues.
- Due to financial constraints, they have not held any durbar to engage identifiable citizens groups on sanitation issues.
- They record all complaints from the community and address them



appropriately and therefore any complaints from the community not recorded in their books have not come to their notice.

## **ENGAGEMENT WITH IDENTIFIABLE GROUPS IN WASH GOVERNANCE IN LA COMMUNITY**

It is in this light that CONIWAS (Coalition of NGOs in water and sanitation) through its member Global Neighbourhood Healthcare Development Organization (GLONEHDO) carried out the programme “Strengthening Citizens’ Group participation in WASH Governance” in La Community. The rationale behind this exercise is to identify weakness of these groups, empower and strengthen them with the requisite tools and skills to engage with duty bearers to achieve effective delivery of WASH services. The objectives for community engagement by the GLONEDHO were as follows:

- To motivate citizen groups to pursue engagement with Duty Bearers on WASH issues.



- To rally behind identifiable Citizen Groups to demand accountability on WASH issues in an enabling environment.

- Improve access to and stimulate public discussions on WASH issues effectively and in a sustainable way.

- To reinforce positive engagement between identifiable groups and service providers in WASH Governance.

- To enhance access to and sustainability of basic services in WASH in La Community.

The team leader of GLONEHDO outlined the objectives of the meeting as spelt out above setting the agenda for participants to focus on the objectives. This was followed by quick run through of the report on Assessment of Urban Water Supply in La in the year 2010. The purpose of running through the report was for the community members to update themselves with the action plan produced after the assessment of urban water supply in La, and what has been done by the Water Watch Committee [WWC] that was formed.

The reaction to the presentation on the report from the secretary of the Agbawe Traditional Council was as follows;

- The Water Watch Committee (WWC) is not functioning due to the fact that the committee did not have the knowhow to implement the Action Plan into action.

- The facilitators of the assessment failed to support the committee with technical assistance needed to put the action plan in force in their formative stage as a committee.
- The WWC will need the full support of the La Traditional Council to work effectively.
- The committee will have to include various sub traditional councils under the La traditional council.

The submission above was supported by almost all the participants. A community member at this point recall the suggestion made during mobilization of identifiable citizen groups on the need to have all the eight Clans in the La community to be represented on any core committee to lead in any engagements with duty bearers in the La community.

### **Emerging issues from the Community which hinder on WASH Governance in the La Community?**

- **Water**
  - For effective delivery of water services, Service Providers must know the population of the area and the water consumption levels for various uses in order to plan accordingly.
  - To educate community on rain water harvesting to supplement pipe borne water.
  - No pipes in the La market
- **Sanitation**
  - Even though the population of La have increased, the seventeen (17) rubbish collection sites with rubbish bins have now decreased to four (4) consequently, rubbish is being littered around the community.
  - Landlords should be advised and encouraged to build toilets in their homes
  - Outlets for some private toilets have been channeled into a big gutter nearby. Reports lodged to the AMA officers but have not yielded any results.
  - No toilets at the La Market
- **Hygiene**
  - Need for Environmental Officers to arrest those who violate good sanitation practices especially food vendors who use dirty gallons to fetch water and those who litter rubbish around.



## **Achievements and Challenges of identifiable citizen groups in participation in WASH Governance.**

The meeting also gave all groups the opportunity to share their challenges and achievements in participation in WASH governance. The following were challenges and achievements by the community:

### **Challenges**

- Defunct Citizen's Groups[Water Watch Committee]
- Lack of follow up on complaints to Service Providers and Agencies
- Lack of responses from Service Providers and Agencies on WASH issues from communities.
- Lack of capacity to plan and implement meeting with stakeholders in WASH in the La community.
- Lack of platforms for identifiable citizens groups to engage with service providers and agencies in WASH Governance.

**Achievements** of identifiable citizens groups on WASH Governance in La Community.

- Individual members of some identifiable citizens group have in their own way engaged with service providers and agencies on WASH issues.
- Agbawe can boast of a beautiful and clean urinal which is being patronized fully by the people thus curbing the habit of urinating carelessly around the community.
- The La Tebu Association has been able to mobilize its community members to have landlords provide toilets in their homes.



