

THE SANITATION CHALLENGE FOR GHANA: MAKING URBAN SANITATION A POLITICAL PRIORITY

The Sanitation Challenge for Ghana was a competition that ran in Ghana between 2015 and 2019 to encourage local governments – Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) – to make urban sanitation a priority.

Specifically, the Sanitation Challenge, which was run in partnership with the national government, spurred MMDAs to develop and implement innovative liquid waste management strategies in poor areas. Participating MMDAs had to provide improved urban sanitation services, taking an integrated approach that covered the entire sanitation value chain: capture, storage, transport, treatment and reuse.

Stage 1 of the prize, the Duapa Award, encouraged MMDAs to develop strategies for improving liquid waste management, while Stage 2, the Dignified City Award, required participants to implement these strategies. During Stage 2, a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation-funded sister prize was run alongside the main prize to incentivise private sector and non-state actors to partner with the participating local authorities and support implementation of their liquid waste management strategies, by bringing innovation, expertise and investment.

Nine MMDAs won the competition based on independent verification of participants’ work and assessment by a panel of judges. Initiatives ranged from providing toilets in markets and schools to raising awareness of the importance of sanitation among communities. One of the winners rehabilitated a sewage treatment pond, used it to rear fish on a commercial scale and has been using this revenue to fund the facility’s maintenance.

IDEAS TO IMPACT

Ideas to Impact is an action-research programme funded by UK Aid delivered by the Department for International Development (DFID).

Ideas to Impact designs and runs innovation prizes to incentivise contestants to find solutions to challenges faced by the poor in low-income countries. These include access to clean energy, water and sanitation, transport and climate change adaptation, in Africa and South Asia.

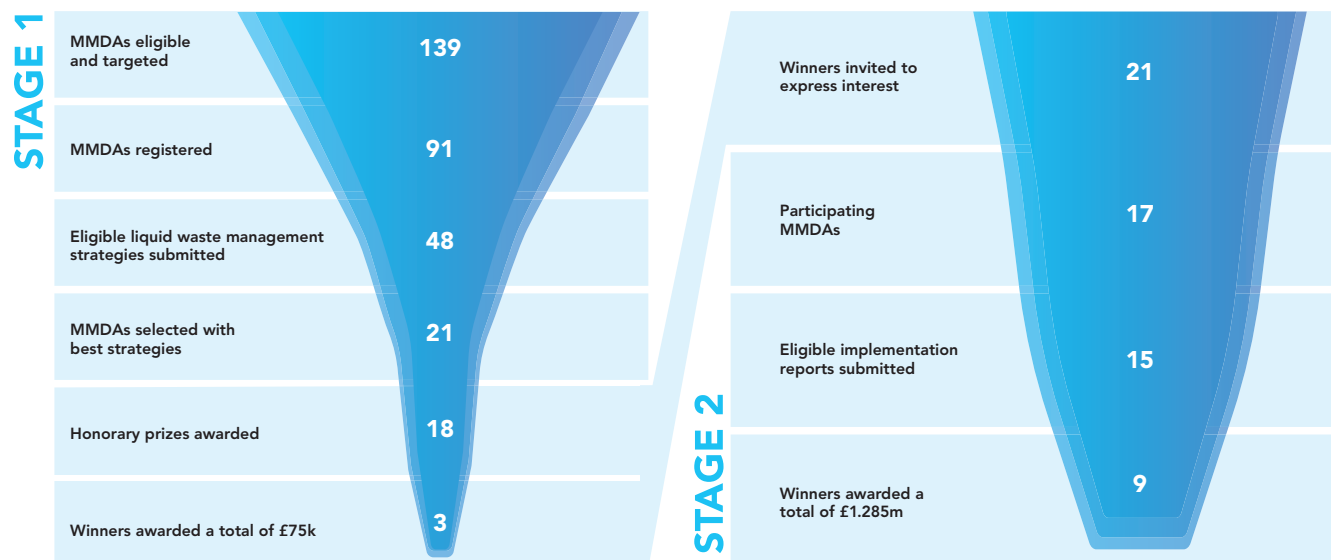
The programme tests the value of prizes as a non-traditional mechanism to spur behaviour change and socioeconomic development. It has been delivered by an IMC Worldwide-led consortium and evaluated by Itad.

