



WATER SECURED

LOW-INCOME URBAN COMMUNITIES IN GHANA

Location

Ashanti Region, Northern Ghana, and Greater Accra - Ghana

People Reached

150.000 people

41,667 households

Indirectly 210,000 to 250,000 people

Partners



Amount Requested

7.9 million USD

Target Groups

Low-income communities, vulnerable households, and individuals in urban and peri-urban communities.

Duration

2024-2027
40 months

Objective

The project aims to increase water security to improve the health status and resilience of urban and peri-urban communities in Ghana, better preparing them for epidemic events and the impacts of climate change. More specifically, to increase access to and usage of climate-smart water and sanitation services through service provider collaboration and a transformative behaviour change process.

URBAN WATER ACCESS:

GHANA PERSPECTIVE

Around the world, a significant portion of the urban population faces substantial challenges in accessing clean and safe water. **Rapid urbanization, climate change, and inadequate infrastructure have exacerbated these issues, particularly affecting economically disadvantaged communities.**



will reside in **urban areas** **placing immense pressure on existing water infrastructure**, often leading to **inadequate supply and poor water quality** in densely populated cities.



do not have access to drinking water on their premises, representing about **1.4 million households.**



lives in urban areas. A significant portion of the urban population lives in **underserved communities** that are highly **vulnerable to environmental shocks** due to inadequate infrastructure.

Half a million households practice **open defecation**, exacerbating health risks during environmental shocks.

Ghana has a high degree of risk to natural hazards and disasters. Between 1991 and 2011, the country experienced **7 significant floods.**

Over **316,000 households** residing in **uncompleted buildings or unconventional structures** like wooden kiosks and metal containers, which further increases their **vulnerability.**

Recent heavy rainfall in the lower Volta area resulted in the most severe flooding in the region's history, triggered by the release of water from the Akosombo Dam to prevent overcapacity. This event **displaced over 26,000 people.**



WATER SECURITY IN GHANA

The Red Cross, UNICEF, and other development partners have identified Ghana as a priority country requiring intensified efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) by 2030. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has recognized that the current pace of progress is insufficient, and thus, there is a critical need to scale up our initiatives. The proposed Water Security project aims to significantly extend the reach of water and sanitation services, offering a substantial impact with a relatively modest investment.

Fostering interdependency between users and service providers creates an ecosystem that not only ensures immediate access to water but also facilitates sustained investment in the long-term maintenance and provision of water and sanitation systems. This approach empowers households to build resilience and better prepare for epidemic events, while mitigating the health and livelihood impacts of climate change. By building trust within communities, this strategy supports long-term, continuous investment in the water and sanitation infrastructure.

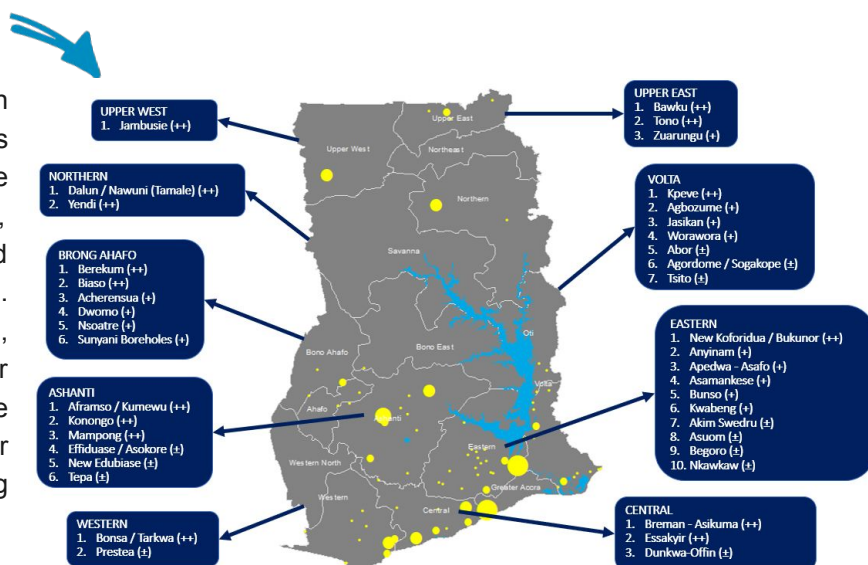


THE PROJECT

The project in Ghana aims to connect low-income urban households to water and sanitation services by offering financial support for initial connections and implementing a behavior change program. This approach ensures improved water quality, reliable supply, and better household resilience, preparing communities for epidemic events and climate change impacts. Additionally, the program aims to foster a sustainable ecosystem where service providers efficiently manage capacity and reinvest revenues to extend services to more low-income communities.

