



LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE NEWSLETTER



Decentralisation, Democracy, Development

VOL.8 ISSUE 1

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2020

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



Head of Service, Ing. Dr. Nana Ato Arthur in group photograph with Chief Executives and Coordinating Directors and other officials

CHIEF EXECUTIVES AND COORDINATING DIRECTORS ORIENTATED ON LGS 2020 PERFORMANCE

Pages 10 - 11

IN THIS ISSUE:



◇ END OF YEAR MESSAGE BY THE HEAD OF SERVICE



◇ REGIONAL MINISTERS AND THEIR COORDINATING DIRECTORS SIGN LGS 2020 PERFORMANCE CONTRACT



◇ ROLE CLARIFICATION WORKSHOP HELD FOR TWO DEPARTMENTS OF THE MMDAs

CONTENTS

◆ LET'S ADHERE STRICTLY TO COVID-19 PROTOCOLS	3
◆ END OF YEAR MESSAGE BY HEAD OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE	4
◆ REGIONAL MINISTERS AND THEIR COORDINATING DIRECTORS SIGN LGS 2020 PERFORMANCE CONTRACT	9
◆ CHIEF EXECUTIVES AND COORDINATING DIRECTORS ORIENTATED ON LGS 2020 PERFORMANCE CONTRACT	10
◆ HEAD OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE MEETS JAPANESE AMBASSADOR	11
◆ ROLE CLARIFICATION WORKSHOP HELD FOR TWO DEPARTMENTS OF THE MMDAS	12
◆ THE ROLE ENVIRONMENT PLAYS IN SHARPENING ORGANIZATIONS	14
◆ LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE DONATES TO THE COVID-19 TRUST FUND	15
◆ DR NANA ATO ARTHUR DONATES TO CLINICS AND PALACES IN KEEA	16
◆ MAKING THE CLIENT SERVICE UNITS REALITY	17
◆ PROFESSIONALISM	19

EDITORIAL BOARD



Ing. Dr. Nana Ato Arthur
Editor-in-Chief



Mr. James Oppong Mensah
Editor



Dr. Charles Kessey
Editor



Mrs. Lena Esinam Otoo
Editor

TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS

Frank K. Asante | Joseph Ankamah | Albert Amoah | Frank K. Kontoh

EDITORIAL

LET'S ADHERE STRICTLY TO COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Ghana confirmed first two cases of the coronavirus (Covid-19) on March 13, 2020. The two had returned to Ghana from Norway and Turkey. Ever since, the havoc that Covid-19 has caused this country is well-known by all. Many families have lost their bread-winners to the deadly virus. The pandemic quickly spread from Greater-Accra to Greater-Kumasi and Kasoa. As a result, we had three months of lockdown in these parts of the country to contain the spread of the pandemic.

The health authorities came out with the list of protocols to guide and guard Ghanaians. First, the protocols were restricted to endemic areas of the country. These include wearing of face masks in public places, frequent washing of hands with soap under running water for at least 20 minutes, clean hands by applying an alcohol-based sanitizer, cover mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with a flexed elbow or tissue and social distancing.

One year on, all the regions of the country have had cases of Covid reported at health facilities. As managers of the country's local governance and decentralisation, our work entails daily interactions with the public. It behoves us to protect ourselves and ensure that clients for our services are also protected. For that reason, every Assembly must provide the necessary ingredients such as veronica buckets, liquid soap and tissues for its staff and general public to wash their hands. Chief Executives and Co-ordinating Directors must supply the above items to facilitate easy control of the pandemic. District

Assemblies have dual responsibility to contain the disease.

The management have both moral and civic responsibility to protect and control the spread first among their staff while the larger society are also taken care of. Much as central government through the health agencies are educating communities, Assemblies must also support the health authorities to educate and control the spread and ultimately eliminate the pandemic from their districts and the country as a whole. The Assemblies are obliged to ensure the observation and enforcement of the Covid-19 protocols in their areas of operation.

There are areas within the communities that need special attention apart from our offices due to the number of people who congregate or undertake their activities. It is clear that many of our traders and buyers in the markets and travellers at the lorry parks do not wear face masks. Assemblies must intensify their sensitization programmes at these areas to ensure strict compliance of the protocols. The Assemblies must have strong collaborative and co-operative mechanisms with operators of these facilities to make patrons adhere to the protocols.

Therefore, we need to always wear the face masks whenever we go to office to transact business. We should also insist that our clients first wash their hands and wear the face masks. We must observe the 2 metres social distancing prescribed by the health authorities in our offices as we engage our clients.

END OF YEAR MESSAGE BY HEAD OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE



Ing. Dr. Nana Ato Arthur, Head of Service

All too soon the year 2020 has cruised to an end thereby ushering us into a New Year of 2021. To this end, am grateful to the Almighty for His unceasing grace that sustained all of us though the Year 2020. To all intents and purposes, the Year 2020, started well with lots of personal and collective sense of optimism by our cherished staff. To this end, permit me to thank the Lord Almighty for His impenetrable protection through the twist and turns of last year even when things turned for the worse at the close of the first quarter of the year. When the COVID 19 struck with all its devastating deathly force it could muster. The presence of COVID 19 also brought on its tray a new working culture to mitigate its spread.