### **Public Hearing on Issues on WASH Governance in La Community**

Having mobilized and sensitized identifiable citizen groups, engagement with service providers and agencies, and engagement with the community on strengthening identifiable Citizens groups' participation in WASH governance, the GLONEHDO team adopted Public Hearing as a social

accountability tool for the discussion of issues on Strengthening of Identifiable Citizens Groups in participating in WASH governance. The public hearing was held in the La Community - this was to draw in more local folks who are really vested in the issues. The GLONEHDO team deemed it very important that during the public hearings, various points raised by all stakeholders will be put across and highlighted for further engagement. Publicizing the hearing, the public was also to make sure that the needed support is given to identifiable groups to help them plan the next steps. The public hearing had the following objectives:

- To IDENTIFY and INFORM all stakeholders on barriers hindering identifiable citizens group participation in WASH Governance in La Community
- To solicit SUPPORT and SUGGESTIONS from all stakeholders in addressing challenges in effective participation of identifiable citizens group in WASH Governance in La Community.
- To encourage stakeholders to assume ROLES and accept RESPONSIBILITIES for effective participation in WASH Governance in La Community.

#### Participation

The currently District Manager for Accra East District was the Distribution Manager in 2010 when the Assessment of Urban Water Supply was done by the GLONEHDO team . He was accompanied by the Customer Relations Officer of Ghana Urban Water Limited [GUWL], the Head of Waste Management Department and the District Environmental Health Officer of the La Sub Metro of the AMA . Other notable persons were the Assemblymen from the La community. Other participants worth mentioning were the representatives of the eight Clans of the La community and the Market Women Association amongst others as per the attendance attached.

#### Presentation

The GLONEHDO Team presented to the gathering the road map towards strengthening identifiable citizens groups in WASH Governance, and the emerging issues from all stakeholders they had engaged with prior to today's public hearing. It was made clear to them by the team that their expectations from the days meeting will be as follows:

- Open up the discussions on participation in WASH Governance in the La community.
- Communicate and clarify issues on participation of citizens In WASH Governance



- Increase community awareness on the value of effective participation and in finding solutions to barriers toward effective community participation in WASH Governance.

- To achieve the stated objective above.

The gathering will also look at the need for WASH charter that will replace the action plan drawn after the

assessment. Again the gathering will have to agree on major challenges and recommendation to ensure meaningful participation in WASH Governance in La community.

Reaffirmation of issues for citizen's participation in WASH Governance in La Community by Service Providers and Agencies.

Ghana Urban Water Limited.[GUWCL]

The District Manager of the Accra East District of the Ghana Urban Water Limited Mr. Paul Akpanya assisted by the Customer Relation Officer, Madam Lydia Ayitevie reaffirmed their support for the participation of citizens in WASH Governance. They further outlined issues that should be considered as basis for such participation to be effective.

- The La Community is receiving water on a ration basis therefore there is the need for the community to be engaged to address challenges arising as a result of the rationing
- There is also the need for the community to be educated on the billing system to ensure good customer relation between the service providers and the community.
- The GUWCL is ever willing to engage with the community should the community take it upon themselves to invite them for fruitful engagements.

#### **Accra Metropolitan Assembly – La Sub Metro**

The Waste Management Department and Environmental Sanitation Department had Mr.David .k. Kpanga and Mr. Richard Acquaye respectively representing them at the public hearing. They agreed to the fact that to put current sanitation policies into use there is the need for



their agencies to engage with the citizens to get the issues to the community. They said is notable issues requiring urgent community participation are as follows;

- Engaging citizens on the Polluter Pay System which is intended to replace the community waste bin sites.
- The policy of house hold toilets to allow transit members of the public to have access to the public toilet need to be further discussed.
- Need to educate communities on how to launch complaints or express concerns to the AMA to ensure they are addressed.



#### Contribution by the Assemblyman

Hon. Christopher Gogoe in contribution to the public hearing, indicated that on his own behalf and that of the other assemblymen present, they appreciated the programme and apologized they were not around during the first meeting because they were misinformed about the time. He suggested that next time a programme like this is being organized; they should be contacted through the Sub Metro so they can be more involved.

