



GHANA **WASH** PROJECT
**Lessons Learned from Local NGO
Partnership Experiences**



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GHANA **WASH** PROJECT



LIST OF ACRONYMS

CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
CODESULT	Community Development Consult Network
CONIWAS	Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation
CRED	Centre for Rural Enterprise Development
EDSAM	EDSAM Social Network
EHA	Environmental Health Assistant
GPS	Global Positioning System
GWASH	Ghana Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Project
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization
M/DWST	Municipal and District Water and Sanitation Team
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NLF	New Life Foundation
NNN	New Nation Network
ODF	Open Defecation-Free
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PROMAG	Projects Planning and Management Network
RAF	Rural Action Foundation
RWSPS	Rural Water and Sanitation Promotional Services
SHEP	School Health Education Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WatSan	Water and Sanitation
WSDB	Water and Sanitation Development Board

As part of its implementation strategy, the Ghana WASH Project (GWASH) partnered with 11 Local NGOs (LNGOs) based in the targeted districts to undertake specific tasks in capacity-building, community mobilization, monitoring and reporting on project activities in each district.

These LNGOs, through contracted work, carried out day-to-day community interactions in community mobilization; Water and Sanitation (WatSan) Committees/Water and Sanitation Development Boards (WSDBs) training for the operation and maintenance of water facilities; WatSan Committee backstopping and general support; hygiene promotion and other behavior change activities; and household latrine promotion, adoption, and user education. They also monitored the progress of activities and were required to report to GWASH and Municipal and District Water and Sanitation Teams (M/DWSTs) in their respective assemblies.

In addition, through this arrangement, the LNGOs received specific training and support with the expectation of building their staff and organizational capacities over the contract period.

This strategy serves two purposes: First, to support the project in carrying out its activities and maintaining a consistent presence at the community level, and second, as a means of building the capacity of the LNGOs who are based at the community level and will continue working in the health sector even after GWASH closes out.

TABLE 1: GWASH LNGOs
GWASH partnered with 11 LNGOs in the following districts and regions:

GWASH LNGO	ASSIGNED MUNICIPAL/DISTRICT ASSEMBLY
Community Development Consult Network (CODESULT)	Bibiani, Western Region
Centre for Rural Enterprise Development (CRED)	East Akim , Eastern Region
Development Fortress	Agona East and Gomoa East, Central Region
EDSAM Social Network (EDSAM)	Ho, Biakoye, Krachi East and Kpando, Volta Region
Grassroots Africa	Ledzokuku Krowor, Greater Accra Region
IMPACT	Awutu Senya, Central Region
New Life Foundation (NLF)	Gomoa West, Central Region
New Nation Network (NNN)	Assin North and Assin South, Central Region
Projects Planning and Management Network (PROMAG)	Bia, Aowin and Suaman, Western Region
Rural Action Foundation (RAF)	Ga West, Ga East and Ashaiman, Greater Accra Region West Akim and Akwapim South, Eastern Region Assin South, Central Region
Rural Water and Sanitation Promotional Services (RWSPS)	Juabeso, Western Region

In undertaking this lessons learned research, stakeholders engaged included six LNGO partners, M/DWST members, community leaders (WatSan Committee members), US Agency for International Development (USAID)/Ghana staff and GWASH field and Accra office staff. Fieldwork included visits to 19 communities in seven districts across all five regions. Tools used were focus group discussions and interviews. Fieldwork was conducted during the project extension period, from November 2013 to January 2014.

The following table demonstrated the extent of stakeholder engagement and field research undertaken for this lessons learned document:

TABLE 2: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & FIELDWORK FOR LESSONS LEARNED

REGIONS VISITED	DISTRICT/MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY	COMMUNITIES VISITED	GWASH STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED
Greater Accra	Ga West Municipality	WatSan Committee Leaders in Abensu and Dedeiman communities	GWASH Field Staff GWASH Accra Office Staff RAF (LNGO – Ga West)
Central Region	Awutu Senya District Agona East District Assin North Municipal Assembly	WatSan Committee Leaders in Kwashie Abbey, Ofadjato, Papaye (Awutu Senya) Adjeikwa, Akoako, Adasemanse (Agona East) Asuoankomaso, Kuberko, Kwamekwa (Assin North)	GWASH Field Staff IMPACT (LNGO – Awutu Senya) NNN (LNGO – Assin North)
Eastern Region	East Akim Municipal Assembly	WatSan Committee Leaders in Aboabo, Adjomoku, Tema Apedwa	GWASH Field Staff CRED (LNGO – East Akim)
Volta Region	Ho Municipal Assembly	WatSan Committee Leaders in Avenui Camp, Abutia Teti	GWASH Field Staff EDSAM Social Network (LNGO – East Akim)
Western Region	Aowin and Suaman Districts	WatSan Committee Leaders in Asafoakye, Papueso, Adjakaa	GWASH Field Staff PROMAG (LNGO – Aowin and Suaman)

This document explores the following themes, examining project experiences and drawing out lessons learned in the following areas:

Part 1: Examining the LNGO Selection Process

Did the selection process establish partnerships with strong performing LNGOs?

Part 2: Building LNGOs' Technical and Management Skills in WASH

Did LNGOs build capacity as result of partnership, and in which areas?

Did GWASH support LNGOs in achieving their own organizational aims?

Part 3: Building Sustainable Relationships with Community and Government Stakeholders

Did the LNGOs build strong relationships with community members and community leadership?

Did the LNGOs develop strong relationships with the M/DWSTs?

Part 4: Collaborations between the LNGOs and the GWASH Team

Did the LNGOs and GWASH staff collaborate effectively to achieve project aims?

PART 1: EXAMINING THE LNGO SELECTION PROCESS

Did the selection process establish partnerships with strong performing LNGOs?

GWASH took measures to identify high-performing LNGOs. GWASH worked with the District and Municipal Assemblies to select LNGOs, acquiring a list of recommended LNGOs operating in each constituency. GWASH considered more than 40 LNGOs as possible project partners, and the project used a selection process with a scoring rubric and documentation verification. The scoring rubric [1] included such criteria as number of watsan committees executed in past five years, proper maintenance of staff records, regular undertaking of staff appraisals and staff retention, keeping proper account books (balance sheets and income statements), possession of functioning means of transport for field work, and evidence of an external audit. The project also attempted to verify the LNGOs' documents, including past contracts and annual reports,

[1] For complete scoring rubric and documentation verification list, please see Tables 5 and 6 in the Appendix.

staff records, financial management documents, evidence of equipment holdings and membership in relevant networks. Using such criteria and documentation verification, LNGOs were scored on a scale of 0 to 100, with the project finally establishing contracts with 11 partner LNGOs.

Although there were some positive examples of high-performing LNGOs, stakeholders' feedback indicates that only three of the 11 LNGOs' performances met expectations. The selection process was identified as a key culprit of partnerships with lower-than-expected performers.

The advertised strengths of many LNGOs during the selection process did not match the reality on the ground during the implementation period: This was the case in terms of available equipment (motorbikes, computers), skills (ability to carry out community trainings and facilitations) as well as human capacity (number of field officers available for fieldwork). Many of the LNGOs lacked sufficient laptops and computer skills; field officers recounted delays in reporting due to this. With one LNGO (CRED), it was only the accountant who possessed the skills to use the computer and was charged with writing the reports. "When he wasn't available, it didn't get done," said the GWASH Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) Agent for Eastern Region.

LNGOs commonly cited challenges with access to sufficient vehicles and motorcycles to facilitate their easy travel to and from communities. As a result, LNGO field staff relied on their own private vehicles, public transport, or on GWASH field staff vehicles when available. This hampered the frequency and distances these field staff could travel for their overall monitoring efforts. The result was that a number of the LNGOs lacked the capacity to carry out their contracted responsibilities. This is critical because in situations where the LNGO fails to perform, it falls upon the field officer to pick up the slack. Field officers experienced this with community trainings and facilitation.

LESSONS LEARNED ON THE LNGO SELECTION PROCESS:

- A more stringent selection process is needed for future LNGO partnerships in project. The selection process should include not only a checklist of required qualification and equipment, but also site-based verification to ensure that the LNGOs indeed meet or exceed the required criteria, in areas such as educational or experiential qualifications, technical skills, equipment (inventory) and management. Future projects could rely on third party verification, through references from LNGOs' previous work, the Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS), etc.
- As part of the application process, LNGOs should be required to submit proposals in response to a statement of work. This technique was used for the project's Small Grants Facility successfully to support in evaluating applicants.
- USAID/Ghana could also look at implemented projects with a strong track record of LNGO partnerships to understand the contributions of their selection processes to positive results.

PART 2: BUILDING LNGOs' TECHNICAL & MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN WASH

Did LNGOs build capacity as result of partnership, and in which areas?

LNGOs were able to build their skills in some areas (technical skills like report writing, CLTS). Concrete skills that LNGOs now possess as a result of GWASH capacity building:

- **LNGO management and field officers improved their technical skills in CLTS:** It was through GWASH that the LNGOs first encountered and learned the principles of the CLTS strategy. Now, they have an understanding of critical steps toward demand creation for improved sanitation in a community; can facilitate pre-triggering, triggering and post-triggering effectively in a community. "Due to GWASH, each member of EDSAM has a firm understanding of sanitation and hygiene ...

Furthermore, they could also continue to build household and institutional latrines if they were to receive funding. Finally, each member of EDSAM now feels confident with leading community meetings and projects.” – Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV), Volta Region

- **LNGOs built strong familiarity with the Open Defecation-Free (ODF) assessment process:** Able to guide communities as they prepare for ODF assessment and verification process, which is first conducted by the community and then by the District/Municipal Assembly.
- **Report Writing: As time went along, the LNGOs received support and feedback that enabled them to build their work planning and report writing skills:** GWASH required monthly and quarterly workplans and reports from LNGOs, and with each report, the LNGOs went through two levels of feedback processing, first from the field officer, and second from the GWASH Deputy Chief of Party.

GWASH provided report templates to guide the LNGOs in the report writing process. The LNGOs first submitted their report to the field officer, who worked with the LNGOs to strengthen the documents, by providing feedback, requesting additional information and detail as needed, and formatting and editing the document’s grammar and spelling issues. The LNGO then re-submitted the report to the field officer, who then forwarded the document to the Deputy Chief of Party for review before it was made final. The goal, which was achieved in many cases, was encouraging the LNGOs to write detailed reports providing full and accurate information on activities by community.

Over the course of the project, the LNGOs became better able to provide this information upfront, demonstrating improved skills and requiring less editing and feedback on the part of GWASH field officers and the Deputy Chief of Party. LNGOs able to retain their staff over the contract period made the most improvements.

“As at the last quarter, for instance, New Nation Network’s [monthly] report, I didn’t have comments like before. The LNGOs have come a long way – especially those who were able to retain staff. You could tell by the quality of their report, work plans and the photos they were even taking and the stories they were writing. Because they have done it and they have gotten feedback over and over again. They had gotten to the point that they were quite good.” – GWASH Deputy Chief of Party

“The GWASH Project’s monthly, quarterly, and yearly reports helped EDSAM staff realize the importance of writing reports. The director of EDSAM put measures in place, such as report writing workshops and field activity summary tables, to improve EDSAM’s reports.” – PCV, Volta Region

Few LNGOs provided timely, quality and regular workplans and reports on field activities: Despite these improvements from the LNGOs’ perspective, the overall sentiment from GWASH staff is that the LNGOs did not perform or report their activities to standard.