THE CHALLENGE

In Ghana, access to good sanitation facilities is limited, especially among the poor. As in other sub-Saharan African countries, local authorities struggle to expand sanitation services to keep up with urban growth. These are developed in a piecemeal manner, with little foresight and coordination, and households often build their own facilities, which reduces local governments’ ability to intervene. Moreover, most sanitation services in sub-Saharan Africa are not sewer-based, which increases the importance of sustainable on-site sanitation service management. However, local authorities do not have the budget to support these services. Therefore, facilities are not emptied as frequently as needed and where wastewater and faecal sludge is collected from on-site solutions, treatment is almost non-existent.

Public toilets are in disrepair and excrements are discharged into the environment, which results in pollution and disease.

Sanitation Challenge for Ghana: What happened



THE WINNERS

Award (GBP)	Winners	Reason for award
Metropolitan and Municipal Assembly category		
First prize 400,000	Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly	Leadership from the Mayor down to the environmental health officer, innovative partnership with private sector partner Aquaculture, and commitment to the whole sanitation value chain.
Second prize 225,000	Effutu Municipal Assembly	Innovative partnership with the private sector and governmental institutions, including the local prison service, which is using biogas for cooking.
Third prize 125,000	Sekondi Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly	Innovative partnership with non-state actors supporting public engagement and a highly committed Assembly.
District Assembly category		
First prize 285,000	Nanumba North District Assembly	Leadership from local tribes and innovative partnerships with local youth group to support community engagement.
Second prize 150,000	Kwahu East District Assembly	Innovative commitment to the complete sanitation value chain and strong leadership from the Chief Executive as the presiding member in the implementation of the liquid waste management strategies.
Special prizes		
25,000	Prestea Huni Valley Municipal Assembly	Community engagement
25,000	Offinso North District Assembly	Financial commitment
25,000	Savelugu Municipal Assembly	Disability inclusion
25,000	Kassena Nankana Municipal Assembly	Leadership commitment

IMPACT

The Sanitation Challenge for Ghana spurred 17 MMDAs to prioritise the improvement of sanitation service delivery in urban areas to benefit the poor, and deliver their liquid waste management strategies, without any upfront funding.

It also resulted in an increase in the budget allocated and spent on sanitation and liquid waste management, and the revision and enforcement of sanitation by-laws by MMDAs. Together with its sister prize, the Sanitation Challenge facilitated 31 partnerships between 16 MMDAs and the private sector, which helped the former to overcome obstacles due to limited expertise, funding and staff capacity.

Changes in Ghana's sanitation landscape also contributed to the prize's success. These included the establishment of a dedicated ministry for sanitation and the inclusion of liquid waste management in central government guidance for local authorities' medium-term development plans and budgets. This latter change was influenced by the prize's stage 1, when the government commitment was originally made, showing the potential for multi-stage prizes to influence the policy environment.

One of the benefits that innovation inducement prizes offer over more traditional funding mechanisms is that they incentivise many participants to work towards the prize sponsor's aims. Not just the prize's winners, but also most finalists improved sanitation planning, policy, resource allocation and attitudes towards liquid waste management, to benefit the poor, and innovated when implementing their strategies.

The Sanitation Challenge also raised awareness of liquid waste management among prize participants, with both MMDA and central government ministry representatives indicating that the prize was a 'wake-up call' to the issue of liquid waste.

SUSTAINABILITY

Most participating MMDAs are likely to continue implementing their liquid waste management activities in the short-to-medium term, with sustained activity being more likely for the prize winners. Sustainability relies on the MMDAs' level of leadership commitment and their ability to secure internal and/or external funding.

Longer-term sustainability depends on liquid waste management being included in the next set of medium-term development plans and budgets, which in turn relies on a continued focus on sanitation at both national government and MMDA leadership levels.