#### Traditional Council Representative

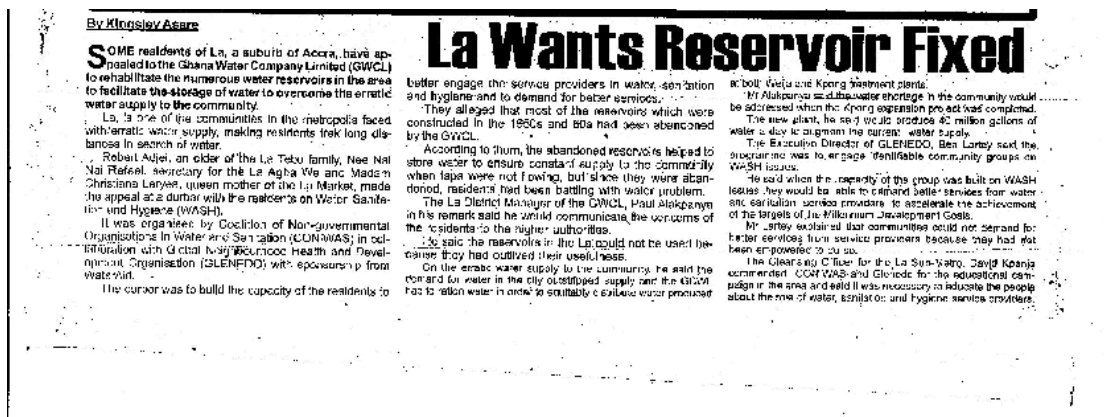
The representative of the Traditional Council assured the gathering of their support and urged the Assemblymen to work hard.

#### Media participation

Six media personnel were invited to the public hearing to enable them share in the challenges of communities in participation in WASH Governance and to encourage coverage of WASH issues in



communities to increase demand on duty bearer to address these challenges. It was also the to solicit their support to increase the voice of the community and to increase the awareness creation on the need for citizens to participate in WASH Governance in our communities in Ghana. Below is a report of the public hearing by the media.



bo

### ➤ Monitoring, Evaluation and follow-ups on issues in WASH Governance in La Community

The fifth phase of strengthening identifiable group's participation in WASH Governance will be how best the participation will be monitored and evaluated by all stakeholders. This is in support of the fact that all stakeholders engaged with, expressed their willingness to ensure that citizen's participation in WASH Governance in the community becomes a reality and functional. Having learnt lessons from the inability of Water Watch Committee to implement the action plan due to lack of well spelt out roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder, it became necessary for a spell out. The most possible way was to formulate these roles and responsibilities in a WASH Charter.

The purpose of the WASH CHARTER aims at aligning all stakeholders in the WASH Sector in the La Community so that their energies will be focused on the provision of better WASH services in the La community. The WASH Charter will outline the scope, the expected outcome, the timelines and the step by step measures to be taken to be taken to ensure effective participation of identifiable citizens groups in WASH Governance in the La Community

### Major challenges outlined from engagement

The programme strengthening of identifiable citizens groups in WASH Governance in La community is to identify and seek ways in addressing any challenges that hinders productive participation of identifiable citizens groups in WASH Governance. The challenges below were agreed on at the gathering and are as follows:

- Lack of know-how of group participation in WASH Governance issues.

- Lack of skills to engage with Duty Bearers
- Lack of community mobilization skills
- Lack of recognized channels for channeling grievances on wash issues
- Lack of mediums for feedback on WASH issues from service providers and Agencies.
- Lack of effective programme monitoring and evaluation

## Recommendations

The gathering having agreed on the above challenges also agreed on the recommendations below. Community member expressed the hope that the facilitators of the programme will not fail to come back to ensure that these challenges if not totally eliminated will be reduce to ensure better services in WASH in the La Community. The recommendations were:

- Need to train groups to understand and be able to lead groups to effectively engage with service providers and Agencies on WASH issues in La.
- Need to sensitize Traditional Council to support the effort of identifiable citizens groups to be able to promote dialogue on WASH issues.
- Need to monitor and evaluate engagements in community to remove barriers and improve effective participation of all groups.
- Need to ensure sustainable efforts in maintaining groups' engagement with follow ups from facilitating groups like CONIWAS.
- Need to assist community to develop the WASH Chapter for La Community.

## Lessons Learnt

- There is the need to ensure long term partnership with identifiable citizens groups to build their capacity to ensure sustainable participation in WASH Governance.
- Adequate funding to ensure follow ups prior to exiting from community and for effective monitoring and evaluation of activities of groups.
- Assist identifiable groups technically to stand on their feet to engage with duty bearers,
- Increase advocacy on citizen's participation in WASH Governance in Communities



## Conclusion

GLONEHDO would impress on CONIWAS to plan programmes that would ensure a long term partnership with identifiable groups in communities. We would also find means of getting back to the Community to assist in the development of the WASH Charter. Finally we expect both CONIWAS and WaterAid to assist us technically and financially to build the capacity of identifiable groups in the La Community.