“The reports were not timely; they will come and they won’t be of the quality you want. Normally it will go back and forth three or four times before it was presentable... Normally, the LNGO quarterly reports feed into the quarterly report that I do [and send to Winrock home office], so if I hadn’t gotten that how do I report? So the timeliness was an issue.” – GWASH Deputy Chief of Party

Community Mobilization and Facilitation: Average performance in this area, with struggles engaging with communities and imparting water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) knowledge: LNGO field staff were less skilled in providing trainings at the community level and struggled to perform in these areas, including imparting knowledge to the WatSan Committees. In a few instances, GWASH staff, such as the CLTS Coordinator or Deputy Chief of Party, had to intervene to support LNGO staff in WatSan Committee trainings. All of the LNGOs struggled in hybrid CLTS due to the fact that it was a new subject for all of them, but gradually improved their skills and knowledge in this area over the course of the project.

While LNGO staff possessed WASH sector knowledge, many lacked the facilitation skills to effectively deliver

the content in a training setting using interactive, participatory methodologies. Before implementing the hybrid CLTS strategy, GWASH held a two-week training for the LNGOs to be tasked with carrying out project CLTS activities. Still, many lacked training skills and were forced to rely heavily on the project CLTS manual when facilitating.

Community Monitoring: LNGOs struggled with regular, community-level monitoring: LNGOs were expected to visit the communities on a regular basis (e.g., such as twice a month, or every three weeks), but it became clear that many LNGOs were visiting the communities on a less frequent basis. A key expectation of LNGOs’ community monitoring responsibilities was to establish a consistent presence for GWASH at the community level. While some of the LNGOs did establish a consistent presence in the communities through regular field visits, others did not.

Community Monitoring: LNGOs struggled with monitoring technical aspects of facility construction: The LNGOs were expected to monitor construction of sanitation facilities, including the correct construction of the household latrines, despite the fact that they did not participate in the latrine artisan trainings to become comfortable with the design and specifications. Many of the LNGOs had previous “software” experience, such as facilitating hygiene promotion activities, working with WatSan Committees and delivering School Health Education Program (SHEP) promotion activities, but they did not have technical experience in the construction of water and sanitation facilities. A strong exception to this was EDSAM, the project’s LNGO in the Volta Region, likely due to the Executive Director’s previous engineering experience.

TABLE 3: LNGO SELF ASSESSMENT

In a self assessment, LNGOs were asked to rate their skills (on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest) in the following areas before and after their GWASH experience:

SKILL AREAS	EDSAM		IMPACT		NNN		PROMAG		RAF		OVERALL IMPROVEMENT
	Before	After									
Technical Skills	8	10	6	10	5	10	8	-	9	9.5	3
Field Experience	5	10	6	10	8	10	7	-	9	9.5	3
Financial Management	4	8	6	9	7	10	-	-	6	7	3

Did GWASH support LNGOs in achieving their own organizational aims?

For WASH-focused LNGOs, the management saw great improvements in their capacity as LNGOs at the management level and the level of their field staff. However, across the board, high field staff turnover, due to poor remuneration and challenging community conditions, meant that many LNGOs lost key field staff who gained skills, experience and knowledge through GWASH.

High field staff turnover presented a challenge for the LNGOs in executing their work and organizational development: Across the board, LNGOs faced staff turnover, the most consistent challenge mentioned. When trained field staff left the LNGO, they took with them the WASH knowledge and skills they had gained. When new recruits filled the position, these new field officers had little to no knowledge about the field activities. Many LNGOs failed to provide trainings for these new staff, and it often fell upon GWASH

field officers to provide informal trainings and support. Without this support, it was difficult for these new staff to gain and build their specialty knowledge in WASH to meet the project's demands for fieldwork.

GWASH invested funds, training and support to improve LNGOs programmatic capacity, but the lack or absence of administrative and financial management capacity of LNGOs limited the project's impact. Poor human resources approaches to LNGO management at the director levels lead to high turnover and wasted programmatic trainings; many LNGOs did not pay their staff, or paid them only a portion of the budgeted amount. In other instances, it was only with GWASH funds that LNGOs could afford to take on field staff. Some LNGOs, like IMPACT in Awutu Senya, Central Region, hired additional staff during their GWASH contract period for fieldwork. Once the contract for GWASH was over, IMPACT and other LNGOs lacked the financial capacity to keep the GWASH-trained field officers on board.

LNGOs confirmed that the combination of poor remuneration and delayed salary payments for field staff, as well as tedious and demanding work contributed to high turnover.

While GWASH included a general intention to strengthen the capacity of LNGOs, this focus was not included in the project's deliverables. This strategy influenced the support provided to LNGOs, and in turn, their organizational development.

"Right from the beginning...two guys did not even receive the first salary and they quit. Two other guys came, and they stopped. Another guy and one lady joined, but they all quit...The whole thing can be attributed to the fact that GWASH was not permanent and the remuneration was not that good at first." – New Nation Network

"Sometimes our salary was delayed for two or three months...GWASH should always find out from the field officers or those involved in the LNGO as to how they are paid...executive directors should be monitored as to the payment to their field workers." – PROMAG

"Four out of the five staff [trained by GWASH] are no longer working with PROMAG; they left when PROMAG's contract with GWASH ended." – PROMAG

"We had four field staff, and they went through training, they had some level of experience... But we couldn't sustain them [financially], so we only kept them for a little while and then we had to let them go after they had provided their services... it's the field officers whose capacity we built that we had to let go." – IMPACT

"Our project wasn't put together to build the entire capacity of the LNGO. We wanted some activities done and so we provided them with information and skills to do those activities...we didn't seek to build the entire organizational structure...I think that was the reason they had a high turnover because we were thinking short term." – GWASH Deputy Chief of Party

LNGOs with WASH as a core organizational focus benefited from their GWASH experience, as the project was in line with their own organization aims: All the LNGOs replied in the affirmative that their GWASH experience has enabled them achieve their goals as an organization. LNGOs confirmed that with the experience they received through the GWASH, they are better equipped to work in the WASH sector.