TARGET

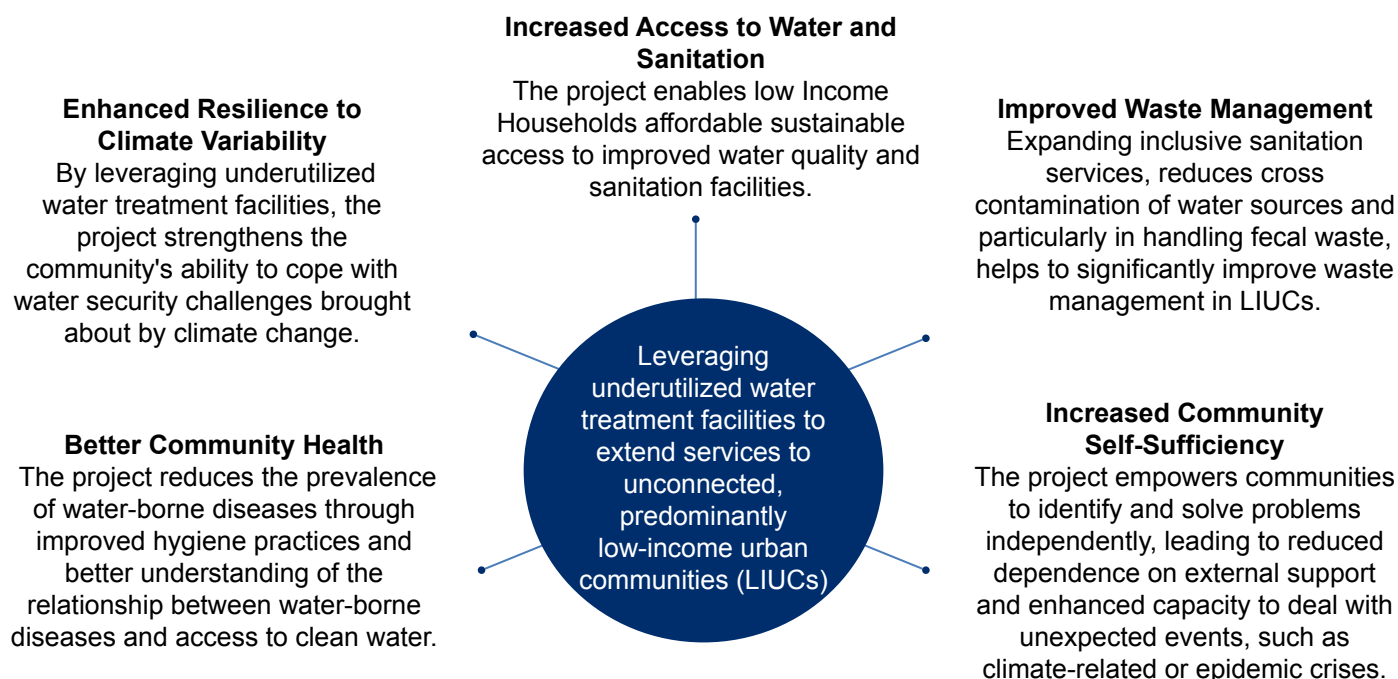
The initiative targets low-income communities in 91 areas served by water supply systems nationwide, aiming to address the underutilization of GWCL operations. Currently, GWCL facilities are underutilized due to limited distribution networks and high connection fees. These facilities represent untapped potential, offering a significant opportunity to extend water services to more households and vulnerable communities without compromising the water supply to current users or negatively impacting water resources.



CHALLENGES

- High connection fees: Many households are unable to access water services due to prohibitive connection costs.
- Lack of transparency in usage costs: Households face challenges in understanding ongoing water expenses and efficient water management practices.
- Rapid urbanization: Expanding communities are growing faster than the existing network, leaving many areas unconnected to essential water services.

