



VIDEO TRANSCRIPT – April 2018

SMARTerWASH: monitoring rural water services for sound evidence-based planning and finance development

A series of four videos about the work and lessons learnt during the SMARTerWASH project: 2013-2016.

This story is the result of an intensive collaborative effort between IRC and the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA), with the support of the beneficiary Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) across the six project regions in the context of the project known as SMARTerWASH - Mobile Monitoring of Rural Water and Sanitation Services That Last.

Transcript

Episode 1: What the SMARTerWASH project tried to address and how

Mike Adjei, Regional Director, CWSA - Western Region

This project - at least for now has - unveiled some of the challenges we have with the facilities that have been provided

Mohammed Kpegla Adama, IT specialist for CWSA - Western Region and Focal person for the SMARTerWASH

In the past they used to concentrate on just the provision of the facilities without the regard of any maintenance culture. But now they have realized true effective monitoring. That they need to know the state of facilities in the various communities, so that early interventions can be undertaken.

Mike Adjei, Regional Director, CWSA - Western Region

Sometimes we go to a community with a new project. So we gathered and we find out that there already are a number - maybe two or three - boreholes which are broken down. If we had a better way of capturing data, some of these facilities wouldn't have been provided. Especially small town water and sanitation projects. We could have just rehabilitated those broken down ones instead of providing new ones.

Mohammed Ibrahim Adoko, Principal Planning Investment Analyst, CWSA Head Office

The SMARTerWASH project came with the service delivery concept. And so, it meant that our interest was not just supposed to be on providing facilities. We are also supposed to look at the services that those facilities were delivering to the communities.

**Supporting water sanitation
and hygiene services for life**

Michel Bedou, District Planning Officer, Shama District

In 2014 when the SMARTerWASH programme came, we had a training attack ready, when we went back - we had to go back to the field and we assessed the number of boreholes which had been broken down. So as to make sure that the district will have a fair idea of how the water situation can be improved

Episode 2: **The process of the SMARTerWASH project**

Seth Jiam, Environmental Health Assistant, Sunyani West District

Through the Flow system we have been able to learn how to use mobile phones to let's say track, to locate our facilities within the districts with the use of GPS system on the [Akvo Flow](#). And that data really helps us to let's say know the type of facilities functional and those ones that are not functional. That has really helped us in our planning.

With the use of the Akvo Flow it has been made easier. And it is simple to pick information from our various communities. And due to that we are able to monitor a greater number of facilities compared to the previous time when we needed to carry it back.

Isaac Asare, District Water Engineer, Bologa\NR East Mamprusi

With this monitoring tool we are looking at having the data in the cloud. Any part of the country where you are, when you have the key to it you can access. And then you know the performance of each district.

Mohammed Ibrahim Adoko, Principal Planning Investment Analyst, CWSA Head Office

It has also helped us to generate a lot of very useful data at the facility level for each district - I think about 120 districts so far - that gathered data - and also in about 6 or so regions that the data has been collected so far. And this has triggered a certain interest in the district authorities, to take such immediate actions, to correct whatever defects were identified in the data.

Mohammed Kpegla Adama, IT specialist for CWSA - Western Region and Focal person for the SMARTerWASH

Before you collect data you need to train district staff and community members to undertake a uniform / standardised way of data capture to prevent disparities. The training helped to synchronise data capture.

The project has taught us that, before you go to the field to capture data, you need to train the district staff and the community members specifically to undertake a uniform way of data capture. Because if you don't set standards, then each person will administer the questions the way they understand it. And it introduces a lot of disparities. So the training aided us in synchronizing the way the data capture had been in the field.

Episode 3: **What the data told us and what we did**

Clement Bugase, Chief Executive, CWSA

With the SMARTerWASH we did the baseline. And it has indicated that about 30%, especially our hand pumps, are non-functional at any point in time. And that is a big proportion as far as we are concerned. And we think that it is working us as CWSA to do more. To ensure that we and the other stakeholders at the district level take remedial measures to ensure that those nonfunctional facilities are brought back to service. Those that are partially functional will also

be made to give complete service. So that rural populations can benefit from the water and the other services that people provide.

