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WASH REFLECTIONS
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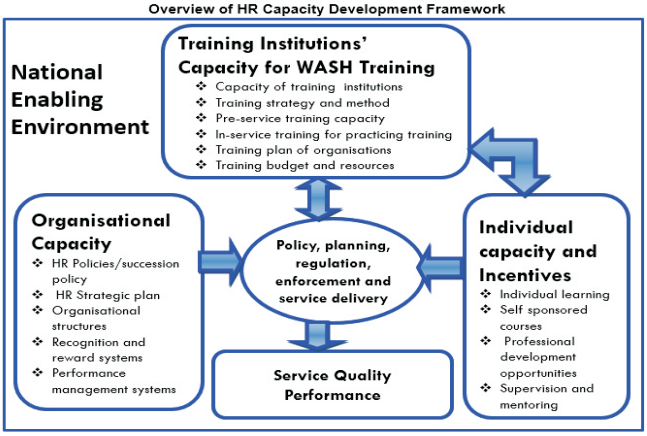
A monthly review of the National Level Learning Alliance Platform

Mainstreaming Human Capacity Development in Ghana's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Sector

Participants at the 71st edition of the National Level Learning Alliance Platform (NLLAP) in Accra have welcomed the idea ofmainstreaming human capacity development in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Ghana.Participants extensively discussed thetraining needs for young professionals and technicians, resources needed, implementation and monitoring and evaluation framework to mainstream, formalize and coordinate human capacity development in the WASH sector.

The UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO-IHP) is supporting the implementation of the African Water Ministers' declaration urging the African Union Commission (AUC) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Water Centres of Excellence to develop a Human Capacity Development Programme for junior professionals and technicians. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) is one of the Centres of Excellence. The NEPAD Centre of Excellence in partnership with national UNESCO-IHP Ghana Team is coordinating the preparation and implementation of the national level programme in Ghana. NLLAP 71 was organized on Thursday, 15th February 2018 to reflect on WASH human capacity development in Ghana, validate results of a human capacity study and also reflect on the commitment of WASH sector organizations and development partners to support capacity building.

Overview of HR Capacity Development Framework



Presentation on the Human Resource Capacity Development in the WASH Sector

Professor Oduro-Kwarteng of the KNUST Regional Water and Environmental Sanitation Centre (RWESCK), in the main presentation at the workshop, said the objectives of the UNESCO-IHP Human Capacity Programme were to prepare a human capacity development strategy for junior professionals and technicians, disseminate the strategy tosector development partners and training institutions, and discuss new courses identified for addressing junior professional and technician level capacity. He also gave an overview of the Human Resource Capacity Development Framework for the national study.

Study findings

The study identified the following skills gaps among the young professionals acrossthe WASH sub-sectors

Skill gaps in water resources

Skill gaps identified include hydrological investigations, water resources management, operations, planning and design of dams/water structures. Other gaps include water resources modelling and GIS application, water quality modelling, management and surveillance skills.

Skill gaps water supply

Skill gaps identified include construction and borehole drilling, community mobilization and engagement skills, managerial and leadership skills, business development and electro-mechanical equipment installation. Others include groundwater treatment, water loss management, and water quality analysis skills.

Skill gaps in environmental sanitation

Gaps identified include facility management/operational management skills, waste-to-energy engineering skills, landfill design and capping. Others include waste treatment technologies and innovation, social and psychology of waste management, waste value chain development skills, and waste sorting.

Skill gaps in environmental health

Gaps identified include rural and urban sanitation technologies, (occupational) health and safety management, infrastructure planning, environmental hygiene, and sanitation facility construction skills.

Cross-cutting skill gaps

The following skill gaps are cross-cutting: (behaviour change) communication skills, report writing and development of decision-support tools, business development and entrepreneurial skills, research and advocacy skills, monitoring and evaluation skills, community mobilization and engagement skills.

The study also identified skills gaps be used to develop training courses for technicians and artisans with non-tertiary certificates.

Strategic actions and resources for human capacity development

The following strategic actions were suggested by respondents during the study to be undertaken by key identified institutions:

Government and Ministries	• Implement human resources components of the national policies • Provide adequate funding for WASH sector capacity building
Agencies and organizations	• Define a clear career development plan • Identify training needs and provide dedicated budget for training • Undertake performance appraisal including training and incentives
Training institutions	• Review and develop new curriculum that are responsive to the needs of the country • Offer training and re-training of sector employees
Individual employees	• Take up new challenges to enable them identify their skill gaps • Apply new skills and knowledge from training at the workplace

Suggestions for the implementation framework

Respondents in the study suggested that training institutions should develop new relevant and critical training courses. Agencies and organizations also need to acquire the requisite facilities and equipment to support the application the new skills acquired by employees. Government and organizations also need to make budget allocations forskills development of employees while individual self-funded courses should be recognized by employers. Organizations also need to revise job descriptions or responsibilities whenever necessary for staff with new skills to apply them.