However, notwithstanding the above challenge(s) occasioned by COVID 19 pandemic as previously, mentioned as the Head of Service am

overwhelmed with deep sense of pride of how we have fared as a Service. In other words, how we have collectively risen to the occasion in respect of the pandemic by avoiding fatalities that I know. For this reason, I directed all the Coordinating Directors to assist the staff under them to develop a timetable for a shift system especially in offices that are over-crowded. Again, the electronic biometric clocking system has been suspended until further notice among others. However, compromising the quality of service we are supposed to provide to our clients would not be tolerated.

Notwithstanding, the above it gives me joy and sense of satisfaction to be interacting with my cherished staff to mark the end of the year 2020.

Before, I continue I think as a nation we have every reason to be thankful to God for a successful and of course peaceful Parliamentary and Presidential elections.

Having said the above, please, permit me to highlights the activities below that took place and the achievements chalked in line with our mandate:

RECRUITMENT

The Service in November, 2020, received financial clearance from the Ministry of Finance to replace **Seven Hundred (700)** officers who had exited from the Service. Appointment letters have since been issued to the new recruits for onward posting to the District Assemblies by the Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs).

PROMOTION TO REGIONAL AND DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR'S POSITIONS

CHIEF DIRECTORS

With creation of six (6) additional Administrative Regions and regions with Acting Regional Coordinating Directors (RCDs) warranted the appointment of substantive RCDS. To this end, **thirty (30)** deserving candidates were shortlisted and recommended to the Public Services Commission by the Local Government Service Council to be interviewed. Thirteen (13) out of the total number were successful and have since been issued appointment and subsequently posted. Hence, on behalf of the Council and on my own behalf I congratulate the successful candidates and also wish the others well for another encounter.

DISTRICT CO-ORDINATING DIRECTORS

Additionally, One Hundred and Sixty Four (164) deserving Directors and analogous grades within the Service were also shortlisted and recommended by the Council to Public Services Commission for promotional interviewed. The interviews were conducted between 4th and 24th November, 2020. Out of the 164 candidates one hundred and twenty-three (123) were successful. Again, on behalf of the Council and on my own behalf I congratulate the successful candidates and wish the others better luck next time.

ATTACK ON STAFF IN THE NORTH TONGU DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

Our hard-working members of staff of the above District Assembly were attacked. Similarly, lots of State properties including computers, documents and a vehicle among others were carried away. It was alleged that the attack was linked to the

Western Togoland insurgent group seeking to secede from Ghana on Friday September 25, 2020.

For the obvious reason, I decided to pay them solidarity visit to assure them of Service's support to ensure their welfare. After a meeting with Assembly's leadership and staff I pledged to support them with some laptop computers and a vehicle in order to ensure the continuity of their work as service providers.

Furthermore, we met with the joint Military and Police Task Force deployed to provide maximum security within the Assembly and its environs. We were given firm assurance that the security situation was under control hence there was a sense of normalcy within the District.

PERFORMANCE CONTRACT AWARDS FOR THE BEST TEN (10) DESERVING MMDAS FOR THE YEAR 2018

The Service has been consistent in ensuring that staff should deliver all year round through both the Performance Contract and Appraisal System. The System is to discourage the culture where staff were assessed when his/her promotion is due. In this regard, the Service has institutionalised an Award system to serve as morale booster for the deserving Assemblies.

The 2018 Awards Ceremony fell on Tuesday 29th September, 2020. The deserving Assemblies were categorised into the best three (3) namely; *Asokore Mampong* Municipal, *Bibiani Anhwiaso Bekwai* Municipal and *Tema* Metropolitan Assemblies. The best three received special packages (Desktop Computers, Printers and Scanners) as well as a CITATION.

End of Year Message by Head of Service

The Assemblies falling between fourth (4th) and Tenth (10th) positions were *Akatsi North Municipal*; *Tarkwa- Nsuaem Municipal*; *Adentan Municipal*; *Ejura Sekyeredumase Municipal*; *Asunafo North Municipal*; *Bekwai Municipal* and *Builsa South Assemblies* respectively each of them was given a befitting CITATION.

THE LEVEL OF INTEGRATION OF DECENTRALISED DEPARTMENTS OF THE NEWLY CREATED RCCS AND SOME SELECTED MMDAS

OHLGS is mandated to provide technical backstopping to all the RCCs and MMDAs to ensure their effectiveness. For this reason, the Office of the Head of the Local Government Service undertook monitoring visits to the six (6) newly created RCCs and some selected MMDAs for data collection. The visits took the team to *Ahafo*, *Bono East*, *Oti*, *Western North*, *Savannah* and *North East*. Seven (7) Assemblies were also involved namely; *Bodi-(Western North-region)*, *Kadjebi (Oti-region)* *North-East Gonja (Savannah-region)*, *East Mamprusi (North-East-region)*, *Tano-North (Ahafo-region)*, *Techiman-North (Bono-East-region)* and *Hohoe (Volta-region)* to ascertain the status of the established Departments.