IMPACT



UNITING ALL PARTIES TO ACHIEVE WATER SECURITY

Aligning With USAID Ghana's Strategy For Water Security and Resilience

The initiative aims to rapidly connect low-income households to existing water and sanitation services in Ghana's urban areas. It acknowledges the financial barriers that prevent households from accessing these vital services and seeks to address concerns about the affordability of day-to-day water usage. To tackle these challenges, the program provides financial support to households in the form of a subsidy for the initial connection to the water service network. Additionally, it offers a behavior change program that educates and informs households on managing and paying for their ongoing water requirements. By providing this support, the initiative not only ensures improved water quality and empowers households to be more resilient but also fosters a supply and demand ecosystem that supports efficient water management and service maintenance.

SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT-LED WASH POLICIES & INITIATIVES

IFRC's initiatives are strategically aligned at country and regional level.

In Ghana, the **Presidential Compact** on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), signed by President Akufo-Addo is designed to enhance public health, strengthen climate resilience, and ensure that all citizens have access to essential WASH services. The IFRC role in this project is tangible, practical and proven in a pilot project to be a trusted partner within communities to provide education, give confidence and provision to expand access to water and sanitation services to underserved urban communities, contributing to improving the country's overall health and resilience.

Within the region, IFRC's work is in alignment with the broader African sanitation policies, the **Africa Urban Sanitation and Investment Initiative (AUSII)** aims to increase domestic and international investments in urban sanitation across the continent, with a goal of mobilizing \$320 million over the next ten years.

IFRC is an indispensable partner delivering on country and regional goals, leveraging our credibility and trust within the communities and with the local providers solving for the barriers to access water, educating and enabling for long term access and equipping local businesses to thrive and provide sustainable services to a loyal consumer base. This symbiotic relationship is crucial role in improving urban sanitation infrastructure, securing ongoing maintenance whilst also reducing health risks, and enhancing climate resilience in rapidly growing urban areas across Africa. This approach not only addresses the immediate needs for water, sanitation, and hygiene but also ensures long-term sustainability and resilience against environmental shocks, making vulnerable communities better prepared for future challenges.

WHAT WE OFFER



an auxiliary body to government with privileged access to government



technical expertise to complement local water and sanitation service providers



a strong volunteer base, with more than 16 million volunteers worldwide, and is very well connected to communities



access to a wide range of data and information available from our local networks



very often the first to respond to any disaster, from the small- to the large-scale



present before, during and after disasters



a global organization, with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 191 countries



knows how to work in post-emergency settings, fragile states and complex settings.

LONG TERM SOLUTIONS

The IFRC is committed to ensuring that at least 70% of project investments remain effective up to ten years after implementation, aligning with USAID's focus on long-lasting development outcomes in Ghana. By addressing both immediate needs and long-term challenges, IFRC builds resilient communities capable of withstanding climate change and other environmental shocks.

Understanding that sustainability in water and sanitation services depends on consistent and reliable delivery, IFRC supports innovative partnerships between National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and public utilities, especially in urban areas. This approach ensures that investments in WASH infrastructure and community engagement remain impactful long after the project's implementation period.

GHANA RED CROSS AND PARTNERS

Ghana Red Cross (GRCS) has reached over 165,585 people with increased, sustainable water security since 2016. GRCS operates in both rural and urban areas, providing WASH software solutions such as hygiene promotion and behavior change campaigns, as well as hardware support through the construction and rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure.

In 2022, the Ghana Red Cross Society (GRCS) and Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) started an innovative partnership, piloting the IFRC's utility-support urban WASH strategy. This project has proven its value to communities with the opportunity to expand to scale impact in more households.

COMMUNITY LEVEL

The project aims to improve access to safe water and sanitation in target communities, ensuring health benefits such as reduced diarrheal diseases and enhanced resilience to environmental shocks. By providing reliable water services, the project also supports livelihoods, increases school attendance, and boosts economic productivity. It particularly empowers women and girls by reducing the time spent collecting water, allowing them to engage in education and economic activities. The project's sustainability is reinforced through behavior change communication, fostering a strong relationship between the community and the utility provider, and ensuring long-term benefits.