"Our goal falls under the thematic area of seeing to it that people in the rural communities have access to clean water and sanitation ... We have achieved our aim through the GWASH Project by providing the communities with the water facility and sanitation education...Yes, I can say we are well equipped to work on any activity in the WASH sector. As we mentioned earlier, we have gained technical skills which will make us an independent organization. We have tapped experience from GWASH." – New Nation Network

"The experience we had from GWASH [we have] been apply to other projects." - PROMAG

LESSONS LEARNED ON SUPPORTING LNGOs' CAPACITY:

- Building the capacity of LNGO partners in specified areas related to both the project's deliverables and LNGO organizational development should be incorporated as part of project deliverables. With the project reporting on the capacity development of its LNGOs, the project would therefore assess their skills regularly, ensuring accountability to the donor and to the LNGOs for their organizational development.
- Once LNGOs are selected, the project should identify any capacity gaps that exist and work with the LNGO to develop a capacity building plan which could include technical trainings, experience sharing and other supports to enable LNGOs to be able to perform at level necessary for project and beyond.
- The project should ensure that the LNGO field staff salaries are market rate, instead of leaving their salary levels at the discretion of the LNGO. The project should follow up to ensure field officers are being paid in accordance with this level in the approved budget.
- In conjunction with the LNGO leadership, the project should devise additional or alternative incentives for the LNGO field workers so that those who go the extra mile are rewarded.
- Additional and regular training opportunities should be available for newly recruited LNGO field staff that join mid-project and weren't able to attend initial workshops. These trainings should be coupled with a mentoring program with a seasoned staff member to facilitate the new staff members' quick and relatively easy transition.
- Finding sustainable funding sources is important for LNGOs. Future projects should include proposal writing and support for LNGOs to enable them to keep up the grant and funding request, financial management and reporting capacity to work on future WASH projects.

PART 3: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS

Did the LNGOs build strong relationships with community members and community leadership?

When asked directly, most of the communities expressed very positive impressions of the LNGOs work, but this is due to the fact that most of these community members were unaware of the specific roles and responsibilities of the LNGOs. What they knew was that through the LNGOs, the communities had received facilities such as boreholes and latrines. As a result, when asked to score the LNGOs on their performance, the communities (WatSan Committee members) gave them 90% to 100%.

That said, WatSan Committee Members struggled to remember the names of the LNGO field officers who were tasked to frequent their communities, hinting at the infrequency of visits. Some members of the community found it difficult to remember the names of personnel of the various LNGOs and the roles they came to play in the communities. While in some cases it had been several months up to a year since the LNGOs' last visit, this also hints at the infrequency of the LNGOs' visits to the community, and failure to establish a strong relationship. There were notable exceptions, such as Rural Action Foundation in Ga West communities.

"We will even give them [Development Fortress] more 100% because they taught us so many things, sometimes we even felt like we were at the university. We now know so much." – Adjjekwa Community

"EDSAM did very well. We shall give them 90%. People were not accepting the message at first and Mr. Darkey-Mensah was travelling up and down to convince us to change our habit, before finally

we took what he was teaching us. They also spoke to us politely and we liked what they were teaching us.” – Avenui Camp Community

“All of the communities we worked in were very receptive to my LNGO. Likewise, my LNGO [EDSAM] treated each community with respect.” – PCV, Ho, Volta Region

On the other hand, two of the three PCVs interviewed provided less than favorable impressions of the LNGOs relationships with the communities.

“I would rate Development Fortress as having good knowledge of the information, but poor delivery skills and relationship building skills. The LNGO staff would condescend to villagers, arrive late to meetings, and show contempt. They knew how to wash hands, but not how to interact with small communities. Obratwaowuo was weary of Development Fortress by the end of their interactions.” – PCV, Central Region

“The LNGO [CRED] was recommended by the Assembly here [in Eastern Region], but they were actually based in Central Region, which meant every weekend they wanted to go to Central Region. Pretty soon, they would leave for Central on Thursday night maybe, and then come back to Eastern Region Tuesday night. So they would be here for Wednesday and Thursday, and that was all the work they were doing, unless they heard that field staff were coming from the office...then they would tag along to the communities so that they could defend themselves in case anything came up.” – PCV, Eastern Region

After the WatSan Committee formation, LNGOs focused on engaging with the WatSan Committees only, rather than the entire community, leading to subsequent leadership challenges for the committees: After forming the WatSan Committees, LNGO field staff met with the committee more often than they did with the entire community. They saw the WatSan Committees as point of contacts and relied on them to spread the hygiene messages, instead of attending community meetings themselves.

This directly affected the recognized authority of the WatSan Committee in the community. While the WatSan Committees were generally committed of the voluntary role they were undertaking in their communities, their authority required legitimacy in order to provide continued hygiene education, to ensure proper usage of the facilities, and especially to collect funds from community members for the future repair of the facilities. Without the LNGOs’ ongoing facilitation to encourage the communities to recognize and respect their WatSan Committees’ responsibilities, the result in many communities was a committed WatSan Committee without legitimacy by their own community. WatSan Committees did not feel they had the needed backing and support of community members to go about their duties.

Most of the communities complained that the LNGOs came to undertake activities without giving prior notification. Failure to give them prior notification meant community members were not available to meet the LNGOs, that the LNGO was unable to engage with the entire or majority of the community and cement the role of the WatSan as caretakers of the community facilities.