Mohammed Kpegla Adama, IT Specialist, CWSA and Focal person for the SMARTerWASH programme.

The project, as I speak now, has helped us in our monitoring because we are going into areas that we don't have information on. It has also helped us to plan very well especially on WASH programmes. It will help us to budget very well especially on WASH programs too. And also we are now going to intensify our monitoring especially on communities that have weak Water and Sanitation Management Teams.

Mohammed Pekla Adama, IT Specialist, CWSA Western Region

With the introduction of the SMARTerWASH project in the Western region, we've been able to know the true situation on the ground. The number of facilities that existed on our database. This project has come to show us that we have many more facilities on the ground than we had captured in our [read: DiMES] database.

Obeng Aseidu, WASH Engineer, North Gunja District

By the first information that we collected we got to know that most of our WSMTs [Water and Sanitation Management Teams] are not in place of which now with help from our partners we are training more. With the Akvo Flow we are using to collect the data we know which communities have WSMTs and those who don't, we know the boreholes that are functioning and those that are not functioning

Clement Bugase, Chief Executive, CWSA

This data that we have collected and the analyses that have been done, have given us an insight into what we are presiding over as a nation with a lot of facilities not working well. And that has now pointed us in the right direction. Because apart from telling us about functionality, it also reveals to us the gaps, geographical gaps, areas that we have not reached well. So in our plans we take that into consideration and we think that this is good information for CWSA and we are also able to brief our higher authorities on what is happening on the ground.

The district assemblies have also - as a result of this project and the collection of data and the analysing of data together - have come to realize and to get to know the extent of their responsibility. And they are now putting that into their plans for the future. They are also using the data to reach out to other partners to help them to do things better than they have been doing in the past

Estherine Mensah, District Planning Officer, Wassa East District

Based on the data we collected and analysed, we realized that most of our communities do not have the WSMTs, those are the Water and Sanitation Management Teams. And about half of the boreholes and hand pumps were also not functioning. As a result, the district took a decision. That is to organise a stakeholders meeting with all of our partners on the way forward. Based on that, we prepared a district water and sanitation plan for 2016 to 2020. The plan was approved and budget has been allocated for it.

Mike Adjei, Regional Director, CWSA Western Region

District assemblies as a result of this work that have been carried out under the SMARTerWASH project have taken actions to improve some of the facilities there.

Owusu Kwasi Mintah, Planning Officer, Sunyani West District,

What has changed? Functionality I should say has been given a further boost. It has been improved because the DA [district assembly] has responded together with the communities to repair some broken down facilities. Yes, and two: we now have data and we are using the data in our planning.

Mike Adjei, Regional Director, CWSA Western Region

What already has been updated is the district water and sanitation plan. They have been able to leverage funding at a district level to re-establish water and sanitation teams that do not exist now. So they are re-training and re-organising, re-training and re-organising, re-training and re-organising water and sanitation teams. They are also going to put in 25 new boreholes as replacement boreholes. This all as a result of the data that was collected at that level.

Dari Kasim, WASH Engineer, Gusheau District

Now even when I am sitting in my office and they pick up the phone and call me and they say 'Dari Kasim, how many facilities do you have? How many of them are functional?' I can give numbers. It was based on this data that we have been able to achieve all those things.

Isaac Asare, District Water Engineer, Bologa\NR East Mamprusi

When you ask me what is the current situation as to compared to the previous years, I would say there has been an improvement. And it has helped us to get also resources from other donors.