The findings of the above visits exposed the stark realities on the ground ranging from inadequate office accommodation, high rent payments of rented accommodation among others.

MID-YEAR REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE CONTRACT FOR RCDS/MMDCDS

As part of the execution of our Performance Contract for RCDS/MMDCDS a Mid-year monitoring exercise was undertaken in July 2020. The purpose was to assess the level of implementation as well as to identify challenges that might have impeded the implementation process. The monitoring teams visited all **sixteen (16)** RCCs and sampled **One hundred and Twenty (120)** Assemblies for the exercise. Challenges observed were lack of RCCs meetings.

Again, Inter-Service and Sectoral Collaboration and Co-operation meetings aim to create an all encompassing local level Administration were lacking. Furthermore, many Assemblies did not have vibrant Websites in terms of constant updates. Notwithstanding the above, most of the Assemblies are doing well in the midst of the COVID 19 Pandemic and other associated challenges.

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

JICA

The Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) has agreed to support the Service to improve its Records and Fixed Assets Management. The programme has a gestation period of three (3) years. The beneficiary entities are Office of Head of the Local Government Service (OHLGS), Greater Accra Regional Co-ordinating Council (GARCC), *Tema Metropolitan Assembly (TMA)*, *Adentan Municipal Assembly (ADNA)* and *Ningo-Prampram District Assembly (NPDA)*. The expiration of the project will see a tremendous improvement in our records management and by extension our service

delivery.

GHANA SECONDARY CITIES SUPPORT PROGRAMME.

Again, the Ghana Secondary Cities Support Programme is funded by the World Bank. The purpose is to support OHLGS to provide capacity-building to the participating RCCs and Municipal Assemblies to improve their institutional performance and the delivery of basic urban services. Since the commencement of the Programme in February 2019, a number of training workshops have been undertaken. Prominent among them are Budget Implementation for staff of the twenty-five (25) participating Regional Co-ordinating Council (RCCs) and Municipal Assemblies (MAs) and others were organised by OHLGS. Thanks for the support received from all the stakeholders.

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES

Furthermore, in July/August 2020, OHLGS carried out workshop for **One Hundred and Ninety Six (196)** participants made up of Co-ordinating Directors, Finance Officers, Budget Analysts, Development Planning Officers, Procurement Officers, Internal Auditors as well as regional Economic Planning Officers from the six- newly created Regions. The training covered the following;

- Accounting and Financial Reporting,
- Procurement,
- Auditing
- Management Controls and
- Documentation of handing over procedures.

The purpose was to boost their professional standing in respect of the above topics as key staff

posted to the RCCs and MAs involved.

APPOINTMENT AND ORIENTATION FOR THIRTEEN (13) NEW CHIEF DIRECTORS

An orientation programme was organised for the 13 newly appointed Chief Directors as previously mentioned. The orientation took place at the Golden Tulip Hotel in Kumasi from September 21st to 26th, 2020. They were walked through Public Administration; Deepening Inter-Service & Sectoral Collaboration and Co-ordination among others. The purpose was to build their competencies in their new role. Mr. Felix *Chahaah* the then Dean of the RCDs, shared some rich and practical working experiences acquired over the years with his new colleagues.

REFRESHER WORKSHOP FOR DIRECTORS ASPIRING TO BECOME DISTRICT CO-ORDINATING DIRECTORS (DCD)

One Hundred and Sixty Four (164) qualifying Directors met in two centres namely Ejisu and Elmina. This was between October 11th and 18th, 2020 for a refresher workshop. The workshop was to put them in the right professional standing in public sector management generally. Such standing was to help in their routine work and also to go through the Public Services Commission's interview later in the year.

TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR IIBs

As part of continuous professional capacity-building, OHLGS organised a 4-day residential workshop for the above mentioned officers recruited before 2020. The beneficiaries were about **Eight Hundred and Twenty Five (825)** drawn from all the sixteen (16) RCCs, two hundred and sixty (260) Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and the Office of the Head of

End of Year Message by Head of Service

Local Government Service (OHLGS) were involved.

The training took place concurrently in six (6) zones namely; *Tamale, Sunyani, Sekondi-Takoradi, Ejisu, Elmina and Ho* between 16th and 25th November, 2020. The training helped to sharpen their skills in handling their day to day duties.

STRENGTHENING OF INTEGRATED SOCIAL SERVICES DELIVERY (ISSD)

As part of institutional strengthening and capacity-building efforts, the OHLGS in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is implementing an integrated social services among the key stakeholders including Ghana Health Service, National Health Insurance Scheme, Ghana Education Service, National Development Commission and Department of Social Welfare and Community Development among others.