“Sometimes they [Development Fortress] never informed us they were coming, but when they came, we called everyone and we met for them to take us through the training.” - Adasamanse Community

“We wanted the [IMPACT] to meet the entire community to teach them the hygiene practices and to officially introduce the WatSan Committee to the community so that the people in the community will know we are not telling a lie. But that did not happen. She never met the entire community to teach them anything. She usually met the WatSan Committee.” – Papaye Community

“This is a farming community, you will only get us on Mondays in order for you to meet the entire community and the WatSan, but they [CRED] came on different days. When they came on other days, they found it difficult to call the entire team together. The last time they came they just met eight people but they did whatever they wanted to so and left.” - Tema Apedwa Community

LESSONS LEARNED ON LNGOs' COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:

- In subsequent projects, the personnel from the LNGOs should be introduced to the community members by a GWASH staff.
- LNGO roles and responsibilities should be stated clearly to the members of the community so that the communities will know which role the LNGOs will be playing in the communities. In addition, the communities should receive a hardcopy version of the LNGO roles and responsibilities, in text that is easy for them to understand.
- GWASH field staff should regularly check on the LNGOs' activities to confirm the authenticity of information provided in reports. Field officers should participate in the yearly assessment process of the LNGOs when management is deciding whether to renew or not renew contracts.
- The LNGOs should be made to realize the importance of establishing relationships with the community as a whole in addition to the WatSan Committees. Once the WatSan Committee is formed, the LNGO, as part of their work agreement with the project, would organize with the community leaders to introduce the committee to the rest of the community and explain their role. The LNGO then would also help the WatSan Committees in organizing sessions with the community on hygiene promotion, etc. to support them in their new role in the community.
- Conflict negotiation and mediation should be including in the trainings provided by the project and LNGOs for WatSan Committees, to assist them in dealing with common community challenges (community members' resistance to paying as they fetch), so that they can expect these challenges and have some skills to manage them independently as they arise.
- To ensure sustainability of the WatSan Committees, the LNGOs should work with the committees, community leaders and membership to develop incentive schemes for the watsan members to reward/demonstrate appreciation for their efforts. This will motivate them in going about their duties and make their positions enviable. For example, the WatSan Committees could earn a percentage of the funds collected from fetching water.
- The LNGO should provide an itinerary of activities to the communities. This list should include the program schedule for the entire month. The schedule should either be circulated to everyone or be pasted on the wall of the WatSan Committee chairman's house. This will inform members of the community of the days and the time that the LNGO will be coming to the communities.
- The LNGOs should introduce themselves and reinforce their affiliations to members of the community, continuously throughout the project. This will ensure the community recognition of the field staff, and will also be important as LNGOs experience field staff turnover.

Did the LNGOs develop strong relationships with the M/DWSTs?

One of the aims of GWASH was to build a relationship between the LNGOs and the District and Municipal Assemblies, to be achieved through effective collaboration between LNGO field staff and M/DWSTs. GWASH developed official documents (Tripartite Partnership Memoranda of Understanding) (MOU) between the project, assemblies and LNGOs laying out expected roles and responsibilities. Despite this, overall, there was a poor working relationship.

Overall, there were poor to average working relationships between LNGOs and Assemblies: The LNGOs reported their unimpressive relationships with the District and Municipal Water and Sanitation Teams, and the district and municipal assembly leaders also complained of a poor relationship.

From the perspective of GWASH staff, cronyism of the District/Municipal personnel who had their own LNGOs on the side caused issues as they were unwilling to collaborate with LNGOs brought in via the pro-

ject's competitive selection process. It appears that some assemblies had preferred LNGOs to work with; when these LNGOs were not selected through the bidding process, the assemblies were less likely to cooperate with the LNGOs that had been selected. Related to this was the lack of influence of LNGOs in respective districts when they came from outside the District/Municipal government stakeholders' network; this was the case of CRED, based in Central Region but contracted to undertake activities in Eastern Region.

From the perspective of the LNGOs, the assembly officers demanded funds for transportation in order to accompany field visits. The assemblies complained that the LNGOs did not provide their workplans in advance, if at all, nor did they provide formal reports documenting activities in the field. In the case of CRED in East Akim, Eastern Region, there was a near total dissolution of the relationship, until GWASH intervened on two occasions for arbitration.

Most of the LNGOs worked either independently or with little support from the M/DWSTs.

"I must be frank, the DWSTs, initially we were asked to liaise with them when the project started so we went to them for everything including sending our reports and work plans but we realized that they were demanding money and fuel before they joined us to the field." – New Nation Network

"Their problem was they were not involved in the planning and the implementation of the household latrine construction. The last meeting that we went to, the District Planning officer was complaining that the household toilets would not be sustainable, that they were not involved, that the design didn't meet the standards, among other things.... So we never went to field together." – IMPACT

"When we asked them for help, they thought GWASH had brought some huge funds and didn't want to release it. They always demanded." – PROMAG

"We had to provide funding for them any activity we do together; GWASH provides funds" – EDSAM

"This is one aspect which I think hasn't worked so well. In some districts, for example East Akim, the district and the LNGO were at loggerheads...It could be because they were not sharing the work plans...I had to go to two arbitrations at the Assembly level because the Municipal Assembly was trying to kick CRED out...There were two sessions in East Akim that I had to go and mediate...It stems from the relationship between the LNGO and the Assembly." – GWASH Deputy Chief of Party

"Let's face it: There are times that you need the Assembly, for example siting [facilities], you can't go and site latrines, we need the Assembly to do that. Monitoring, you can't go to the district every day, so you need the Community Director to support you. You also need the [Environmental Health Assistants'] support, so if you don't have that rapport with them to build up that partnership, you can't go ahead and do your project. Even for sustainability, if you are not involved, they will say, 'It's those people's project, if it breaks down it's their problem.' So for sustainability, we need to work on that link." – GWASH Deputy Chief of Party

M/DWSTs often felt left out of the ongoing activities in their districts, despite the signed MOUs between themselves, the project and the LNGOs, due to lack of reporting and information: Despite the MOUs that were signed between GWASH (Relief International), the LNGOs and the Assemblies, the M/DWSTs were often left out of the planning and reporting on community activities. In addition, the M/DWSTs said they were not provided with the scope of work of the LNGOs to know what activities to expect in their constituent communities. The M/DWSTs also complained that they did not have a strong sense of the LNGOs responsibilities since they did not have the LNGOs' scope of work.

"The GWASH relationship with the LNGO was stronger than the Assembly, we at times felt we are left out. I suggest any future project we build on the relationship and work as a team." – Aowin and Suaman District Assembly

"Next time if the LNGO is being introduced please make their scope of work known to us." – East

Akim Municipal Assembly

"Sanitation is a collective responsibility. It is good you to involve them [LNGOs], so that the work can go on. The approach is good, but we would wish they would improve on their relationship with us."
– Ho Municipal Assembly

"It is very necessary that the Assembly is involved because some of the LNGOs work in some areas and we do not even know about their activities...Sometimes, they come and do the work and they go; sustainability is left in the air, because the Assembly is not involved." – Agona East D/A

"We have not received any formal or written reports. If you talk of verbal reports, that one, we have been receiving it. But if its written report, monthly, quarterly or annually, that one we haven't been receiving it. We do not know if the they [EDSAM] have been channeling the reports straight to [GWASH] or to those places where the selection took place. That is lacking. We do complain many times and when we meet they tell us they are going to give us." – Ho Municipal Assembly

"Next time the LNGOs should be based at the district capital. That will encourage a better relationship with the LNGO and the Assembly. It will also help them get involved in what the Municipal Assembly is doing, and the management will also know that there is an LNGO working here." – Community Development Officer, East Akim Municipal Assembly

M/DWSTs were not informed at the completion of hardware facilities. They also complained of their lack of involvement in the regular monitoring of the construction of these facilities: Another reason for the importance of including the Assemblies in the monitoring responsibility is that at the close of the project, it is the Assemblies that will take over providing community support. However, when the M/DWST member has not been properly introduced to the contractor or to the beneficiary, these individuals would question the Assembly's involvement, creating complications and challenges to sustainability.

"We were able to build a relationship with them [LNGO]. In the beginning, they brought some artisans from Brong Ahafo to come and construct some KVIPS here, so when you go and they are doing the work and you approach them, because the person doesn't know you and they are not working under you, they are not taking any instructions from you... So when they started training the artisans, we also went to witness and supervise and when they were constructing and we went to inspect. They knew we us, and I think things are going on alright." – Ho Municipal Assembly

The District and Municipal Assemblies require formal documentation – regular reports, workplans and information of completed facilities. Regular and timely sharing of these documents was an issue between the LNGOs and the Assemblies across the board. In some cases, there were verbal updates of field activities, but without a formal report. In some other cases, it was only after the Assemblies made specific complaints to GWASH or to the LNGO that the LNGO began to provide these documents. While this can be a challenge in terms of planning and staying abreast of activities in the field, it can cause additional issues when it comes to the commissioning and usage of project facilities when handed over without informing the Assembly.

"With the school facilities, we went out with the contractor and he finished with our engineer and they finished building [the institutional latrine]. All of a sudden, the school children started using it and we didn't know anything about it. So when I went to one school, we realized they were using it... So it looks like we all went out to work, and they [LNGO] came back to ask them to use it. So no report, nothing...We would have wanted a formal report, that they have completed this and that, but they do not do that. Our engineer was saying that if any problem develops, he will direct them to you [GWASH] since you were the ones who instructed them to start using it [the facility]." – EHA, Ga West Municipal Assembly

LESSONS LEARNED ON LNGOs' WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ASSEMBLIES:

- District and Municipal Assemblies' feedback on LNGOs should be included in the LNGO selection

process. While it should not necessarily be given large weight, giving Assemblies the opportunity to weigh in can promote their buy-in to the project. Once an LNGO is selected, the Assemblies should be provided with the rationale for their selection according to the selection process criteria.

- In future projects, the M/DWSTs should be provided with LNGOs' scope of work to be aware of the totality of their responsibilities and planned activities.
- At the beginning of the project, M/DWSTs, project implementers and LNGOs should meet to agree on a collaborative framework for sharing workplans, reports and monitoring project activities.
- District and Municipal Assemblies' feedback and experiences should be included in the annual or regular performance evaluation of the LNGOs.
- USAID/Ghana's mission order allowing the project to pay per diems to government officers was critical for allowing the project to use it as an incentive to the Environmental Health Assistants (EHAs) to work more closely with GWASH field staff in monitoring. It allowed the project to address the lack of funds for EHAs to travel to the field, and also facilitated a closer working relationship between these partners. At the same time, there is the sustainability challenge of where the officers will find funds to continue the work when the project comes to an end.
- To facilitate closer working relationships between the LNGOs and district and municipal assemblies, if space allows, LNGOs should be based at the Municipal/District Assembly. This would encourage more constant communication and interaction between these stakeholders.

PART 4: COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN THE LNGOS AND THE GWASH TEAM

Did the LNGOs and GWASH staff collaborate effectively to achieve project aims?

