

A toilet in every compound: improving access to compound sanitation in Kumasi and Ga West

In the low-income communities of Kumasi and Ga West (Accra), over half the population live in compounds without access to an in-house toilet. This Note details WSUP's support to Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA) and Ga West Municipality in developing a five-year Compound Sanitation Strategy.



The case for a compound sanitation strategy

Compound housing is a common form of habitation for the low-income residents of Kumasi and Ga West. Tenants living in compounds will often share the same living space with more than 20 other people, yet the vast majority have no access to in-house sanitation, instead relying on the high number of public toilets which typify Ghana's urban centres. In the country's second city, Kumasi — where only 19% of the population has access to improved sanitation — the number of compound toilets is actually decreasing. These trends have occurred despite the existence of a ready-made mechanism to increase demand for compound sanitation in Ghana: long-standing national legislation which states every dwelling should provide access to a private toilet.

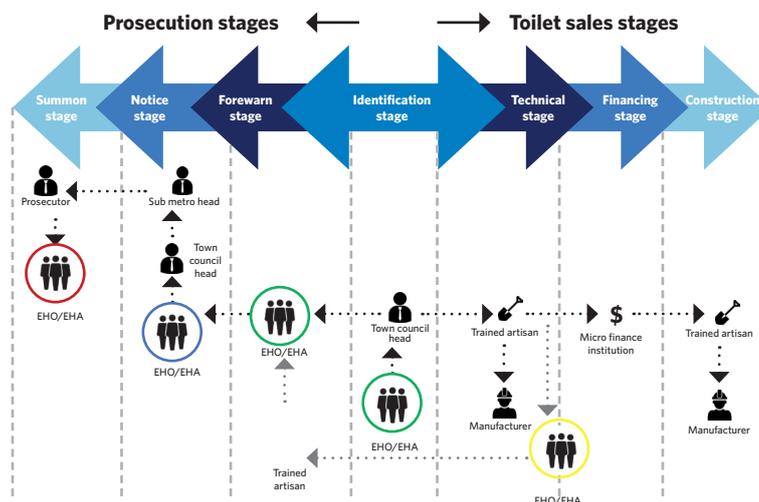
Strengthening the municipalities' role

Clarification and improved enforcement of existing by-laws — targeted at landlords — provides the foundation for the strategy (see Figure 1). The stronger public sector role conceived under the strategy reflects the decentralisation process in Ghana, which delegated control of sanitation to the local level, and the corresponding need to bolster weak municipal capacity to fund and implement sanitation-related activities. In addition to better enforcement, strategy components in this area include:

- **Trained and certified businesses:** KMA and GWMA ensure those involved in the construction of toilet facilities have been adequately trained, and that the facilities constructed by the private sector are safe to use.
- **Advocacy by traditional leaders:** Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) working for the Environmental Health and Sanitation Department (EHSD) engage with traditional leaders and community organisations (e.g. women's organisations) to secure buy-in to the strategy.
- **Monitoring-Learning-Adapting:** KMA and GWMA commit to putting in place a monitoring framework for compound toilets to allow for learning and ongoing adaptation of the strategy.

Figure 1: Enforcement management model in Kumasi.

Figure 1 presents the steps involved in the enforcement management model. The process begins with a compound inspection by an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) — managed by the EHSD Town Council Head — to confirm that the compound has a safe toilet for use by tenants. If this is lacking, the EHO informs the compound's residents of by-laws and offers them support for getting a toilet. Depending on the response, the process will then move towards the toilet sales stage or the prosecution stage: under the sales stage, residents are provided with technical and financial information and support, followed by construction. If the landlord and tenants fail to take action they will be warned, given a notice, and finally prosecuted if they remain non-compliant.



Compound sanitation strategy: major pillars

Mobilising municipal finance for sanitation

A major pillar of the strategy is that each municipality increases investment in activities related to promoting compound sanitation. For example, municipal funds are required to allow EHOs to better undertake their roles and to begin unlocking the challenge of by-law enforcement. To promote this process, WSUP is supporting KMA and GWMA in mobilising Internally Generated Funds (IGFs). One of the key options being considered is enhanced collection of property rates: payments levied on every building under the jurisdiction of the Assembly and payable by the owner of the property. The scope for generating additional funds for sanitation using property rates is significant: this is the only source of income over which the Assemblies have freedom to choose how the income is spent, yet in Ga West only around 45% of potential known revenue is currently collected.

Building the supply side: private sector suppliers and financiers

The number of compound toilets in Kumasi and Ga West will not increase unless the local private sector regards low-income consumers as a viable market, and delivers products which consumers in this segment of the market actively desire. WSUP has engaged manufacturers, distributors and local artisans to address the current disconnect between suppliers and consumers: Biofilcom (manufacturer of the Biofil toilet), EnviroLoo, Duraplast (manufacturer of pre-fabricated septic tanks) and Clean Team are all offering strong products and services to the market, with the municipalities ensuring the quality of the installation of their products. Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) have been engaged in both locations and have a vital role to play in providing small-scale consumer loans. Private sector engagement will be supported by a marketing campaign to increase awareness of the by-laws, technical options, financing options and overall process for getting a compound toilet.

Empowering the vulnerable

Women, children and people with disabilities are the most affected by inadequate water and sanitation facilities in Kumasi and Ga West — as across the continent — and it is these groups that have the least influence over a household decision to invest in a toilet. As such, empowering the vulnerable to make their voice heard is a core element of the strategy. Representatives of these groups are included in all committees involved in the strategy, except at the highest level (Compound Sanitation Steering Committee), and efforts are being made by both municipalities to ensure full representation.

Figure 2: Illustration of the compound sanitation strategy



Conclusion

The compound sanitation strategy is still in the early stages of trial and adaptation in both Kumasi and Ga West. In each location the strategy represents the most challenging and long-term component of a wider programme to improve sanitation, including improvements to public toilets as an interim measure while the strategy gains traction. Complex tenancy arrangements, limited investment in low-income housing and high population growth only add to the challenges. By seeking to engage all stakeholders involved in this issue, a comprehensive strategy has been created; one which explicitly targets bottom-of-the-pyramid consumers and those most often marginalised in the decision-making process for getting a toilet. Having committed to improved budgetary support to sanitation service delivery, it is envisaged that KMA and GWMA will be positioned in time to implement the strategy with minimal external stakeholder involvement. The ultimate goal is to develop a refined model that could be replicated in other Ghanaian cities and adopted nationally by the Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate at the ministry level.

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