Suggestions for monitoring and evaluation

To track the progress of human resource capacity development in the WASH sector, respondents suggested the setting up of a sector human resource monitoring and evaluation information system and database, establish a coordinating platform and appoint an M&E focal person at the sector ministry. There was also a suggestion for the establishment of employer and trainee surveys to provide data for the M&E. The The ministry shall be supported by focal persons at the training institutions to undertake data collection and management.

Participants'suggestions

The participants reflected on the study findings and results of the national dialogue workshop and agreed that the following training needs and strategies are critical to build capacity for the WASH sector.

Water resources

- Short-term training needs for young graduates should include Water Resources modelling, GIS and remote sensing, water quality assessment and modelling and principles of integrated water resources management.
- A critical long-term training programme for young graduates should focus on IWRM and climate change.
- Critical short-term training courses for technicians with non-tertiary certificates should include stream gauging and hygrometry, water quality assessment, monitoring and analyses, and rainwater harvesting techniques.
- A critical long-term course for technicians should focus on hydrological investigations.
- Government ministries, agencies and departments should provide funding for human capacity development through budgetary allocations, internally generated funds, dedicated training funds and donor funding.
- Training institutions should attract funding from industry, lead in curriculum development with inputs from industry, constant interaction with industry and bridge the gap between academia and industry.

Water supply

- Short-term training courses for young graduates include low-cost groundwater treatment and drilling technology, water loss detection and management; and innovations in water supply.
- A post-graduate programme in operation and maintenance in water supply systems was also recommended.
- For short-term non-tertiary technician training certificates, courses in sustainability of handpumps, water safety and management and financial management were recommended, while M&E, water treatment and record-keeping were recommended for long-term training.
- In terms of funding, training plans and budgeting, donor support and government allocations were suggested, while training institutions are expected to design programmes that meets the needs of users/employers to attract funding.

Environmental sanitation

- Top priority training needs for young graduates should be on behaviour change communication, social and psychology of waste management, business development in WASH, waste value chain and entrepreneurship, waste treatment and innovations.
- A critical long-term course should involve facility and operational management skills, waste to energy engineering, landfill design and capping.
- Training for technicians with non-tertiary certificates should include customer service, community mobilization and engagement skills, equipment handling, data collection, health and safety management skills.
- A prescribed long-term course for technicians could focus on sanitation facility construction.
- Training could be funded by Government ministries, Agencies and Departments through pooled funds and a sanitation fund.

Environmental health and hygiene

- Young professionals should be trained in environmental laws and policies; behaviour change communication in WASH; and entrepreneurial skills in WASH as short-term courses. A long-term course may focus on sanitation infrastructure planning.
- Non-tertiary technicians may be trained in rural and urban sanitation technologies; business development in WASH; and environmental laws and policies. A long-term course may focus on construction technology of sanitation facilities.
- Government should provide funding through budget allocations and specialized projects; training institutions may attract funding through proposal development, marketing, partnerships and other innovative fundraising strategies.

Other Comments

Hajia Safuratu Muhammed Andani, Greater Accra Regional Director of the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA), on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer, said the project had come at the right time for the agency since it plans to recruit young graduates to manage some rural and small towns water supply systems. She said there are however some skill gaps identified among young graduates which the agency believed with the support from the Centre of Excellence would be useful in addressing them. On his part, Mr. Emmanuel Aboagye of the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABPTEX), said the Board was ready to help close the skills gap by supporting the development of tailored curricula for the capacity building process. The Head of People and Organizational Development of WaterAid Ghana, Mrs. Antoinette Shor, also said increase in population and human needs required constant capacity development in the sector to keep up with the dynamics. She also drew attention to the dwindling donor support to the WASH sector in Ghana, which could affect human capacity development. This, she said, called for a reflection on innovative financing in a Ghana to sustain human capacity development programmes.

The Chief Director of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, Mr. Obeng Poku, who chaired the workshop, acknowledged in his opening address, that human capacity development continued to be a major challenge in the WASH sector in Ghana in spite of previous efforts.He expressed his excitement to see all stakeholders gathered to contribute to the development of a national framework for capacity building. . He welcomed the role of KNUST as one of the five NEPAD Centres of Excellence in West Africa and hoped that there would be improvement in human capacity development for the sector through the UNESCO-IHP intervention. Mr Obeng Poku concluded by suggesting that the Schools of Hygiene be considered in the training plans, and that liquid waste management also needs to be considered critically.

NLLAP is a WASH sector multi stakeholder platform with the overall goal of improving sector learning and dialogue. It is hosted by the Ghana WASH Resource Centre Network (RCN). The platform offers learning and sharing opportunity for sector players as one of the practical approaches to improving sector engagements/sharing with the long term aim of achieving a knowledge driven WASH sector that delivers quality and sustainable services in Ghana. NLLAP meetings take place on the last Thursday of every month and are open to all interested parties. The discussions of each NLLAP meetings can be found on the RCN website www.washghana.net.

If you are interested to propose a topic for a meeting please contact us on,
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