

BEYOND CREATING ACCESS TO HOUSEHOLD TOILETS

EMERGING IMPACTS ON SMEs & LOCAL ECONOMY BY THE GAMA SWP

GAMA SWP
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GAMA SANITATION AND
WATER PROJECT



Staff from DCHAR, a Sub-Project-Implementer (SPI) in the Ejisu Municipality ordering cement from a local vendor

BACKGROUND

The GAMA Sanitation and Water Project has acquired valuable implementation lessons that need to be documented and shared as contribution to WASH sector learning. These lessons emanate mostly from the project's unique approaches for effective project implementation. One of the project's effective implementation approaches is the partnership with Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in household sanitation facility delivery to the intended beneficiaries internally referred to as Sub-Project Implementers (SPIs).

Granted that partnering with SPIs has resulted in faster supply of toilet facilities to demanding households and has facilitated the provision of more than 40,000 household toilets, a major side that has not been adequately reviewed is the impact of the project on these SMEs and other players within the local economy (beneficiary communities). If the project is making impacts on the lives of individual beneficiaries of household toilets, what impacts has it made in the sustainability and growth of its partner SMEs, other businesses and especially the youth within the project communities?

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this documentation exercise was to begin to capture the impacts of the GAMA SWP on the sustainability and growth of SMEs and other players along the value chain, especially suppliers of construction materials. The ultimate objective was to trigger a more in-depth study into how development projects impact on the sustainability of SMEs and the local economy, document the evidence, process, and share the documented information with target stakeholders on how development projects in WASH in general can as well contribute to economic growth and stability through effective partnerships with the private sector, beyond the primary intention of serving identified direct beneficiaries of facilities.

PARAMETERS ASSESSED

The two-day rapid assessment in April 2022 considered improvements in staffing, financial stability, working environment, confidence, quality of service delivery, management systems, and additional useful professional knowledge gained through the project.

List of SPIs, suppliers, and artisans interviewed

| SPIs | SUPPLIERS | WORKERS |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| • Savvy Solutions (Suame) | • Psalm 100:4 – Ejisu Onwe | • Rose Yaro – Worker, AMCPC |
| • SkyFox Limited (KMA) | • R&P Enterprise–Ejisu Onwe | • Robert Arhin – Mason, McBizzy |
| • DCHAR (Ejisu) | • B.I. Enterprise – Ejisu Abankro | • Kenedy Andebamusu – Digester Artisan (Finest) |
| • Joevide (Asokwa) | • AMCPC Limited (Non-SPI) | |

EMERGING IMPACTS ON PARTNER SMEs

Improved staffing

Each of the four SPIs assessed indicated that they had had to recruit additional staff to support project implementation. Staff recruited ranged from core management and administrative staff to permanent artisans, casual and other workers. Core staff recruited include engineers, accountants, secretaries, administrators, and safeguards officers. Artisans recruited included masons, carpenters, and plumbers, while other workers included slab-makers, drivers, and loaders. While this increased staffing means expansion of the entity, it as well means jobs for the staff recruited.

Additional staff recruited because of the GAMA SWP AF as at the time of the assessment

| SPIs | CORE STAFF | OTHER PERMANENT STAFF | CASUAL |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------|--|
| SkyFox Limited | 5 | 8 | NIL |
| DCHAR | 1 | 28 | |
| SAVVY Solutions | 2 | 18 | Plus 7 additional part-time staff |
| Joevide | 3 | 6 | Plus, additional casual workers when necessary |

Financial stability

All SPIs interviewed agreed that there was relative financial stability. All that needed to be done was to complete construction of the number of toilets demanded by target households. While three of the SPIs indicated marginal improvement in financial stability, one indicated that, given their size in the construction business, there is no significant increase in financial returns. In spite of occasional administrative challenges resulting sometimes in delays in the payment of fees, the assurance that something is due provided a sense of stability.

Improvement in work environment

Some of the SPIs assessed said there had been

slight improvements at their workplaces, especially their offices. Two of them had acquired new project offices, one of them had also added a truck to its fleet of vehicles, while another had also added a pick-up to facilitate mobility of staff and materials to project sites and forums. All of them said due to adherence to safeguards policies of the project, staff safety at construction sites and at the office had been enhanced.

Confidence

Due to their affiliation with the GAMA SWP, majority of the SPIs assessed admitted that their confidence to bid for bigger projects had been enhanced. To qualify as SPIs, they already had to ensure that all

the necessary corporate health documents were intact and in good shape, while they also won their bids through a stiff competition with several other entities. Again, partnering the Government and the World Bank in the project already, according to some of the SPIs, enhances their profile and motivates them to bid for similar or even bigger projects.

Improvement in service delivery

The GAMA SWP has its peculiar implementation dynamics. Most of the SPIs are used to constructing bigger facilities like schools, markets, and other buildings. Construction of household toilets within the GAMA SWP based on on-going household demands, needs expertise in mobilization of resources, both human and material, in order to provide timely service. The GAMA SWP has therefore opened up some of the SPIs to this peculiar service delivery strategy. Again, once a household pays their part of the cost, a day's delay in starting to construct raises several credibility-related questions within the neighbourhood and sometimes even breeds tension between the SPI and the community. Due to this pressure, some of the SPIs have learnt to improve on responsiveness and timeliness in service delivery, while adhering strictly to prescribed standards. Three out of the four SPIs assessed attested to this fact.