Currently, UNICEF is providing technical support and USAID and DFID are also providing financial support for sixty (60) MMDAs to support the above programme.

Additionally, the collaboration witnessed the introduction of the Social Welfare Information Management System (SWIMS), Inter-Sectoral Service Standard Operating Procedure (ISSOP) and Training of Trainers (ToT) for the Service's revised training manual for Social Welfare and Community Development staff.

The above programmes necessitated series of zonal workshops across the country where key

officers were selected from the 60 participating MMDAs. The aim was to strengthen and increase access to an integrated set of social services in a collaborative manner with other entities. The SWIMS is also to help standardized case management. The rationale of all the above

programmes are to ensure the delivery of quality integrated social services with the view to addressing multi-dimensional poverty of vulnerable groups in society.

CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW OFFICE COMPLEX

The Service has started construction a new Office Complex, which its construction has started vigorously. On this note please, permit me to place on record my deep sense of appreciation to the Office of the Administrator of the District Assemblies' Common Fund (DACF) for its invaluable and continuous support to the Service in diverse ways including the funding of the Office Complex. Upon completion, a number of Directorates/Units would be allocated offices to enable them operate effectively.

CONCLUSION

As we were able to sail through all the challenges of last year notable the general elections and the COVID-19 among others I am equally optimistic that no matter the severity of the challenges embedded in the 2021 our power of resilience will make us the victors and not the vanquish. With the above words of optimism let's all face 2021 with sense hope, belongings and brotherly/sisterly love.

REGIONAL MINISTERS AND THEIR COORDINATING DIRECTORS SIGN LGS 2020 PERFORMANCE CONTRACT



Regional Ministers of the sixteen (16) Regions on Friday February 21, 2020 signed the Local Government Service Performance Contracts with their Co-ordinating Directors for the year 2020. The ceremony was witnessed by the Head of the Local Government Service, Ing. Dr Nana Ato Arthur and a Deputy Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Hon. Kwasi Adjei Boateng. Implementation of the Performance Contract signifies the determination of the Service to institutionalise a system for a performance management at all levels to ensure improved service delivery.

The Head of Service in a brief address entreated the Regional

Ministers and their Co-ordinating Directors not to only view the performance contract as a tool for assessing performance of the Regional Co-ordinating Directors (RCDs) but also a mechanism for assessing progress of governance of the Regional Co-ordinating Councils (RCCs). He stressed that the performance contract was critical to generate the needed commitment by the workforce to support local and national development efforts. He indicated that outcome of evaluation of the 2018 performance contract showed that the RCDs made strides in the achievement of their performance targets and in addition assisted MMDAs within their jurisdictions to deliver on their mandates.

He appealed to the Regional Ministers to ensure that resources were available to enable RCCs perform their roles effectively. He asked the Regional Ministers and the Co-ordinating Directors to develop the necessary team spirit for successful implementation of the performance contract. He also urged the Regional Co-ordinating Directors to engage their departmental and unit heads to help meet their performance targets.

Hon. Kwasi Adjei Boateng lauded the OHLGS for the institution of the Performance Management System and urged the Service to as a matter of urgency, develop specific indicators to measure the performance of the newly created Regions and Districts. He charged the Regional Ministers to work closely with their respective Co-ordinating Directors to improve service delivery.

CHIEF EXECUTIVES AND COORDINATING DIRECTORS ORIENTATED ON LGS 2020 PERFORMANCE CONTRACT



Head of Service, Ing. Dr. Nana Ato Arthur in group photograph with Chief Executives and Coordination Directors and other officials

The Office of the Head of the Local Government Service (OHLGS) organized a series of orientation training for Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) and Co-ordinating Directors (MMDCDs) on the 2020 Performance Contract (PC) of the Local Government Service (LGS).

The country was zoned into three and the orientation training held at Ejisu for Assemblies in the middle belt; Elmina for Assemblies in the costal belt; and Tamale for Assemblies in the northern belt. The orientation was part of measures by the OHLGS to intensify engagements to increase knowledge and understanding of key stakeholders in the 260 MMDAs on the implementation of the 2020 Performance Contract. The engagement also helped to obtain feedback and inputs to inform review.

The Director of Management and Technical Services at the OHLGS, Ing. Mabel Amoako-Atta in

a presentation highlighted to participants, the seven (7) broad Key Performance Areas (KPAs) and their corresponding Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the 2020 assessment. She said the contract deliverables were consistent with the mandates of Assemblies as expressed in their planned activities.

The broad areas of assessment include Central Administration; Human Resource Management; Financial Management and Reporting; Infrastructure; Social Services; Economic Development and Environment and Sanitation. The participants also made recommendations on the areas of assessment based on experiences and lessons learnt from the 2018 Performance Contract assessment process.

