

**Contribution and lessons of decentralized
management of rural water to
decentralization in Ghana**

Institute of Local Government Studies
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in the Context of GPRS and MDBS”

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**Context to decentralized
management of rural water**

- Water supply governance and delivery for a long time in the sector has been guided by the GWSC Act 310 of 1965 which placed the governance and service delivery responsibility for both rural and urban water supply in the then GWSC (GWCL since 1999).
- In 1986 a rural department was created within GWSC to be in charge of rural water. GWSC, however, focused on urban water because of the commercialisation of that sub sector to the neglect of the rural water sub sector.
- Investments in rural water were made as and when there was money from a donor for rural water supply using mainly international contractors.

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Context to decentralized management of rural water

- The Government launched the National Community Water and Sanitation Programme (NCWSP) in 1994 and in 1998, transformed the CWSD into the CWSA by Act 564, charged with coordinating and facilitating the implementation of the NCWSP in District Assemblies.
- The NCWSP was basically in line with the National decentralisation process
- The national political orientation at the time coupled with global trends in the water sector facilitated the adoption of decentralised management model

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Features of the national decentralisation

- Devolution of central administrative authority
- Divesting of implementation responsibility to the district level
- Fusing of governmental agencies at the regional and district levels into one administrative unit
 - Institutional integration
 - Manpower absorption
 - Composite budgeting and the provision of funds for decentralized services.

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The implementation of a decentralized model had implications for 3 dimensions of capacity development at national and District level

Level	Elements and issues
Enabling environment	Existence of policies, legislation, regulations, procedures, financial arrangements, institutional arrangements and inter organisational relationships and networks.
Organisational level	Organisational structure, decision making processes, procedures, working arrangements, management instruments, organisational incentives.
Individual level	The skills, knowledge, experiences, attitude, motivations of individual people working in organisations

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Capacity development activities

	Institutional (Enabling Environment)	Organisational	Human resource
National level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Passage of CWSA Act, Act 564 in December 1998 Development of sector strategy in 1994 ➢ Development and implementation of a Strategic Investment Plan in 1995 ➢ Draft water policy soon to be passed by parliament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Development of an organisational structure for CWSA ➢ Creation of a water directorate ➢ Annual review meetings ➢ Donor coordination group ➢ Annual mole conference ➢ Support for establishment of a secretariat for CONIWAS ➢ Recruitment of and training of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Recruitment of and training of staff ➢ Design of conditions of service ➢ Supply of requisite logistics
District level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establishment of DWST's anchored within DAs ➢ Sub project agreements and MOUs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Embedding of the DWST within the district administration ➢ Appointment of task officers/project accountants ➢ Development of manuals/project documents/brochures/guidelines etc ➢ Review meetings ➢ Partnering with international NGOs (WaterAid Ghana, Plan Ghana) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Provision of Motor vehicles/cars, computers and accessories, office equipments ➢ Training (workshops, certificate courses, on the job coaching support, participation in conferences both local and international)



Strategies for implementation

- Political decentralisation
 - Establishment and empowerment of local government structures,
 - Demarcation of administrative boundaries and the promotion of advocacy and popular participation of the people at the various levels of decision making.
- Administrative decentralisation
 - Integration of departments of DAs
- Fiscal decentralisation
 - Transfer of adequate financial resources from Central Government to local governments
- Decentralized development planning
- Decentralized management of public-private partnerships

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Comparism b/n implementation strategies

National decentralisation	Water sector decentralization
Involved devolution of power, administrative/ fiscal decentralisation	Gave practical meaning to political decentralization through the implementation of projects at the district level- project planning, processing of community applications, signing of sub contract agreements, MOUs, procurement and contracting among others
Envisaged delegation to private sector in project implementation and investments in economic development	Delegation to private sector and civil society key component of sector strategy. Proactively developed private sector and civil society to assume and play the required roles
Decentralization to sub-district level (yet to be fully realized)	Operations and maintenance routed at the community level through the establishment of WATSAN committees/WSDBs



Enabling factors for decentralised management of water

- The passage of the national legislative instrument on decentralization in 1994 led to the creation and empowerment of 110 districts as the key institutions responsible for local governance including water and sanitation development at the district level has meant massive capacity development at this level to facilitate their new roles and responsibilities.
- The programme implementation strategy by the Sector in which focus is placed on decentralized delivery of services has provided impetus for accelerated capacity development at the district level. For instance, capacity development component formed 11% of the first phase of the International Development Agency (IDA) Community Water and Sanitation Programme 2 in Four Regions
- The availability of relevant legislation and development of tools and guidelines/manuals have provided impetus to decentralised capacity development

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Constraining factors affecting decentralised management of water

- Delays in the implementation of local government service act is affecting the capacity of DAs to recruit and control staff
- The slow pace of fiscal decentralization is incapacitating many districts from performing their functions well (eg meeting 5% contributions to capital cost).

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Contributions to national decentralization

- Gave practical dimension to decentralization (from community member, assembly members to DCE) through hands on experience with project promotion, project planning, implementation, M&E, procurement etc
- Development of human resources – through training and the development of manuals and guidelines
- Facilitated and deepened the decentralisation process at the sub district and community levels through the Watsan committees/ WSDBs establishment
- Unleashed energies in the private and civil sector to undertake innovations to meeting the needs of communities and forging partnerships with district assemblies- LMDGs as with WaterAid, sanitation ladder and sanitation markets in Afram plains, tripartite partnership in the management of water to urban poor by TREND and partners etc.

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Lessons for decentralization

- There is ample room for the replication of the Watsan/WSDBs to other relevant sectors as education, health and agriculture as a way of boosting the decentralisation process as this will give community members opportunities to further participate in decision making concerning their daily livelihoods.
- One main driver of the Ghanaian decentralised management model is the emergence of the CWSA as a strong sector agency with a clearly defined mandate, dedicated and skilled staff and has a strong donor support. This has ensured that the institution is able to carry out its programmes and scaled them nationally within a very short period.

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Lessons for decentralisation

- Generally, the Ghana decentralised model shows/affirms the dynamic process involved in building capacity for decentralised management. The experience is that capacity development is not static or one off activity. It is a dynamic process that is constantly evolving and responding to emerging sector needs. It shows that what is critical in capacity development is creating the enabling environment especially at the national level, to situate the CD intervention within a context/programme and to allocate lead responsibility to an agency/organisation/department to drive the process
- The case also demonstrates the relationship between the two levels of governance – national and district. For instance the creation of the enabling environment at the national level facilitates the replicability of lessons learned and the national adoption and ownership of the processes while project implementation coordination problems at the district level has informed the need for sector harmonisation at the national level.

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Lessons for decentralisation

- Transparent and accountable techniques such as PET should be used to track the flow of funds and to ensure that they are used for poverty reduction activities. This would require the passage of the free access to information law to enable civil society and interested independent bodies with a strong interest accountability to access information

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Conclusion

Decentralization entails enormous capacity development. Capacity development is not a one off activity but is a dynamic process that is constantly evolving in response to changes in the sector. There is therefore the need for work, patience and the systematic creation of learning opportunities (learning alliances/multi stakeholder platforms) for the full realization of our nurturing decentralization.

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Thank you

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