Initial indications are that national government commitment to liquid waste management will continue, as this reflects the broader new direction in sanitation service delivery in Ghana. However, the speed of implementation is uncertain, given its limited funding.

Moreover, upcoming elections might change government priorities. For the positive changes seen in the policy environment at MMDA level to continue, oversight by, and accountability to, the national government is needed.

VALUE FOR MONEY

To understand the prize's value for money, Itad evaluators compared its performance against its original expectations, which were met almost entirely. The Sanitation Challenge was also assessed against a grant-funded intervention with similar aims, the Ghana component of the USAID-funded Sanitation Service Delivery programme.

The prize's strength came from the higher number of self-selected and self-funded participants it attracted and retained and the combined activity they undertook. On the other hand, the grant-funded project provided tailored technical assistance to a broad range of sanitation stakeholders and monitored interventions on the ground more closely to help prevent negative environmental impacts.

The support the prize provided to the MMDAs was limited, which did not discourage them from remaining in the competition. It was mainly provided in the form of workshops, which were attended by senior ministry representatives. By leveraging central government's involvement in the prize, the prize team kept MMDAs committed, as well as facilitating peer learning among the participants.

Despite MMDAs' limited resources and staff turnover and, in some cases, communities' lack of capacity and resistance to behaviour change, participants were resourceful in overcoming these constraints by showing proof of concept, increasing sensitisation and reducing costs for households.

Summary of Ideas to Impact prize effects achieved

<p>RAISE AWARENESS</p> <p>Bring awareness and knowledge of an issue to people's attention.</p> 	<p>PROMOTE BEST PRACTICE</p> <p>Identify best practice in a certain field and encourage adoption.</p> 	<p>FACILITATE PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS</p> <p>Raise visibility and bring together people working towards a common goal.</p> 
<p>OPEN INNOVATION</p> <p>Enable new solvers to enter the field of endeavour.</p> 	<p>COMMUNITY ACTION</p> <p>Incentivise communities to take action towards a problem and solution.</p> 	<p>POINT SOLUTION</p> <p>Find a solution to a highly specified problem.</p> 
<p>MAXIMISE PARTICIPATION TOWARDS SPONSOR'S AIMS</p> <p>Benefits are provided by all effective participants, not only winners.</p> 	<p>MARKET STIMULATION</p> <p>Increase or start new economic activity for a particular good or service.</p> 	<p>ALTER THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Influence policy change in reaction to the other prize effects.</p> 

Intended effect, evidence found

Intended effect, limited evidence found

Unintended effect, no evidence found

Source: Adapted from Ward, J. and Dixon, C. 2015. Innovation prizes: a guide for use in a developing country context. Ideas to Impact.

FOUR KEY LESSONS

- 1** Unlike grant-based programmes, prizes can spur solutions by many actors, with no upfront funding and minimal support. This can lead to increased value for money, ownership by participants and political engagement.
- 2** As prizes can stimulate several projects that are run independently, their managers should monitor and understand the effects on people on the ground to act and avoid unintended consequences.
- 3** Prize participants should be held accountable for the quality and development impact of their interventions. However, given the voluntary nature of participation, reporting requirements should be light and support might have to be provided.
- 4** To ensure longer-term sustainability of results, prizes should be used alongside other funding mechanisms, so that post-award activities can take place to sustain and build on the prize results.

'THE MINISTRY APPRECIATES THE PASSION WITH WHICH THE ASSEMBLIES RESPONDED. THIS YIELDED INNOVATIVE IDEAS AND PROGRESS ON THIS EFFORT... TO IMPROVE SANITATION IN [THE] RESPECTIVE ASSEMBLIES.'

- Hon. Cecilia Abena Dapaah, Ghana's Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources.

ideas to impact.



Find the full evaluation report at
www.ideastoimpact.net



The Sanitation Challenge for Ghana was delivered by IMC Worldwide with IRC Ghana as the local implementing agent and Maple Consult providing technical inputs. It was designed by Trémolet Consulting.



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