The presentation also drew attention to the following as some issues observed with the 2018 Performance Contract implementation. These included inability to maximimise the full potential

of Assembly personnel which affected communication with stakeholders; poor functioning of client service units; negative IGF growth rate in some Assemblies from which new ones were curved out; poor performance in the transition from subsistence to commercial farming in urban and per-urban areas; poor record management; and irregular and inadequate statutory fund flows.

The Head of the Local Government Service, Ing. Dr. Nana Ato Arthur commended Assemblies with exceptional performance in the 2018 Performance Contract ranking. He said the Performance Contract was potential tool for objective assessment that could engender competition among MMDAs to stimulate district level performance to deepen local governance. He

disclosed that the best three Assemblies (Asokore Mampong Municipal, Bibiani Anhwiaso Bekwai Municipal and Tema Metropolitan Assemblies) would be sponsored to attend the 2020 Conference of the African Association of Administrators and Management (AAPAM) scheduled to take place in South Africa.

Dr Arthur urged the Chief Executives to work hand-in-hand with their Co-ordinating Directors to ensure achievement of the deliverables; and explore innovative ways to improve service delivery. He disclosed that the Service would organize a forum to bring together the top and bottom 20 Assemblies in the 2018 Performance Contract ranking to share best practices and lessons.

HEAD OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE MEETS JAPANESE AMBASSADOR

The Head of the Local Government Service, Ing. Dr. Nana Ato Arthur on Thursday January 30, 2020 called on the Japanese Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana, H.E. Mr. Tsutomu Himeno.

The meeting between Dr Arthur and H.E. Tsutomu Himeno was in recognition of the contribution of the Government and People of Japan to capacity development of staff of the Service. The meeting was also to strengthen the partnership and

cooperation between the Service and the Japanese Embassy for the fulfillment of the mandate of the Service and the benefit of the Japanese Embassy.

Both the Head of Service and the Japanese Ambassador were optimistic of better and stronger collaboration between the two institutions in the years ahead.



Head of Service, Ing. Dr. Nana Ato Arthur with the Japanese Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Tsutomu Himeno

ROLE CLARIFICATION WORKSHOP HELD FOR TWO DEPARTMENTS OF THE MMDAs

The Office of the Head of the Local Government Service (OHLGS) has completed three zonal sensitization workshops to clarify the roles of the Physical Planning and Works Departments of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). Participation of the workshops by staff was 190, 174 and 164 in Zones 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The participants were either heads or other staff of the Physical Planning and Works Departments from all MMDAs in the country. The zone one cluster was made up of Assemblies in the Ashanti, Eastern, Oti and Western North Regions and their workshop held at Ejisu, Ashanti Region. The Zone two workshop was held at Elmina, Central Region with Assemblies in the Central, Greater Accra, Volta and

Western Regions in attendance. Zone three was made up of eight Regions namely Northern, North East, Savannah, Ahafo, Bono, Bono East, Upper East and Upper West Regions. The zone three workshop was held at Tamale, Northern Region. The technical sessions of the programme were facilitated by the Deputy Director and Principal Planning Officer of the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA) and the Engineer-In-Chief of the Public Works Department (PWD) all from Accra. The Chief Director and other senior staff of the OHLGS were also in attendance.

In the Ashanti Region, the workshop participants were welcomed by the Regional Co-ordinating Director Mrs. Emelia Botchwey on behalf of the Regional Minister. The Hon. Deputy Central



A group photograph of Head of Service and OHLGS Management with participants at the workshop

Regional Minister, Mr. Thomas Adjei Baffoe welcomed participants to the Region on behalf of the Regional Minister. In zone 3, the Regional Coordinating Director, Alhaji Issahaku Alhassan stood in the stead of the Northern Regional Minister to welcome the participants to the Region. The speakers applauded the LGS for the creation of the platform to reflect on issues that emerge with the operationalization of the departments of the Assemblies with the goal to ensure harmonious working relationship among staff. According to the speakers, the operations of MMDA departments were provided for in law and therefore the issue of confusion on roles and functions should not arise. Staff of the two departments were urged to actively participate and dispassionately engaged for better understanding of the provision of the laws in line with their required duties.

The Head of Service in his address at the various zonal centres said until the enactment of the Local Governance Act, 2016, the LGS was made up of agencies which worked up to their mother departments in Accra with little or no recourse to the District Assemblies. He said it was therefore critical to clarify roles for harmonious industrial relations. Other highlights of the Head's address were the calls on regional officers to adhere to laid down administrative procedures for the proper functioning of MMDAs; and on heads of departments and units of MMDAs to engage their Coordinating Directors with regard to their required roles in the implementation of the performance contracts (PCs) signed on behalf of their respective Assemblies. He also mentioned that the Service had sought for technical assistance from JICA to address the challenge of records

management in the Service and urged the MMDAs to be up and doing. He emphasized the need for staff to apply themselves to the highest levels of professional standards in the discharge of their duties; shy away from active partisan activities and ensure that knowledge gained from the training was transferred to other colleagues and subordinate staff.

Until the passage of the Departments of District Assemblies Commencement Instrument (LI 1961), the functions of decentralized departments hitherto non-existent at the Assembly level were performed by those in existence with related functions. With the gradual transfer of staff of agencies decentralized at the district levels and their takeover by the Local Government Service (LGS) for the operationalization of these departments at the local levels, it has become necessary to clarify the roles of these departments as provided for in law for the avoidance of doubt and ensure harmonious working relationship among staff of the MMDAs.

The Physical Planning Department is a decentralized department recently operationalized through the merger of the Department of Parks and Gardens and the erstwhile Town & Country Planning Department now Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority. The Works Department on the other hand was created out of the amalgamation of units such as PWD, District Works, Water and Feeder Roads.

THE ROLE ENVIRONMENT PLAYS IN SHARPENING ORGANIZATIONS

The environment plays a critical role in the way organizations function to fulfill their mandate both in public and private organizations. The role environment plays in the private sector is extremely important in terms of profit-making, which appears to be the primary objective. The write-up will dwell on the external environment, where what goes on there has a direct impact on the internal dynamics of the organization. This is in respect of its strategic direction in order to stay economically afloat/buoyant in its operations. The environment has a huge source of information and also being the home for varieties of resources among others.

For this reason, an organization operating in what is said to be a stable environment can adopt what is called a mechanistic management structure where rules and operating procedures do fit into the hierarchical control system of the organization. However, if the organization is situated in an unstable environment then lots of ad hoc decisions may have to be taken in view of the exigencies of time. At times, the administration has to be decentralized for each level to make decision(s) as appropriate for the overall working of the organization in order to minimize the environmental uncertainties.

Now attempt would be made to simply define an organization as a composition of group of people with a particular purpose or objective, regarding a business interest or responsible for the delivery of governmental services.

Situating the above within the frame of the Ghanaian Local Government Service the environmental determinism has impacted greatly

in the strategy direction of the Service under the leadership of Ing Dr. Nana Ato Arthur and his governing Council. Prominent among them is the administrative emphasis on **Inter-Service and Inter-Sectoral Collaboration and Co-operation** as captured at Section 81 of the Local Governance Act 2016 (Act 936). Under this collaboration good working relationships have been created among Ministries, Department and Agencies especially, those involved in service delivery at the local level. For instance, this collaboration has brought the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) into close working proximity with the Local Government Service (LGS) in respect of varieties of activities such as the implementation of Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP). The LEAP programme is a cash transfer to families. Again, LGS is collectively working with MoGCSP to get a Social Protection Bill passed by the Parliament to give legal backing to most of Social Protection programmes.

Additionally, LGS needed to build on the capacities of the Social Welfare and Community Development staff to enhance quality service delivery at the local level. This led to LGS to negotiating with UNICEF for assistance in the revision the existing Training Manual for the Social Welfare and Community Development (SW&CD) staff. The SW&CD staff are indeed at the fore front as far as service delivery is concerned. The revision has been successfully carried out and good number of such officers have since been trained to enhance their capacity to function. Apart from the training a lots of sensitization workshops at National, Regional levels have taken place in collaboration with MoGCSP to drum home the need for all levels

of government to prioritize the issues of the vulnerable groups in society through an integrated Social Services Delivery (ISSD) system.

Again, to streamline the work of the SW&CD staff LGS collaborating with MoGCSP with the support of UNICEF to develop **Social Welfare Information Management System (SWIMS)**. The system is to help manage social cases better and to ensure continuity from one officer to the other to mentioned but a few.

The above programmes were selected based on the dictations from the environment. In other words, decision or policy makers always have to scan through the environment to avail themselves of possible challenges which could be translated into opportunities. In this regard, any organization, which fails to acknowledge the fluidity of the environment risk of not predicting right into the future. Such a failure could have a huge negative impact on the operational position of the organization being it financial or otherwise.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE DONATES TO THE COVID-19 TRUST FUND



The Head of Local Government Service, Ing. Dr. Nana Ato Arthur on Thursday April 30, 2020 led a delegation that donated an amount of One Hundred and Twenty Thousand Ghana Cedis (GH¢120,000.00) to the COVID-19 Trust Fund on behalf of the staff of the Local Government Service (LGS).

Dr. Arthur said the decision was taken in response to the

President's call for a concerted effort to help contain the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that, staff of the LGS got actively involved and the financial contribution was raised from members through the efforts of the various professional associations at the national, regional and local levels.

The Head of Service indicated that staff of the LGS were greatly exposed to the threats of the

pandemic. He cited among others the fact that revenue collectors kept interacting with the public in the discharge of their duties, social welfare staff at the local levels were continuously involved in caring for abandoned babies and homeless persons as well as the continuous receipt of clients by the Assemblies.

In this regard, the Head of Service said staff of the Service have been directed to adopt the system of flexible working hours, practice social distancing and hand washing in addition to the wearing of face masks as measures to protect themselves against contracting the coronavirus.

