



SAG-SEED AWARD  
WINNER 2017

SEED Case Studies



# WASHKing

Upgrading sanitation in low-income urban households in Ghana



**SEED**

promoting entrepreneurship for sustainable development

Founding Partners



# About SEED

SEED promotes eco-inclusive solutions of small and growing enterprises in support to sustainable development by increasing their organisational resilience in local, national and regional markets and shaping an enabling environment.

SEED was founded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg and is hosted by adelphi research gGmbH, based in Berlin, Germany.

adelphi research (AR) is a leading think-and-do tank for policy analysis and strategy consulting. The institution offers creative solutions and services regarding global environment and development challenges for policy, business, and civil society communities.



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## Imprint

Publisher: SEED  
c/o adelphi research gGmbH  
Alt Moabit 91, 10559 Berlin, Germany  
[www.seed.uno](http://www.seed.uno) | [info@seed.uno](mailto:info@seed.uno)



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Suggested Citation: SEED (2018). *WASHKing. Upgrading sanitation in low-income urban households in Ghana*. SEED Case Study Series. Berlin, Germany.

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The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors based on interviews and site visits to the enterprise and do not necessarily reflect the views of SEED or adelphi research.

Feb 2018



## Acknowledgement

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Dieudonne Kwame Agudah (Founder of WASHKing), Ebenezer Kumi (Founding Member, Afrik Eveil), Samuel N Lawer (Municipal Planning Officer, GWMA), Ezekiel Katrei and Samuel Otubutah for participating in numerous hours of interviews and kindly giving us a glimpse into their daily activities, as well as to SWITCH Africa Green and the European Union for their generous support that made this case study and research possible.



### About SWITCH Africa Green

The overall objective of SWITCH Africa Green (SAG) is to support 6 countries in Africa to achieve sustainable development by engaging in transition towards an inclusive green economy, based on sustainable consumption and production patterns, while generating growth, creating decent jobs and reducing poverty. The objective will be achieved through support to private sector led inclusive green growth. SAG is implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme with the assistance of the European Union.

## LOCAL CHALLENGES

### Growing Inequality

Living conditions and incomes in Ghana have improved significantly since 2005 as the result of 7% economic growth, largely from developments within the industrial and agricultural sectors.<sup>1</sup> Ghana's national poverty rate decreased from 56.5% to 24.2%.<sup>2</sup> The poverty rate is the ratio of the number of people whose income is below the poverty line, defined as half the median household income of the total population.<sup>3</sup> Not all regions have benefited equally from Ghana's national economic growth. Social inequality is rising, especially in rural areas and northern Ghana.

### Lack of Basic Sanitation

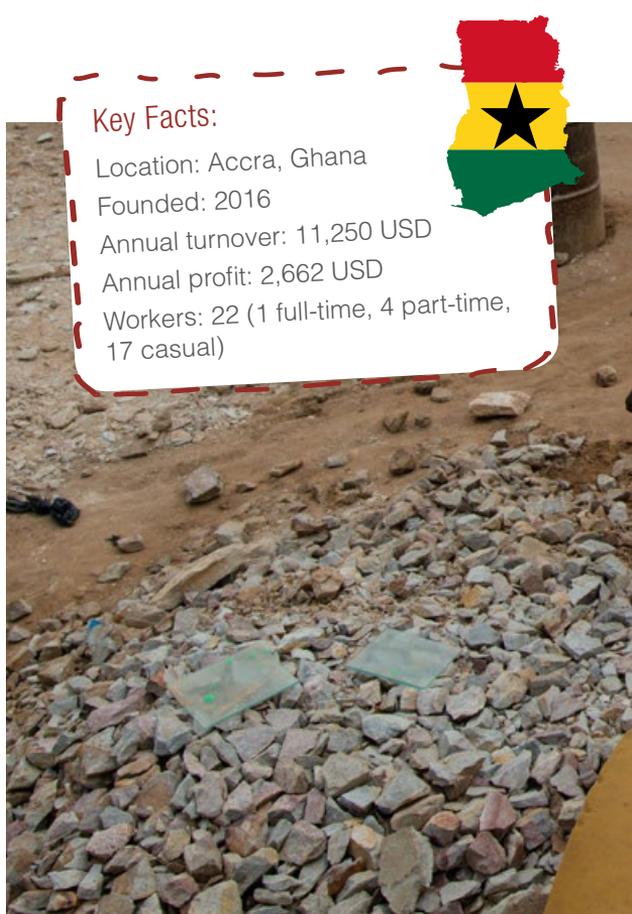
Alongside continued poverty and rising social inequality, many communities lack access to proper sanitation. This is especially true for Ghana's most vulnerable populations. On average, 22.9% of all Ghanaians lack access to sanitation facilities, and only 15% have access to improved sanitation or toilet facilities. A lack of toilets results in around 70% of people openly defecating, which is associated with the contraction of multiple illnesses.<sup>3</sup> Girls are particularly affected by insufficient sanitation facilities and are often required to stay home while menstruating. Moreover, contamination of food and water due to insufficient hygiene often leads to diseases and stunted growth from malnutrition. These illnesses keep people from working. Loss of work time is especially detrimental to poorer individuals who depend on their already modest incomes.

