

**Project Report
on Dagati and JY Villages
in Sekyere Central District of Ashanti Region**



April 2017

Introduction

This is the report of a project to provide sanitation to the villages of Dagati and JY in the Sekyere Central District of Ashanti. The project had four parts:

- a detailed examination of relevant aspects of the villages and their organisation (Baseline Survey). This has already been presented to the sponsors;
- the construction of 31 household latrines;
- the delivery of training in health and hygiene to all villagers; and
- work to strengthen community institutions and thus enable the village to maintain the improvements in future without external support.

The project took place during the first six months of 2016. Health and hygiene training and the strengthening of community institutions took place throughout the project and will continue, though less formally, for some months to come.

The work was overseen by Nicholas Aboagye, Ashanti Development's Country Director, who made regular visits to the site to supervise the artisans, work with them and encourage community members to fulfil their part of the bargain (see below). All bought-in materials were sourced locally and supplied on time to ensure that construction progressed on schedule.

Early Stages

At the outset, meetings were held with the community to explain that sponsors had been found to fund the provision of sanitation for the village. If the villagers agreed, the work would be undertaken by a partnership consisting, on the one hand, of the villages themselves and, on the other, of Ashanti Development representing the sponsors.

The villagers' responsibility would be to provide sites for each latrine, to dig the latrine pits, and to provide unskilled labour and non locally-available building materials. For its part, Ashanti Development would provide the remainder of the building materials, would train the community in latrine construction and health and hygiene and would pay the artisans' wages. Ashanti Development would also work with the community institutions, in particular the Water and Sanitation Committee, to ensure that the improvements were maintained.



Every member of both communities was very happy when they learned about this. They told us that there were no latrines in the village and everyone practised open defecation. They said they disposed of refuse wherever it fell.

They also said that they were aware of the sanitation work in Mpantuaase and Nkwabirim, and had wished for a long time that they too could have a similar project.

Latrine Construction

The work progressed faster than anticipated because the community was so eager to get the latrines after they had learned about the bad effects of open defecation. Almost everyone in both villages was outstanding and did well right from start to finish of the project.

The only major problem that arose was when it was realised that the two villages were sited on underlying rock, which made digging the pits difficult or impossible. Some households used chisels to crack the rock.

One household was unable to dig the pit at all for this reason. After discussion a nearby household agreed to let them site their latrine on their land.

Sanitation

There has been great improvement in sanitation because open defecation, which used to be the main sanitation problem, in the village has now stopped. This is really good news, and means, among other things, that diarrhoea and the incidence of worms in children have become far less prevalent.

The villages have also agreed to establish central refuse dumping sites for all the households. This is important for reasons including that rubbish offers hiding places to snakes as well as collecting rainwater, which provides places for mosquitoes to breed.

Looking at the enormity of the sanitation situation in the village, training in sanitation and hygiene need to be continued for a while in order to consolidate the gains made so far.



Community Institutions

There are two committees operating in the villages. One is a Unit Committee, which shares membership with Ohemaa Dida; and the second a Development Committee. This last was not

working effectively, so has now received training on community mobilisation and governance. Fortunately, the caretaker Chief is the member of the committee.

The caretaker chief interacted well with the Queen Mother of Ohemaa Dida, who sadly died recently. Fortunately, the communities also have good relationships with Ohemaa Dida's elders, who report on their behalf to the Paramount Chief.

The Assemblyman often visits the villages to consult and learn about their problems. Recently, with the approval of the District Assembly, he worked with the caretaker chief to evict the nomadic Fulani headsmen who were allowing their cattle to destroy the communities' farms.

The assemblyman (local authority councillor) often visits the villages to discuss their problems, and the relationship with the District Assembly is therefore good.

General

In general, the project progressed very well, because the community was committed to the project and carried out their work well within schedule.

They are now extremely grateful to the donors. They say that, situated as remotely as they are, they never thought that help on this scale would come to them.