DR NANA ATO ARTHUR DONATES TO CLINICS AND PALACES IN KEEA

Dr Nana Ato Arthur, Head of the Local Government Service has donated some items to Clinics, Chief Palaces and Lorry stations in the Komenda Edina Aguafu Abrem (KEEA) Municipality as part of efforts to fight the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The items consisting of 50 Veronica Buckets, 25 gallons of liquid soap, 10 boxes of Hand Sanitizers, 20 Bins and Rolls of Tissues.

The items are to be distributed to health centres and other public places in the KEEA Municipality. They include; the Elmina Polyclinic, Komenda, Kissi and Abrem Agona Clinics.

The Public places were the Elmina Police Station, the Chief Palace, the Lorry Station as well as the Agona and Komenda Lorry Stations.

Presenting the items, Dr Ato Arthur said, the donation was by way of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic together as the items would support the Government's efforts in the area.

He said rising up from the KEEA as a District Chief Executive, Member of Parliament, Central Regional Minister and now the Head of the LGS, there was the need for him to look back and offer the necessary support.

Dr Ato Arthur said, though a lot of donations were given by some institutions and organisations, "We as individuals must also do our part to support our communities."

He said the COVID-19 pandemic was real and cautioned the citizenry to take the precautionary measures seriously and advised the Fisherfolks to respect the COVID-19 protocols set out by the Ministry of Health and respect President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's directives aimed at preventing them from contracting Coronavirus.

Madam Catherine Ampah-Brient, Acting Municipal Director of Health at KEEA said the Assembly had already supported her outfit with face masks and hand gloves and other medical supplies. She announced that the Municipality had two suspected COVID-19 cases whose samples were sent to Accra for testing.

Madam Ampah-Brient said the KEEA Assembly in collaboration with the Health Directorate had put in place a task force to educate the natives on COVID-



19, precautionary measures and symptoms and the contacts to reach out to in emergencies.

“We have also received a list of travellers and their addresses in our Municipality from our Head Office “Ghana Health Service” that will be used for contact tracing,” she added.

She thanked Dr Ato Arthur for the gesture and called on other individuals and organisations to support them.

Madam Irene Joyce Akwah, Mr Ebenezer Omane-Agyekum and Madam Joyce Abrokwa, Physician Assistants for Kissi, Komenda, Abrem Agona and Ankafu Clinics respectively thanked the Head of Service for the gesture, saying that, “we really need the items to execute our contact tracing exercise.”

Source: GNA

MAKING THE CLIENT SERVICE UNITS REALITY

One key but often neglected unit in most organisations and institutions in both Public and Private Sectors in the country is the Customer or Client Service. Client Service may be defined as the provision of service to clients before, during, and after a purchase. In a nutshell, the interactions that clients have with representatives of the organisation will be of top priority.

Any organisation worth its salt will place the interest of the customer or client high on its scheme of things. As a result, the management will ensure that the Unit is well-placed to provide the necessary services customers or clients will require.

The rate of success of such interactions is dependent on employees "who can adjust themselves to the personality of the guest"-as stated by *Buchanan, Leigh* in an article entitled "A Customer Service Makeover" published in *Incorporated* magazine (1 March 2011 edition). This is because it is one of the communication channels that represents the eyes and ears of that institution. Whatever the organisation's objectives may be either as good/product or service provider

to its cherished customers or clients, the satisfaction of same must be paramount in all things. The Clients are likely to sell the organisation positively if they are well-treated at the Client Unit. The opposite is obvious if it goes the other way round. In both cases the consequences will impact greatly on the organisation.

It is against this background that experts in Marketing still hold on to the age-long adage that ***“Customer or Client is king”***. Various businessmen, entrepreneurs and marketers have all said something that summed up to confirmed the popular adage. For example, Samuel Moore Walton, the American businessman and founder of Wal-Mart Stores Incorporated is on record to have said, ***“There is only one boss. The customer. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending the money somewhere else.”***

Customers or clients are now not only interested in the end satisfaction they get in consuming the services rendered to them but also the processes by which the services came about. It is so because services are intangible, inseparable, perishable and variability.

It is said services are intangible because it cannot be seen, tasted, felt, heard or smelled before purchase. It is like taking a chance. The purchaser does not really know whether he will have a better deal.

Again, they are inseparable in that services cannot be separated from the provider of the service. The provider is part and parcel of the service offered. His or her disposition may affect the service provided. What this means is that services are distinct from products in that the production and consumption of services are inseparable.

Furthermore, services are said to be perishable in that they cannot be stored for reused or resale. They are usually consumed immediately after purchase.

Finally, services are variable because the quality cannot be constant. The quality of services delivered are dependent on the providers. More so on when, where and how they are provided.

These four distinctive features follow the four primary objectives of service that any service agency must strive to adhere to: building trust or faith, empowering service delivery personnel, establishing uniform processes, and promoting customer satisfaction.

It is in this light that many organisations are the faces of their organisations by putting in measures to make their Customer or Client Service Units be on top of issues.

