

Improving Economic Livelihoods through the Provision of Water and Sanitation in Ghana

Introductory text box

In the Bolgatanga district of Northern Ghana villagers rely on basket weaving for income. By providing safe water and sanitation, WaterAid has aided their production which has led to improvements in economic livelihoods.

The efforts of villagers to make woven baskets in Northern Ghana has been hampered by the insecure supply of good quality water. Because of the competing uses over the limited supply, the lack of time, often brought about by the need to fetch water from distant sources, and health problems, stemming from polluted water and limited hygiene practices, it has been difficult for women to make a living out of weaving baskets.



Basket weaving in Ghana is heavily dependent on a reliable, constant source of water. After the straw has been bought, it is split, and twined. It is then dyed and left out in the sun to dry. Throughout this process the straw must be constantly dipped in water and reliable access to water is therefore essential.



By improving access to clean water and better sanitation as well as promoting hygiene practices, which constitute WaterAid's standard approach, these limitations have been successfully addressed. This project is a lead example of the indirect benefits that WaterAid work entails. DFID is a partner in this project through its Partnership Programme Agreement with WaterAid.



WaterAid Ghana's local partner Rural Aid began its project in Asamponbisi, a village of 680 in 2001, by constructing a 27ft well and hand pump in its centre. At the same time, Rural Aid



began a programme of hygiene education, in which the whole community comes together to identify problems and prioritise solutions. Aided by Rural Aid's knowledge and technology, the local water and sanitation committee ensures that personal hygiene messages are getting through in people's homes. Enabled by improved health, a more reliable water supply and a better working environment, villagers are also freed from time-consuming tasks such as collecting water from distant sources. This means that WaterAid is not only addressing the Millennium Development Goals concerned with water and sanitation provision, but indirectly helping to tackle other causes of extreme poverty



Thanks to the new pump and the resulting improvement of the economic situation, people across the Bolgatanga district now have *"more time for weaving baskets. The money is still scarce but comparatively we have more than before. With the little money we get from the baskets we are able to buy some clothes and buy better food to prepare for our children – like greens, beans and rice."*

(Mbinge Alokoh, Asamponbisi, Ghana, 2005)

A weaved basket can sell for up to 20,000 *Cedis* (about £1.20). With material costs of 13,000 *Cedis* this leaves a possible profit of around £0.40. Without chores, it is possible to produce one basket per day.



To meet the MDG's for water and sanitation in Ghana an additional

- 1 5,700 households/month have to be provided with sanitation
- 2 6,900 households/month have to be provided with drinking water

The annual MDG spending gap for water and sanitation in Ghana is \$68m

Links field 1

[WaterAid 'Boiling Point' report](#)  on MDG spending gap for water and sanitation:

[Ghanaian water sector report](#) 

Links field 2

[Rural Aid](#) 

[WaterAid](#) 

Metadata

Keywords: water and sanitation, economic livelihoods, Ghana, basket weaving

Region: Asamponbisi, Bolgatanga district

Country: Ghana

Partner: Rural Aid

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Relevant MDG:

1.1: Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day

7.2: Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation