

Drip-Drop

Stories About Access to Water In Ghana

By Peace Corps Volunteers
Who Served in Ghana
in 1999

Access to Water in Ghana

By Molly Campbell, Amisano, Ghana

The rainy season here in the Central Region of Ghana is never the same from year to year. One year there may be an over abundance and the next year a drought. This crazy weather pattern makes it difficult for farmers, market ladies, and families. The worry of water is always on their minds.

There is a seminary about a quarter of a mile from the center of the village that fortunately has a bore hole that villagers are allowed to use. The water from this bore hole is very clean and can be drunk without treatment. The village also has three wells where clean water can be drawn; however during the dry season the chances of these drying out are common. The river is very near and is still the main source of water for bathing and washing while the wells and bore hole is used for cooking and drinking.

The village also has piped water, however there is a charge to use it so only a small number use the piped water. This is my main source of water. The water comes from Cape Coast, about twelve to fourteen miles from Amisano, therefore it is not always reliable. Pipes break frequently and during the dry season, the water is turned off weekly to help conserve. I have a barrel I keep full, but during water shortages I obtain water from the bore hole.

Access to Water in Ghana

By **Nell Todd**, Mafi-Dove, Ghana

I fetch my water from one of the eight bore holes that are in my village. A bore hole is similar to a well, except it is smaller in diameter and a plastic pipe lines it. At the water table the pipe has tiny holes or slits in it to allow the water to come in. The plastic pipe is surrounded by a sand and gravel mixture, which acts as a natural filter. A pump is attached to the plastic pipe. We draw the water by hand. Each of the eight bore holes has a distinctive taste, and most people have a preference as to which they like best. Some have a salty taste, others have high iron level.

Fetching water is often done by women and small children. The bore holes are not only a source to get water, but it is a social place as well. Often I'll see children playing games (a game similar to rock, paper, scissors, but instead of using your hands girls will jump up and down, moving their legs in different directions while clapping--I still haven't quite figured it out!)

The water that I use has some silt in it due to improper construction of the gravel filter. After it settles for some time it is clear. I put the bore hole water through a filter (which the Peace Corps provides) to make it safe for drinking.

The other source of water is the river. Many people have stopped using it for drinking, but they still like to bathe and wash clothes with it because it lathers well! ("Sister Ana, we use too much soap if we use the bore hole water.")

Access to Water in Ghana

By **Amy Wiedemann**, Gbefi, Volta Region, Ghana

In my community there are three sources of water. First, there is the River Dayi and some other smaller streams and tributaries. The community also has two bore holes which are in effect covered hand-dug wells, with manual pumps at the top. And then there is the water from above, rainwater.

In my community, the availability of water is not a problem thanks to the tremendous amount of rainfall that we receive. Not only do people collect this rainwater at their homes with gutters that lead to storage drums, but the rain also keeps the River Dayi at a higher level and constant flow.

Despite being very hard, the bore hole water is definitely the cleanest and ready for immediate consumption. The rainwater in and of itself is good, however its contact with dusty, metal roofs and dirty gutters generally leaves the first bucket collected quite dirty.

The River Dayi remains the number one water source for the people of Gbefi, despite its volume of sediment and dirt. As to the reasons for its top billing, it's the most consistent and has been there the longest, whereas the bore holes are about fifteen years old. Also, there are only two bore holes for a community of around three thousand which leads to a great demand and long lines. There are never any lines at the river.