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

The project's focus on improving water access will benefit the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) by increasing the number of long-term clients, thereby boosting revenue and enabling further investments in water distribution systems and support for low-income communities. The behavior change campaigns will help better inform clients, leading to improved trust in billing systems, higher bill payment rates, and more effective reporting of issues like leakages. Additionally, enhancing GWCL's user feedback mechanisms and disaster preparedness, with support from the Red Cross Red Crescent, will improve service quality and resilience, making GWCL a stronger provider essential for achieving universal water access.



OUR SOLUTION: MAIN OBJECTIVES

Phase 1: Water Services

Result 1: 150,000 people in low-income communities can access safe drinking water through household or compound tap connections.

1. Community Selection: Work with the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) to identify and select low-income urban and peri-urban communities based on available water production and treatment capacity.	2. Surveys: Conduct a baseline survey in the selected communities and an end-line survey at the project's conclusion. Note that 10,000 household surveys have already been completed.	3. Campaign Support: Assist the Low-Income Customer Support Unit (LICSu) of GWCL in running campaigns to promote new water connections for households and compounds. This includes educating potential clients about the registration process, associated costs, timelines, and subsidy programs.	4. Subsidy Programs: Support GWCL in administering two subsidy programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">A 70% subsidy of \$177 for regular low-income households.A 100% subsidy of \$235 for the most vulnerable families.Equates to \$35 per person, the cost to connect and have access to safe water.	5. Client Registration and Selection: Help LICSu with registering new clients for the 70% subsidy and ensuring a fair selection process for the 100% subsidy. Also, assist in effectively communicating the process and selection criteria to target groups.
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Result 2: 150,000 newly connected people to the water grid are supported to be aware of their rights and obligations (customer obligations) towards the water utility and adopt safe water use and hygiene practices to maintain their safe water access.

Proper community engagement and social behavior change transform targeted communities. GWCL is supported by its user feedback and response mechanisms.

1. Establish and Train Water Users Associations (WUA's): Support establishing and training Water Users Associations (WUA's) in target communities.	2. Project and Partnership Introduction to Communities: Properly introduce the project and partnership to the target communities.	3. Evidence-Based Behavior Change Campaign: Through stakeholder workshops focused on improving water billing understanding, promoting rights and responsibilities, encouraging savings for bill payments, facilitating fair agreements, and enhancing urban hygiene.	4. Develop and Implement a Strategy for the Behavior Change Campaign: Based on workshop outcomes and the experiences from the pilot project, develop core messages, communication materials, and select suitable media for the campaign.	5. Train Key Stakeholders on Behavior Change: Train 200 GWCL WUA members, 30 GRCS staff, and 400 volunteers on behavior change, GWCL processes, core messages, and campaign activities.
6. Behavior Change Campaign Rollout: Implement the behavior change campaign across the target communities.				
7. Hygiene Education Campaign Rollout: Execute a comprehensive hygiene education campaign in the target communities.				
8. Establish a Community Feedback System: Develop an open and trusted community feedback system with support from RC volunteers.				
9. Collaborate on Feedback System Rollout with GWCL Roll out the feedback system in close collaboration with GWCL to ensure effective community engagement.				
10. Create Award/Reward Schemes for Customers Establish award and reward schemes for high-performing customers in partnership with GWCL.				
11. Adhere to Protection, Gender, and Inclusion Principles: Ensure that Protection, Gender, and Inclusion principles are strictly followed, especially during the selection process for household connection subsidies (70% and 100%).				

Result 3: Ghana Water Company Limited is better prepared for disasters.

1. Collaborative Assessment to Align Interests and Capacities of GWCL: Joint assessment between GRCS, GWCL, IFRC, and NLRC to understand the specific interests, needs, and capacities of GWCL. Based on the joint assessment, the following activities could be considered:		
a. Training in/ facilitation of contingency planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario planning • Defining roles and responsibilities • Ensuring to receive and utilize early warnings through anticipatory action • Identification of capacity and pre-positioning needs 	b. Training in OCHA-led Humanitarian WASH coordination mechanism and connecting to other humanitarian partners	c. Connecting to early warning/ anticipatory action mechanisms
		d. Providing funding for prepositioning of items

Result 4: *The cooperation between the RC and GWCL is strengthened, and the Ghana Red Cross's capacity in urban water security and Climate Change mitigation/adaptation-related approaches and activities is further improved.*