## HOW THE BUSINESS WORKS

Since its establishment in 2016, the eco-inclusive enterprise **WASHKing** aims to eradicate open defecation and poor sanitation in low-income urban communities in Accra, Ghana. To achieve this, WASHKing designs, supplies and installs affordable, eco-friendly biodigester toilets in poor urban households. A biodigester toilet is a simple, low-cost solution to treat human waste using microbial processes to break down the waste. WASHKing serves primarily low-income urban households and institutions with poor or no access to toilet facilities.

The toilets require little maintenance, need minimal water and use a locally produced enzyme to treat the solid waste. In collaboration with local partners, WASHKing helps low income customers to receive micro loans that are paid back in instalments. The enterprise also provides employment and training for local artisans to design and construct the toilets using regionally available materials. The enterprise's flexible payment terms, trainings on hygiene and after-sales services ensure customer satisfaction.

### Key Facts:



- Location: Accra, Ghana
- Founded: 2016
- Annual turnover: 11,250 USD
- Annual profit: 2,662 USD
- Workers: 22 (1 full-time, 4 part-time, 17 casual)

1 Worldbank 2017. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ghana/overview>

2 UNICEF 2016. [www.unicef.org/ghana/Ghana\\_Poverty\\_and\\_Inequality\\_Analysis\\_FINAL\\_3\\_2016.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/ghana/Ghana_Poverty_and_Inequality_Analysis_FINAL_3_2016.pdf)

3 UNICEF 2015. [https://www.unicef.org/ghana/REALLY\\_SIMPLE\\_STATS\\_-\\_Issue\\_3\(1\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/ghana/REALLY_SIMPLE_STATS_-_Issue_3(1).pdf)

# Solutions to local challenges

Watch how we do it!



“ I wanted to solve multiple challenges in the community at the same time, and I realised that a business approach to sanitation could improve people’s lives as well as improve the environment. ”  
*Dieudonne Kwame Agudah, Founder and CEO*



# The power of partnerships



## International Organisations

Partnering with a number of NGOs to support their sanitation programs, WASHKing acts as a service provider, designing and installing toilet systems. The enterprise has installed toilet systems in the Ho region as part of the **UNICEF Ghana Community Led Urban Environmental Sanitation program**. The Ho project is part of a wider sanitation program which also includes sites in the Accra and Tamale regions.

WASHKing has also partnered with the NGO **Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP)**. WSUP's core remit relating to water and sanitation is to support local enterprises to deliver market-based solutions. Through its activities, WSUP seeks to inspire consumers to become drivers of sanitation development within the communities, and enterprises such as WASHKing to service this demand with innovative sanitation solutions.

In coordination with WSUP, WASHKing constructed 12 toilets in different projects areas and has provided workers as Toilet Sales Agents (TSAs) for WSUP's projects in Accra.



## Local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

**Global Youth in Environmental Sustenance (G-YES)** is an NGO that was established to deliver WASHKing's non-profit services. G-YES receives 10% of WASHKing's revenue to run programs and initiatives that focus on solutions to environmental degradation, youth unemployment and poor health. As a WASHKing entity, G-YES provides business and non-business-based solutions to address social and environmental issues.

G-YES's work includes helping 9 schools in the greater Accra Region to engage with students and improve attitude, knowledge and understanding of the conservation and management of their school environments and communities. The work activities such as tree planting and sanitation works.

Working with WASHKing provides G-YES direct access to relevant market-based solutions. G-YES supports WASHKing to generate value along the value chain by promoting WASHKing's activities and linking potential customers with the enterprise.



The SEED support has really made me look more closely at the business as a whole, and helped me to understand its impacts much better.



*Dieudonne Kwame Agudah, Founder and CEO*



## Local Municipalities

**Ga West Municipal Assembly (GWMA)** is one of the ten municipalities located in the Greater Accra Region. Research conducted by the GWMA Department of Sanitation concluded that only 31% of households have access to private toilets. This leaves much of the community reliant on public toilets or open defecation. WASHKing and GWMA recently began cooperating in order to increase the level of household toilet coverage. Through its partnership with WASHKing, GWMA has better access to the community. In return, GWMA added the enterprise to a list of local service providers. This increases WASHKing's opportunities to connect with potential customers wanting to install toilets.



## Microfinance Organisations

Despite a willingness to pay, one key challenge that WASHKing faces is the inability of their low-income customers to pay for the toilets. Many households earn less than \$2 per day. The biogas toilets cost around \$450 on average. WASHKing has established a partnership with **Reob-Fekams Microfinance Company** to supply partial microloans to WASHKing customers in order to build toilets in their homes or communities. The loans offer flexible payment terms, regarding duration and amount, and are tailored to the clients' needs. Thereby, clients are able to fund the construction of sanitation facilities that they otherwise would be unable to afford.