For us in the Local Government Service the operations of the Client Service Unit must be taken seriously in order to provide satisfactory or quality services delivery to our clients. It should be well-resourced and personnel managing the units be highly trained to be on top of issues. Since the unit basically offers services to clients, the unit must be one of the organisation's prime units or sections. First and foremost, it must be well-positioned and accessible to all without hindrance.

However, it is regrettable to say least that most Local

Government Service outfits have relegated this all important unit to the background. Most Assemblies in the country have no dedicated offices for the unit, let alone furnishing the offices. Assemblies must provide offices for the Client Service and ensure basic facilities that would make clients comfortable to present their cases without restraints. Since complaints are essentially services but not tangible goods or products to be carried out at the end of the day. So, the service being offered the complainant must be of quality. Others consider the work of the Client Service as same as the Presiding Member's role as Chairman of the Public Relations and Complaint Committee of the Assemblies as enshrined in Section 26 of the Local Governance Act of 2016, Act 936. As a result, such Assemblies have labelled the latter office as Presiding Member's Office. The effect is that because Presiding Members are not staff of the Assemblies, the Client Service/ presiding Member's office are always under lock and key. This situation makes it very difficult for effective and efficient functioning of the Client Service Units.

Again it is a fact that some Assemblies are using the District Information or Public Relations Officers as Client Service staff. At best, the Client Service Unit must be likened to Receptionist who will receive complaints from the public.

It is well known that services are peculiar and have certain characteristics unlike products important sectors which are tangible

Criticism

Some have argued that the quality and level of client service has decreased in recent years, and that this can be attributed to a lack of support or understanding at the executive and middle management levels of a corporation and/or a client service policy. To address this argument, many organizations have employed a variety of methods to improve their customer satisfaction levels, and other key performance indicators (KPIs).

PROFESSIONALISM

The Local Government Service has developed a number of Protocols to guide and guard its operations to ensure that the staff of the Service work to the satisfaction of clients across all levels of local governance. One such protocol is the Service Delivery Standards for Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs).

As a result, the Service came out with six (6) defining and measuring areas of the Service's Delivery Standards. The Research, Statistics and Information Management Division of the Office of the Head of Local Government Service (OHLGS) will research into or look at each of the six Service Delivery Standards and share the outcomes in articles with all and sundry. These are Participation, Professionalism, Client Focus, Transparency, Efficient and Effective Use of Resources and Accountability.

Professionalism, as one of the Service Delivery Standards of the Service has three definitions in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as follows:

- a. "Skills or qualities of a professional or its members"
- b. "Great skills and competence"
- c. "Practice of employing professional"

From the above definitions, it means professionalism has something to do with skills and competence of a professional. The question is what does it entail when we say someone is a professional? Several authorities in some professions such as accounting and management have expressed their opinions on the subject. For instance, Peter Johnson, the Human Resource partner at the accountancy firm Cassons, has said: "A professional is someone who displays high levels of expertise and efficiency." He further agreed with

the notion that professionals are tribute not only to themselves, but also to others. That was when he said, "As an accountant, you are representing your profession, your professional body and your organisation.' What this means is that to be a professional, one must do his or her work reasonably well.

Again, to a large number of people, a **professional is often associated with officers who** work and behave in a manner that portray them as capable, dependable and humble.

Therefore, professionalism is seen in many professions and organisations and personnel involved strive to be professionals in their own rights. As a result, the act of professionalism cannot be learnt by mere reading a textbook or attending lectures. Penny Clarke, Programme Director of BSc Accounting at Manchester Business School has stated that "Professionalism cannot be taught, it's not a skill but a collection of attributes which need to be developed over time."

The immediate question is what type of attributes that are needed when we talk about professionalism? To answer this question, it must be explained that there is no one fixed all answer to the above. True professionals must possess certain attributes that easily give out a person or an officer as professional. Some of these are outlined below in no order of importance.

COMPETENCE

In showing professionalism at workplaces, workers must have competency in their work.

Any professional worth his salt in whatever field must have specialized knowledge and skills in addition to the qualification. Local Government Service staff must give confidence to their clients in the services they provide.



MISSION

A World-Class Decentralised and Client-Oriented Service.

MISSION

To support Local Government to deliver value for money services through the mobilisation, harmonisation and utilisation of quality human capacity and material resources to promote local and national development.

OUR CORE VALUES

Accountability, Anonymity, Impartiality, Client-Oriented, Creativity, Diligence, Discipline, Equity, Integrity, Innovativeness, Timeliness and Transparency.

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE (OHLGS)

P.O. Box MB 396, Ministries - Accra, Ghana

Tel.: 0302 - 677929 Fax: 0302 - 662799

Email: ohlgs@lgs.gov.gh

Website: www.lgs.gov.gh



Local Government Service - Ghana



@LocalGovService

GPS Address: GA-019-4293

(OHLGS office is adjacent Afua Sutherland Children's Park, Gamel Abdul Nasser Road)