Kyei-Asare Bediako, Water Engineer, Sunyani West District

What has really changed or what has really taken place in the district assemblies is that districts are actually shifting from the provision of infrastructure to sustainability of the existing facilities. At first we were providing facilities for districts. We didn't even think about the sustainability aspect. But now we have gone so deep into the sustainability aspect rather than just the provision of infrastructure. And it has really helped the districts.

Vida Dutti, Country Director, IRC Ghana

Having done the SMARTerWASH project we've been able to establish the critical mass of the status of rural water services in Ghana. We are using that to inform our planning towards the SDGs. By also engaging with the data, we have also realized that a number of other sector partners are picking up bits and pieces of how we can deal with these issues. So we are beginning to build some collective action around on addressing the issues on sustainable water services.

Episode 4: **Doing things better than before**

Mohammed Kpegla Adama, IT specialist for CWSA - Western Region and Focal person for the SMARTerWASH

I also used to look at the provision of the facilities alone, without looking at water delivery as a service. I know that, if you consider water delivery as a service you will know the various service levels which you need to address to find the most ideal situation, the practical situation, and the critical situation that you need to deal with.

Mike Adjei, Regional Director, CWSA Western Region

It is going to enhance planning, it is going to enhance decision making. Because we can broadly say that now, data that is coming from the communities through the district are reliable.

Daniel Nnebini Nyamekye, Planning Officer, Kintampo South District

It has changed our way of doing things. We used to concentrate our efforts on providing physical facilities, new boreholes in the district. But after the project we shifted our focus from the provision of physical infrastructure to repairing the broken down ones.

Mohammed Ibrahim Adoko, Principal Planning Investment Analyst, CWSA Head Office

The project has also assisted us to come to the realization that it is not just all about adding up to existing investments. It is also about taking very good care of whatever investments are already there.

So the question we have to ask now is: now that the project is about to end, will the communities be able to sustain the continuous monitoring process? And as we all know, data is not a static phenomenon, it's fluid.

Estherine Mensah, District Planning Officer, Wassa East District

To ensure the sustainability of the project in the district, the district assembly intends to train all the area council chair men to take up the data collection exercise. Because they are rather closer to the communities than the districts

Kyei-Asare Bediako, Water Engineer, Sunyani West District

On the ground, what I learned was that we need to do is continued monitoring.

Ofori Macarthy, Regional Director of CWSA, Northern Region

If we are strict about maintenance we can avoid down times, because then we will not be reacting to repairs, we will be proactive in ensuring that the thing never breaks down. So that is what I am preaching.

Monitoring is the soul of the water system. I mean, if you don't monitor you will not be able to know that there are things about to break down. But if you monitor you can always anticipate on breakdowns, you can anticipate down times so that they do not occur. So that is very very important. I believe that is key.

Paul Kofi Twene, Kintampo South Cluster Manager, Water Vision Ghana

I think it is a wakeup call for us to look at the level of functionality of our facilities and how we are able to improve so that the level of service delivery can be seriously improved. So for me it is a wakeup call for us to be able to work with the district. So that we are not only providing facilities, but we also need to ensure that we deliver services to the people that we serve in the districts.

Vida Dutu, Country Director, IRC Ghana

Usually you have people piloting so many interesting ideas. And I think our most critical challenge for those of us in the development field is how do you get a brilliant idea which has been tested scaled. And I think that in SMARTerWASH we've been able to show that you can cross that bridge. We piloted this idea of rural service water monitoring in only three districts in Ghana. And an organisation like IRC, to have been able to walk on the path with government, to scale the process to 131 districts is a major achievement

Mohammed Ibrahim Adoko, Principal Planning Investment Analyst, CWSA Head Office

The SMARTerWASH project had been of immense benefits to all of us – the district level, the community level, the regional level and then the national level. With a click of a button you can

be at the national level and be able to know what is happening in a certain community with a certain facility

Credits

IRC would also like to thank the regional CWSA offices and the MMDAs in the six administrative regions of Ghana: the Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Brong-Ahafo, Central and Western Regions.

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