- 1. Implement Urban WASH Activities in Low-Income Communities:** GRCS and GWCL collaborate to implement WASH-related activities in urban low-income communities.
- 2. Establish a Project Management Committee (PMC):** Create a PMC to oversee and manage the project's progress and activities.
- 3. Conduct Joint Trainings:** Organize joint training sessions for GRCS and GWCL teams to enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- 4. Train on Climate Change Adaptation in Urban WASH:** Equip GRCS staff and volunteers with skills to adapt to climate change impacts on Urban WASH.
- 5. Develop Climate Change Adaptation Strategies and SOPs:** Create strategies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for adapting to climate change and promoting a Green Response in Urban WASH.
- 6. Engage in Contingency Planning for Climate Change and Disasters:** Collaborate with communities, local authorities, and service providers to enhance preparedness and readiness for climate impacts and potential disasters.
- 7. Conduct Training on Anticipatory Action and Disaster Preparedness:** Provide training on anticipatory action, disaster preparedness, and climate change mitigation/adaptation for stakeholders in urban environments.
- 8. Plan and Extend Joint Activities to New Communities:** Expand joint activities to additional communities and plan for new projects and partnerships.
- 9. Joint Monitoring of Field Activities** Collaboratively monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of field activities.
- 10. Increase Local and International Fundraising Efforts:** Enhance joint efforts to raise funds locally and internationally for ongoing and future projects.
- 11. Support Behavior Change Communication (BCC) and Hygiene Promotion:** Assist GWCL with BCC initiatives and hygiene promotion in existing and future projects funded by third-party organizations and donors.

Phase 2: Sanitation Services

While previous piloting experience has clearly defined the scope of work, the relevant partner, and relevant activities for GRCS in the field of urban water access, this investigation and piloting still need to be undertaken in the field of urban sanitation. The activities proposed under results 5 and 6 include this investigation and piloting.

Result 5: *Development of citywide inclusive sanitation priority action plans for GRCS in 3 cities.*

A participatory in-depth assessment of the current sanitation service ecosystem is conducted in 3 cities to identify gaps and priority actions across financial, infrastructure, institutional, technical capacities, and regulatory aspects.

1. Stakeholder Mapping in Sanitation Ecosystem Map all stakeholders involved in the sanitation service ecosystem, including informal and formal service providers, commercial entities, and regulatory agencies.	2. Develop a Citywide Shit Flow Diagram (SFD) Co-develop a Shit Flow Diagram (SFD) through participatory workshops to visually represent the sanitation situation across the city, showing how excreta is managed from defecation to disposal or end-use.	3. Conduct City Service Delivery Assessment (CSDA) Perform a CSDA to understand the root causes of sanitation issues highlighted by the SFD and establish an action plan to prioritize sanitation improvements.	4. Develop a GRCS Sanitation Action Plan Based on SFD and CSDA findings, create a GRCS citywide inclusive sanitation action plan, focusing on activities that align with GRCS's strengths and community reach.
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Result 6: Implementation of the citywide inclusive sanitation priority action plan in 3 cities.

The exact activities under this result and the quantification of the target groups will be determined through the activities under result 5. A social behavior change campaign is expected to be part of the sanitation activities. For example, a behavior change campaign to stimulate people to use safe and regulated latrines or septic tank desludging services could be relevant. The GRCS citywide inclusive sanitation priority action plan will indicate the relevance of a behavior change campaign for safe sanitation services.

Intermediate Results (IRs):

The proposed project is contributing to reach five of the below listed Intermediate Results (IRs) and fulfilling two of the three main activities of the USAID – Ghana High-Priority Country Plan:

IR 1.3 Improve the capacity and performance of national and subnational institutions: Enhancing WASH and buy-ins to URBAN WASH and WASH-FIN 2, will allow USAID/Ghana to build the capacity of major government partners, including Ghana Water Company Limited.

IR 2.1 Increase area-wide access to safe, equitable, and affordable sanitation services.

IR 2.2 Increase access to equitable, safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water services.

IR 2.3 Improve performance and climate resilience of water and sanitation service providers.

IR 2.4 Increase adoption of key hygiene practices.

Outcomes

- Increased household connections to Ghana's water infrastructure.
- Households receive education on water affordability and effective long-term water management.
- The water provider optimizes current capacity, reducing underutilization.
- Pipeline extensions reach more homes in low-income areas, expanding access to essential water services.

Cost per beneficiary:
approximately 30 CHF.