

PROMOTING HOUSEHOLD TOILETS IN LOW-INCOME URBAN COMMUNITIES IN GREATER KUMASI METROPOLITAN AREA – LESSONS FROM THE EJISU MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

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A happy GKMA household toilet beneficiary couple

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This Field Note contains brief information about how the Ejisu Municipal Assembly has excelled in the implementation of the Greater Kumasi Metropolitan Area Sanitation and Water Project (GKMA SWP), a name adapted from the officially known Greater Accra Sanitation and Water Project Additional

GAMA SANITATION AND WATER PROJECT

Financing (GAMA SWP AF) to suit the local context. Ejisu is one of the eight Local Assemblies within the GKMA benefiting from the project. Since the launch of the household toilet construction phase of the project in November 2021 in Kumasi, Ejisu has always led the monthly performance League Table by way of number of toilets constructed even though the overall project implementation strategy is the same for all the participating Metropolitan/Municipal Assemblies (MMAs). This brief therefore discusses the factors that have so far contributed to the comparatively exceptional performance of Ejisu, some of which may serve as lessons and inspiration for the other Assemblies in GKMA and similar projects elsewhere. The Government of Ghana, with financing support from the World Bank, has been implementing the GAMA/GKMA SWP since 2015, with the GKMA phase starting in 2021 after a highly successful project implementation in GAMA as at the end of 2020. The success in Accra necessitated the provision of additional financing by the World Bank to extend the project to eight MMAs in Kumasi comprising Asokore Mampong, Asokwa, Ejisu, Kumasi (KMA), Kwadaso, Oforikrom, Old Tafo, and Suame. This phase of the project is expected to end in December 2024.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EJISU MUNICIPALITY

Known globally by the heroics of the famous Nana Yaa Asantewaa, a former Queen Mother of Ejisu, the Municipal Capital, who once led the Ashanti nation to a war against the British in the early 20th century and the attraction of Bonwire as the epicenter of the famous kente cloth in Ghana, Ejisu Municipal Assembly occupies about 10% of the total land size and 3.3% (180,723) of the total population of the Ashanti Region. The municipality comprises 42 communities, almost all of which are low-income by nature. The major occupation of majority of the residents in the municipality are trading and farming.

EJISU'S EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE

For eleven consecutive months, Ejisu Municipal Assembly has been the torchbearer of the GKMA SWP in terms of construction of household toilets and in fact provided the earliest inspiration for overall expected project success in the Ashanti Region. As at the end of October 2022, Ejisu alone had constructed 1,021 (approximately 22%) out of the total of 4,742 by all the eight MMAs. The next most successful MA was Kwadaso, which had constructed 613. The wide gap between Ejisu and the other MAs has always been hailed at project management and review meetings. However, it has been difficult to understand the underlying factors of this exceptional performance.

EJISU'S SUCCESS FACTORS

Like all the MMAs, Ejisu has applied community-level durbars, door-to-door sensitization, and distribution of promotional flyers by trained Household Toilet Teams, visits to markets and commercial centres, use of information vans and information centers, use of mass media, mobilization of identifiable groups and socio-religious platforms, in addition to law-enforcement as the main strategies for household toilet promotion and demand creation. The following factors, however, have been identified as the main driving force behind Ejisu's sustained progress, which may be lacking or may not have been adequately deployed by other MMAs:

DEMONSTRATED OWNERSHIP BY MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT



The Ejisu Municipal Coordinating Director, Mr. Trovel Ababio, selling household toilets at Jamasi



The Presiding Member of the Ejisu Municipal Assembly, Hon. Cecilia Mensah, selling household toilets at Manhyia

Led by the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE), Hon. Samuel Oduro Frimpong, and ably supported by the Municipal Coordinating Director (MCD), Mr. Tovel Ababio, Management of the Ejisu Municipal Assembly has been incredibly supportive and responsive to the project. The MCE has almost always been present at every project-related forum organized by the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU). In a similar fashion, at the Municipal level, he has personally demonstrated keen interest in the progress of implementation, having on a few occasions led the team and management into communities and households to personally participate in sensitization activities. Due to their personal attachment to the project, there is hardly any hesitation from them to release project vehicles or fuel them for the teams to undertake their planned field activities. They have also led in relating effectively with the traditional authorities in the Municipality to facilitate access to their communities and to support the sensitization process. A similar sense of attachment has also been demonstrated by the Presiding Member of the Assembly, Hon Helena Mensah, who also occasionally participates in community outreach programmes to support the household toilet team.

COLLABORATION



A group of Environmental Health, Community Development, Education, and Security Service getting ready for demand creation for community household toilets.

Though household toilet promotion is primarily an environmental health affair expected to engage mainly the Environmental Health Unit of the Assembly, Ejisu has rather facilitated active collaboration among almost all departments in the Assembly. In some of the community outreach programmes, almost every department is involved including Education, Community Development, Planning, Health among others. In fact, some of the community visits have involved the Police Service, Fire Service, and Ambulance Service in household toilet promotion. Externally too, the Assembly has effectively sought collaboration with the Chiefs and involved Assembly Members to extend promotional activities to their communities.

PROACTIVE AND COMMITTED STAFF

Even a couple of weeks before the official launch of the household toilet construction phase of the project in the Household Toilet Team, staff of the Ejisu Municipal Assembly had already started mobilizing households and registering them to take advantage of the then impending opportunity. The project team has hardly been discouraged or constrained by the occasional delays in fund transfers for field activities or the sudden increase in their responsibilities in trying to achieve set targets for the project. The project team, led by the Municipal Environmental Health Officer, Mr. Ernest Nsuyor Bodoung, has also taken advantage of all the capacity building opportunities available with the project to enhance their skills in community mobilization, environmental and social safeguards, prosecution skills, stakeholder management, among several others.

HIGH PERFORMING SUBPROJECT IMPLEMENTERS (SPIS)

The GKMA Project has assigned three contractors (referred to as SPIS) to each MA, and each of them operates within a demarcated zone. The SPIS are expected to mobilize resources to quickly respond to household demand for toilets. The MA compiles a list of households which have fully paid for the facilities and gives it to the respective SPIS to construct. Ejisu is blessed with some of the highest-performing and most responsive SPIS (Okrugyato, DCHAR, and Sanshie Bonsu). Their ability to construct within stipulated deadlines and deliver quality facilities also facilitates marketing of the products in the

communities. They have proven to be so capable that other struggling MAs have called on some of them to step in to fill supply gaps for them on some occasions. In MAs where the SPIS have weaker capacities to respond to demand, progress is usually restrained.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Among the eight MMAs in GKMA, Ejisu seems to be the least built due to its comparatively rural nature. Getting access to space to construct a toilet is therefore not as difficult as what pertains in the other MAs. Elsewhere in the other MAs, space is limited and a decision by households to build a toilet usually delays due to scarcity of space resulting in higher probability of litigation.

CONCLUSION

Even though the household toilet promotion approach adopted by Ejisu is not too different from what pertains in all the other MAs, Ejisu's performance has been phenomenal from day one. It is clear that while some of the success factors are not necessarily a creation of the Assembly, such as availability of space and high performing SPIS, other factors such as ownership of the project by management, excellent and selfless project team, collaboration with other departments, and good relations with Traditional Authorities and Assembly Members have been the secret to their success so far.



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