With one exception, there was a poor working relationship between LNGOs and the PCVs. There were consistent challenges of LNGOs working with GWASH field and home office staff in terms of regular and timely reporting; this was influenced by the fact that GWASH LNGOs contracts and financial reporting were with Relief International, while field activities and monitoring were through Winrock International. Additionally, the project shifted to increased involvement of M/DWSTs and EHAs rather than LNGOs to provide monitoring and support with only three highly performing LNGOs remaining in the final 18 months of the project. In the end, out of 11 LNGO contracts, four were not renewed and two were canceled early due to poor performance.

Overall, the LNGOs and the PCVs reported a poor working relationship: GWASH worked with seven PCVs, with six based in the field in five sites. Some of the LNGOs, like RAF and NNN, did not have GWASH PCVs serving in their districts.

Generally, the LNGOs and PCVs did not feel united in the field as members of the same team, and there were fundamental misunderstandings about how best to collaborate effectively. On the one hand, LNGOs reported that the PCVs were not "cooperative," did not help in achieving "common goals," and had their "own priorities." LNGOs mentioned that rather than addressing issues in the field together, the PCVs would report issues directly to the GWASH office in Accra, building suspicion and distrust.

On the other hand, PCVs reported that the LNGOs did not provide sufficient advanced notice of field activities, failed to share workplans (or did not share them in a timely manner), but still expected the PCVs to be available whenever needed, even on short notice. A common complaint was that LNGO field staff would arrive in the early morning at the PCV's home to do fieldwork, without establishing any prior plans for that day. If the PCV was unavailable, the LNGO perceived this as unwillingness to work together.

"They were not cooperative. They did not help with us achieve a common goal. They are the kind who always wanted to do what they thought was good for them and they complained a lot. They

liked reporting problems to GWASH instead of sharing with us so we all solved it together.” - PRO-MAG

“It wasn’t the best, as good as it should have been. [The PCV] had her own priorities. She was to support us so we should have worked together, but she planned her own [activities]; she had problems with the community and with our field staff.” – IMPACT

“I did not have a working relationship with the GWASH Local NGO. Development Fortress rarely notified me of their work in my area and had difficulty contacting me in time for me to be effective in supporting their efforts in Agona East. I would best describe my collaboration with Development Fortress as an exchange of information on latrine construction and two education initiatives.” – PCV, Central Region

“They [CRED] didn’t really know what my role was, and I think they felt slightly threatened by their presence, like I was going to [report them to GWASH] if they weren’t doing all the work that their report said they were doing...And they would do things like show up [in the community] and test me in Twi and give me obscure sentences and things...they would do things like that to embarrass me at the beginning of our meetings.. it wasn’t really the best partnership.” – PCV, Eastern Region

There was an extremely positive working relationship between EDSAM Social Network and the GWASH-seconded PCV based in Volta Region, demonstrating the high potential for this type of collaboration: EDSAM has worked with American volunteers in the past, and both the PCV and the LNGO reported a strong relationship with mutual benefits. The two collaborated on a nearly daily basis, with the PCV included in almost all of EDSAM’s activities, including participating in Monday morning staff meetings.

The PCV also reported that the LNGO encouraged him to make additional contributions. The PCV also provided support in terms of writing proposals, training on basic computer skills like Microsoft Word and Excel, monitoring hardware activities and collecting photos, Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and beneficiary information for the project’s database and online map. The PCV admittedly had less success when it came to support in triggering and software activities, due to the language barrier.

“[The PCV] learned the local conditions fast, takes all instructions, supports staff, and provides training in ICT, etc.” – EDSAM

“I had a very strong working relationship with my LNGO [EDSAM]...Not only did my LNGO include me in all of their GWASH activities, but they also encouraged me to contribute to the strategy of the project (i.e. HHL construction strategy, activity planning)...“I have helped EDSAM write work proposals to undertake when the GWASH Project ends. Not only will this help EDSAM obtain future work, but it will also teach them and give them practice on how to write proposals for work in the future when I am gone... When there is time I hold formal computer classes....Finally, I believe that I have gained more from working with EDSAM than they have gained from me. I now understand how a small organization in a developing country runs and also how to do work in rural communities.” – PCV, Volta Region

While the LNGO contracts and finances were administered and managed by Relief International (home office), field staff executed programming activities in collaboration with Winrock field staff, resulting in a lack of leverage for GWASH field staff to address challenges in the field: The LNGO contracts were made under the RI umbrella, while in the field, the LNGOs worked with the Winrock staff. The result: There were accountability challenges (verifying that the LNGOs had done their budgeted work, such as field visits). Another challenge was field staff could not interfere or ask them to do critical activities.

LNGO were not empowered to address field challenges at their level in the field, and instead, reported challenges to the GWASH office. Rather than addressing and resolving issues in the field, both GWASH and LNGO field staff reported it to management to resolve.

"Now the report goes through field agent, who will do the first reading through and they sent it to me by the 10th of every month...I collate the comments then send it back to the LNGO directly. That was just the technical side; I never saw financial reports...Accountability and reporting were very difficult." – GWASH Deputy Chief of Party

"I think the field staff are also not comfortable or confident addressing things at their level in the field and letting it end there...We probably should have empowered the field staff to deal with LNGO issues." – GWASH Deputy Chief of Party

Despite ongoing GWASH activities in their assigned districts, out of 11 LNGO contracts, four were not renewed and two were canceled early due to poor performance. RWSPS's and IMPACT's contracts were not renewed. CRED's contract was not renewed, due to their antagonistic relationship with the East Akim Municipal Assembly. CODESULT and Grassroots' contract were terminated early; in the case of Grassroots, it was due to non-performance as specified in the contract (the LNGO was not showing up to meetings or trainings). PROMAG improved but after the review, GWASH did not renew the LNGO's contract due to reports that the field staff did not undertake their contracted field activities.

