

Precious Drops: The Value of Water

Narrative Stories from Ghana

Technological advancements in the construction and installation of boreholes and hand-dug wells have improved people's lives. They are now able to take advantage of clean drinking water. Boreholes have a life span of 50 or more years. In fact, we are now trying to replace a 53-year-old borehole. As far as agriculture is concerned, farmers plant crops according to seasons. Not many farmers practice dry-season farming. People do not like to draw water from the borehole for watering crops or even flowers, as they consider it a waste of good drinking water.

There are dams which were once used for irrigation purposes, but because the dams are so old (some over 50 years) the dammed water dries up during the hot season. But during the rainy season, the dams fill up and farmers use the water from irrigation canals to water their crops. Rice is usually grown around dams.

*by Sasha Bennett
Bongo-Soe, Ghana*

I live near the Volta River and the sea. The Volta River is mostly used by fishermen. There are only two bridges that cross the river so there are a lot of wooden canoes at various points along the river to shuttle people back and forth. A launch goes the length of the river every other day, carrying goods and passengers.

Lake Volta is used as a means to transport materials and people to the northern part of Ghana. The dam is the source of electricity for much of the country.

About two hours from Mafi-Dove is the Tema Harbor, one of two main harbors in the country. This is where much of the importing and exporting takes place. Ships come from all over the world to pick up and drop off goods.

*by Nell Todd
Mafi-Dove, Ghana*

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Women and children bear the burden of keeping their households supplied with water, through numerous daily trips to and from the borehole or river. Rainfall is so plentiful in my area that there really isn't an issue of community management, as there is in communities that face drought. Farmers, in times of plentiful rain, deal with the threat of rot, the need for suitable drainage, etc. During times of little rain, they face the enormous task of hauling bucket after bucket of water to save their parched crops. Regrettably, there are no irrigation systems.

*by Amy Wiedemann
Gbefi, Volta Region, Ghana*

In Amisano, the women and children usually get water at the seminary borehole (about a quarter of a mile from the center of the village), at one of the three wells, at the river, or through the pipes. Villagers, however, have to pay for piped water (40 cedis, or about three cents a bucket), so not many use this. Farmers do not irrigate; they depend on the rainy season year after year. If a drought occurs, the crops die and there is no food to eat or sell. In the Peace Corps Project Nursery we hand-water during the dry season—each tree (there are thousands of them) getting a small "drink," one cup of water at a time.

*by Molly Campbell
Amisano, Ghana*