*Learn more about the partnership!*



# Creating impact



## SOCIAL IMPACT

WASHKing achieves a number of social impacts through its business activities. The enterprises main social target is to reduce the incidence of disease in communities through the provision of toilet facilities. Improved sanitation and hygiene help to increase productivity, reduce time out of work and medical costs, and create cleaner local environments. WASHKing also trains and employs local artisans in the design and construction of toilet facilities. This provides artisans with income and transferable skills, which they can apply to other income generating activities in the future.

### Key impacts

- Completed the construction of 29 toilets in 2017
- Provided toilet access to over 600 people in 2017



## ECONOMIC IMPACT

During the first year of activity WASHKing was able to employ a number of artisans on a casual basis to undertake roles in both design and construction. The additional income allows them to contribute to their childrens' education, and increases their savings.

Providing toilet facilities reduces dependency on limited public toilet facilities, if they are available, or open defecation. It also plays a large role in reducing preventable disease in the community and will result in long-term improvements in productivity and consistent incomes

### Key impacts

- Provided jobs, income and training for 22 local artisans during the construction of 29 toilets
- Improves the economic productivity of over 600 people provided with access to toilets

# Sustainable development goals

## SDG 3

### Good health and wellbeing

WASHKing reduces the disease burden resulting from poor sanitation by providing toilets to communities. Local communities, and especially children playing outside, benefit from the cleaner environment provided by the installation of toilet facilities and a reduction of open defecation.

## SDG 6

### Clean water and Sanitation

WASHKing's provision of eco-friendly bio-digester toilets eliminates open defecation in low-income communities. This improves local water quality and sanitation practices.



## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

WASHKing aims to combat environmental degradation and environmental health issues through the installation of toilet facilities in communities. Open defecation and limited sanitation infrastructure in poor urban communities threaten the local environment. These environmental impacts are directly linked to human health risks relating to water borne and vector borne diseases. The main environmental impacts associated with open defecation include microbial contamination of waterways, and visual and dour pollution.

### Key impacts

- Reduction of negative environmental impacts such as environmental pollution through open defecation
- Water savings and waste reduction from the use of 29 biodigester toilets



### SDG 8

#### Decent work and Economic Growth

WASHKing employs and trains artisan workers in the design and construction of toilet facilities. Workers are able to gain meaningful employment and obtain transferable skills, beneficial to future employment.

See how we create impact!



“ I want every household in Ghana to have access to a toilet, and to reduce preventable disease. When we are able to do that, we are starting what we set out to achieve. ”

*Dieudonne Kwame Agudah,  
Founder and CEO*

## FUTURE PLANS

- Raise the capital to fund a trial for an alternative microfinance tool to reach lowest-income communities
- Increase the turnover of the business to allow the community and employees to improve their income status. The additional business activity also provides income for local suppliers
- Expand partnerships to improve the enterprise's profitability
- Investigate further collaborations with local municipalities to assist them reach their sanitation targets
- Expand marketing to improve the awareness of WASHKing's services
- Expand to other areas outside of Accra, and eventually to other developing nations where sanitation is a key challenge



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## SEED Case Studies Series

### Demonstrating Sustainable Development on the Ground through Locally-Driven Eco-Inclusive Enterprises

Eco-inclusive enterprises, also known as green and social enterprises, have a critical role to play in achieving a global Green and Inclusive Economy, tackling the Sustainable Development Goals or implementing the Paris Agreement. By embracing the added values of social improvement and resource management eco-inclusive enterprises that have won a SEED Award are living proof that entrepreneurial partnerships between various stakeholders can create innovative and novel solutions for delivering sustainable development at the grassroots level and be economically sustainable.

Since 2005, SEED has supported over **240 Award Winners in 37 countries**. While the value of eco-inclusive enterprises in delivering sustainable development is increasingly recognised and harnessed in the development sphere, there is still very little data available on the triple bottom line impact of these enterprises and their contribution to sustainable development. The SEED Case Studies are designed to help fill that gap by generating insights for policy and decision-makers on the role of green and inclusive enterprises in achieving sustainable development, and on enabling factors that can help them overcome barriers, reach scale and replicate.

A man with short dark hair, seen from the back, is wearing a bright red polo shirt. The shirt has white text printed on the back: 'Toit in' on the top line, 'EverHome' in a larger font on the second line, and '(Call Me 40886645)' in a smaller font on the third line. He is standing in an outdoor construction site with unfinished concrete block walls and a dirt ground. In the background, there are more buildings and a blue sky with some clouds. The man is holding a smartphone in his right hand.

**Toit in**  
**EverHome**  
(Call Me 40886645)



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