

Water Citizens

promoting participatory policy making and
effective service delivery on water and sanitation

Nzema Area,
Western Region,
Ghana



Implementing Partners



Donor



Facts About Water

- Water is an essential resource, a unique source of life for the ecosystem.
- Access to water is an important development issue of today, and will be even more in the coming years, one of the main challenges that the international community will have to face in order to ensure the survival of future generations and our planet.
- Water belongs to all living beings.
- Water and sanitation are essential for life, for health, for dignity, for empowerment and prosperity. They are human rights, fundamental to every person.

Despite this, millions of people lack access to safe, sufficient and affordable water and to accessible sanitation and hygiene facilities. This lack is not so much due to “natural” causes but rather to the impact of adverse models of development on the environment, to the deterioration of water quality and to the unsustainability of the levies for different uses.

Water is a fundamental human right, as recognised by the United Nations in July 2010 with Resolution 64/292 , which states “the right to safe drinking water and sanitation is a human right essential to the full enjoyment of life and all human rights”. This means that water is not a commodity, it is not a good for sale, but it is a common good. The provision of water and sanitation is not a matter of charity, but a legal obligation for all governments.



Project Background

The "Water Citizens: promoting participatory policy making and effective service delivery on water and sanitation" is an European commission co-financed project implemented by the Italian NGO Cooperazione allo Sviluppo per i Paesi Emergenti (COSPE), in partnership with the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), and Comitato Italiano Contratto Mondiale sull' Acqua (CICMA) - Onlus (Italian Committee of the World Water Contact).

The beneficiary area is the Nzema Area in the Western Region of Ghana, and specifically the Nzema East Municipality, the Jomoro District and the Ellembele District. The Western Region of Ghana is not poor in water, but its hydrological resources are not equally distributed and their quality is increasingly threatened by pollution and unsustainable exploitation. Since the 90's, Ghana as majority of West African countries, has adopted a series of reforms to decentralise certain functions and responsibilities of the Central Government to local authorities and has enhanced decentralization and participation policies in the water and sanitation sector. By decentralizing responsibilities in the water and sanitation sector to municipalities, the central Government hoped to improve access to these essential services in order to progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals - MDG 7. About 20 years after the adoption of these reforms and despite limited improvement in access to service, the outcomes remain modest.



The Water Citizens Project aims at strengthening Non State Actors capacities to participate in public policy making and demand for effective services delivery.

The beneficiaries of the project are civil society organisations in 30 communities within the Nzema Area.

The persistent inadequate provision of basic Water and Sanitation services, the unhealthy unhygienic conditions and limited access to drinking water are seriously affecting the living conditions of the Nzema Area. Measures undertaken so far have not been adequately responsive to local needs and while rural civil society is scarcely aware of rights based advocacy approaches and not adequately involved in the water and sanitation governance.

The Water Citizens project aims, therefore, at empowering civil society in the project communities to actively participate in water and sanitation policy making to improve service delivery.

COSPE and ISODEC will work closely with CICMA in order to identify the main gaps and opportunity for a Ghanaian local agenda and enhancing networking among local and international civil society organisations active on the right to water.

An advocacy campaign will also be designed and implemented to improve the legislative framework that recognizes and guarantees to local communities access to water as a right and safeguards national sovereignty.



Expected Results

Result 1

CSOs/CBOs empowered on water access rights, in order to enable the citizens groups to hold officials and institutions accountable in the delivery of WATSAN services.

Result 2

WATSAN platforms strengthened on capacities management, advocacy and institutional sustainability.

Result 3

Small scale local development activities and monitoring systems on water and sanitation are participatory identified and implemented.

Result 4

Advocacy campaign launched on water access rights and on WATSAN participatory planning and management.



Water Grabbing

COSPE, ISODEC and CICMA, together with other likeminded civil society networks in their respective countries are joining forces to lobby the international community and states to concretize and constitutionally recognize the human right to safe, clean, affordable and adequate water and sanitation as essential for full enjoyment of life by everyone. Today, however, a new global phenomenon threatens the achievement of these goals - **THE WATER GRABBING**. Water grabbing is everywhere, as it refers to the wide variety of phenomena characterized by the removal of water as a commons freely available to all, and the alienation of its control for the benefit of a private or public actor with a speculative purpose. Water grabbing takes place when big dams are built and people are forcibly displaced from their dwellings, or when the mining sector exploits water in a manner that is unsustainable for the ecosystems and the community. They transform water from a resource openly available to all into a private good whose access must be negotiated and is often based on the ability to pay.

Water grabbing is a major threat for the survival of ecosystems and communities, and it represents a clear violation of the human right to water. Nevertheless, big and small cases of water grabbing take place by hundreds everyday around the world. If we want to achieve the Millennium Development Goal, and reverse this dangerous pattern in view of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goal, it's necessary to advocate at national and international levels for the inclusion of water and sanitation as a human right in the new UN Agenda post-2015. We need to make our voice heard right now.

That is why COSPE, alongside with other civil society networks worldwide, is launching a web platform (www.watergrabbing.net) to raise awareness and reframe the policy agenda to tackle the phenomenon of water grabbing, and protect the human right to water. It aims at tracking and recording ALL cases of water-grabbing taking place in the world, to show the huge scope of the phenomenon and its alarming consequences, and raise the awareness of civil society actors, social movements, NGOs, decision-makers, the academia and the media to take action and stop water grabbing immediately.

Stop Water Grabbing now !!!



Partner Organisations

COSPE

COSPE is a private and non-profit organization founded in 1983 that works in 30 countries worldwide with around 150 projects, together with women and men promoting changes to ensure fair and sustainable development, human rights, peace and justice among people.

COSPE works to build a world where diversity is considered a value, a world with multiple voices where every encounter enriches and where social justice is determined by everybody's access to equal rights and opportunities. In the last 30 years, COSPE has been promoting the right to free access to water for all as a human right and a commons, together with civil society networks from more than 40 countries in the world. - www.cospe.org

ISODEC

The Integrated Social Development Centre is an indigenous non-governmental organization committed to the promotion of human rights (especially social and economic rights) and social justice for all.

ISODEC, formed in 1987, has a long history of support to grassroots groups in Ghana. From a peri-urban health and sanitation, basic education base, it grew into a formidable force in rural water and sanitation delivery. ISODEC works in an integrated and multidisciplinary manner linking the grassroots to the national and global. ISODEC has a

vast experience in building platforms, coalitions and networks relating to water and sanitation and others areas that borders on issues on human rights and livelihood. In 2000 ISODEC took a strategic decision to combine service delivery with policy and people centred advocacy. Hence, a research and advocacy programme was initiated aimed at promoting national development alternatives principally in Ghana and, to some extent, in the West Africa sub-region. www.isodec.org.gh

CICMA

The Italian Committee for the World Water Contract was born in Italy in March 2000, with the aim to promote a new culture of water, source of life, and the recognition of water as a human right and a commons. Since more than 10 years CICMA works on water-related issues implementing awareness raising campaigns and promoting the public management of water resources, especially in terms of water service, to increase participation of citizens in policy making processes at national and international level and promoting the empowerment of local committees and CSOs interested in the defence water as common goods, to prevent effect of climatic change. CICMA has a large research experience, that involve research design and monitoring of different practices of water access promoted by development project in southern countries realized by NGOs. www.contrattoacqua.it



**WATER
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