LESSONS LEARNED ON LNGOs' COLLABORATION WITH GWASH STAFF:

- At the introductory trainings provided by the project to the PCVs and LNGOs, the role of the PCVs should be clearly stated to the LNGOs so they are able to involve them in their activities. Similarly, PCVs should be provided with a realistic understanding of the opportunities, challenges and cultural differences of working with a Ghanaian LNGO.
- The LNGOs and PCVs should receive conflict negotiation support, first working together to troubleshoot issues before reporting issues to the home office.
- Field staff should be empowered to address issues that come up in the field with the LNGOs, and then report the status of the issues and resolution to higher-level management.
- Sub-contractual management of the LNGO should be the responsibility of the organization who is overseeing and monitoring its activities to ensure accountability and facilitate responsiveness to problems that occur at the field level.



Akoako WatSan Committee (Agona East, Central Region)



Community members of Kwamekwa (Assin North, Central Region) gather to discuss their experience working with the local NGO through USAID's Ghana WASH Project.

TABLE 4: GWASH LNGO PERFORMANCE RATING

Rating of LNGOs, according to experiences of D/WWSTs, Watsan Committees and GWASH Team, including both field staff and office staff:

Scale: LOW – LOW AVERAGE – AVERAGE – AVERAGE HIGH – HIGH

LNGO NAME	CONTRACT INFORMATION			STAKEHOLDER PERFORMANCE RATING			
	CONTRACTED PERIOD	CONTRACT STATUS	ASSEMBLY RATING	COMMUNITY RATING	GWASH TEAM RATING	OVERALL RATING	
CODESULT	Nov 2010 to Jan 2012	Contract terminated early	--	--	LOW	LOW	
Centre for Rural Enterprise Development (CRED)	Nov 2010 to Dec 2012	Completed; Not renewed	LOW	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	LOW AVERAGE	
Development Fortress (DF)	Nov 2010 to June 2013	Completed; Not renewed despite ongoing activities in district	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	
EDSAM Social Network (EDSAM)	Nov 2010 to Present	Contract extended through February 2014	AVERAGE	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	
Grassroots Africa	July 2011 – Apr 2012	Contract terminated early	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	
IMPACT	Nov 2010 to Dec 2012	Completed; Not renewed despite ongoing activities in district	AVERAGE	LOW	LOW	LOW	
New Life Foundation (NLF)	Nov 2010 to Dec 2012	Completed; Contract not renewed, end of activities in district	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	LOW	LOW AVERAGE	
New Nation Network (NNN)	Nov 2010 to June 2013	Completed; Contract extended to support additional activities	LOW	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	LOW AVERAGE	
Projects Planning and Management Network (PROMAG)	Nov 2010 to June 2013	Completed; Not renewed	LOW	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	LOW AVERAGE	
Rural Action Foundation (RAF)	Nov 2010 to June 2013	Completed; Contract extended for additional activities	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	
Rural Water and Sanitation Promotional Services (RWSPS)	Nov 2010 to Dec 2012	Completed; Not renewed	LOW	N/A	LOW	LOW	

APPENDIX—TABLE 5

TABLE 5: GWASH LNGO SELECTION TOOL, REVISED VERSION

Selection criteria and scoring used to rate LNGOs as potential GWASH implementation partners:

LNGO SELECTION TOOL							
	KEY CRITERIA	PROPOSED SCORE	NAME OF LNGO				
1	Registration: Registrar General Department/ DA (15 points)	15	LNGO A	LNGO B	LNGO C	LNGO D	LNGO E
	Registrar Gen Dpt (30%) 10 yrs & above 35% 5yrs to 9 yrs (20%) below 5 yrs (10%) Constitution (5%) Sub Total	0	0				
2	Location (10 points)	10					
	National Level (10%) Regional Level (20%) District Level (70%) Sub Total						
3	Functioning Board of Directors (10 points)	10					
	4 yrs BOD minutes (100%) 3 yrs BOD minutes (70%) 2 yrs BOD minutes (60%) 1 yr BOD minutes (50%) No BOD minutes (No Score) Sub Total						
4	Major Focus of LNGO (10 points)	10					
	WASH related (100%) Other health related (50%) Other non WASH related (25%) Sub Total						
5	Project Implementation Experience (review contract documents, annual reports and contacts of main partners) 10 points	10					
	WASH Sector (100%) Other health related (50%) Other projects - Non WASH (25%) Sub Total						
6	HR Management Systems (10 Points)	10					
	Updated records of staff (50%) Staff appraisal records (25%) Low attrition rate (20%) High attrition rate (5%) Sub Total						
7	Financial Management Systems (15 points)	15					
	External audit reports (50%) Financial reports (40%) Petty cash records (10%) Sub Total						
8	Equipment Holdings (10 points)	10					
	Functional vehicles (60%) Vehicle ownership documents (30%) Vehicle logbooks (10%) Sub Total						
6	Membership of Relevant Networks (10 points)	10					
	International membership (40%) National membership (30%) Regional membership (30%) Sub Total						
Grand Total		100					

APPENDIX—TABLE 6**TABLE 6: GWASH LNGO DOCUMENT VERIFICATION TOOL**

List of LNGO documents to be verified in order to qualify as potential GWASH partner:

#	VERIFICATION REQUIRED	REMARKS
1	Registration Certificate [Registrar Gen./DA/ Social Welfare etc]	A legal requirement
2	LNGO Office [physically verify]	
3	Filling of Documents [observe]	To gain an idea of LNGO documentation practice
4	Board of Directors meeting minutes	To gain an idea of BOD effectiveness
5	Contract Documents for WatSan Projects executed	
6	Appraisals done	
7	LNGO Accounts Books [Balance Sheet/Income Statements] Ledgers etc	For Financial accountability
8	Means of Transport - Vehicle ownership documents	
9	Audit Report	For Financial accountability