Improvement in management systems

Majority of SPIs assessed indicated improvement in record keeping and monitoring and tracking systems. Most of them, for instance, said they had moved away from manual planning and tracking (pen and paper) systems to digital and computer-based systems. The nature of the GAMA SWP implementation culture, which demands regular review and learning forums, have also helped to improve management attitudes, peer learning and responsiveness.

Additional useful knowledge gained

SPIs interviewed indicated that they had gained additional professional and practical knowledge through the numerous training programmes and peer review sessions, as well as direct field implementation experiences. Knowledge gained include improved community mobilization skills, which, to some of them, had not been part of their operational strategies. Some also indicated improvement in communication with local project stakeholders. Another major lesson gained was on adherence to social and environmental safeguards. Others indicated that they had gained more knowledge on the bio-digester toilet technology, as well as exposure to the vast sanitation market in Kumasi with linkages to key institutions and influential personalities necessary for business expansion.

EMERGING IMPACTS ON LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES

This particular component of the rapid assessment was limited to a few small businesses in the Ejisu Municipality as it was not originally included in the project. However, findings from the few interviews revealed interesting dimensions necessary for a larger-scale assessment in the future. A few local

businesses around where SPIs within the Municipality operate were assessed to learn about the possible spill-over impacts on the local economy from the GAMA SWP in Greater Kumasi. Those assessed include plumbing and cement shops serving as suppliers to some of the SPIs.

R&P Enterprise and Psalm 100:4 are retail shops dealing in plumbing materials and cement at Onwi within the Ejisu Municipality. They both supply cement and plumbing materials to DCHAR, one of the SPIs operating within the Ejisu Municipal Assembly. They both indicated that DCHAR had become a strategic customer to them and hoped that the project would stay longer with them. B.I. Enterprise at Abankro, also a supplier to another SPI at Ejisu – Okrugyato, also shared a similar sentiment. To the company, Okrugyato sometimes bought an average of 50 bags of cement per day and was in fact not a customer to lose. At the Kwamo Branch of the K. Ofori Enterprise, though not very sure about who was behind it, they had noticed a surge in the demand for welded mesh used for making slabs. Many of the SPIs operating in Oforikrom, Ejisu, and Asokore Mampong had indicated that they bought welded mesh from the Kwamo branch of K. Ofori Enterprise.

Asokore Mampong Concrete Products Company (AMCPC) Limited was discovered as a new company established in 2021 mainly to take advantage of the GAMA SWP in Kumasi to produce and supply household toilet components to SPIs and they had managed to get eight of the SPIs as regular customers. The company produces bio-digester slabs, cement blocks, welded mesh, vent pipes, roofing, and plumbing materials, and even worms for seeding. AMCPC had nine permanent and six casual staff, 14 of whom were all recruited from around the Asokore Mampong Municipality, to produce and supply the materials to SPIs.



Rose Yaro, worker with AMCPC

EMERGING IMPACTS ON LIVELIHOODS



The project has indirectly created hundreds of jobs for artisans in the construction industry through the SPIs.

While the SPIs recruit and engage masons, carpenters, slab-makers, plumbers, tilers, drivers, loaders and others, the impacts of this exercise obviously extend beyond expansion of the companies to improvement in livelihoods of the employees and their families.

Robert Arhin, a mason with McBizy, one of the SPIs, says working on the project has improved his financial situation since there is always an assignment to do. This is unlike his previous situation, where as a mason, he was most of the time idle because of lack of contracts.

Kennedy Andebamusu, a bio-digester artisan, also with McBizy, says he had his training on biodigesters through the GAMA SWP after which he has also trained about 15 others. Again, he says there is an improvement in his financial situation as he can now easily pay his rent, children's school fees, utility, and medical bills.

Rose Yaro, the only woman working with Asokore Mampong Concrete Products Company (AMCPC), also says she has received training on production of concrete products like slabs and now earns regular income and contributes significantly to family upkeep, unlike her previously unemployed status, when all the domestic financial burden was on only her husband. AMCPC was set up to seize the opportunity of the GAMA SWP in Kumasi to produce and supply household toilet components to SPIs.

CONCLUSION

Though the focus is to support households to get access to clean drinking water and decent and standard toilets to reduce open defecation, the GAMA SWP is clearly making other impacts that transcend this primary focus. Based on the limited information gathered during this rapid test assessment, the following conclusions are pointers to the other (unplanned) impacts that the project is making.

- The project is helping its SME partners (SPIs) to be sustainable and be able to provide more and better sanitation services in the country.
- There are rippling effects on local businesses especially suppliers of construction materials.
- The project is creating jobs for the youth (skilled and unskilled) and helping many of them to gain skills and experiences in household toilet construction in beneficiary communities.
- There is, however, a need to undertake a more in-depth study to explore more facts with more evidence. This will help to measure the actual impacts of the project and similar projects beyond just the intended beneficiaries. Findings from this in-depth study will also be useful for other development projects especially as justification for more funding and technical support from government and other funding partners.



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