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UNDP / World Bank Water & Sanitation Program

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CASELET 2

Dissemination Notes

Integrated Sanitation Project Midnapore

Summary

The Integrated Sanitation Project (ISP) demonstrates the impact of NGOs in mobilization and intermediation in communities that are financing their own sanitation services. Project planners avoided approaches that promoted "solutions." The task at hand was to create awareness and then to present a range of technical options from which to choose. This process enabled people to make informed choices. It can be termed as creation of demand or more correctly as an enabling process to reveal latent demand. Subsequent arrangements were for production, delivery and installation of the hardware and for catering to the administrative and accounting requirements. In the process the support of already existing social organizations and groups was enlisted and made use of. These groups received training, to enable them to play effective role in advocacy and subsequently, through the mechanism of revolving fund, to organize and manage delivery of services. Those below poverty line constitute 78% of the beneficiaries. This is a significant achievement as the country experience, in the urban context, indicates that the exclusive promotion of a single option can be time consuming because the technology is often perceived as unaffordable for many, and/or the total subsidy is beyond the government to provide within a reasonable time.

The Place

1. Midnapore, in the state of West Bengal is one of the largest districts in the country with a population of 8.35 million as per 1991 census. Most people, 7.5 million, are rural. The water supply coverage (1991) was 8.67 % through piped system and 42.77 % through spot sources. The sanitation coverage as per 1991 census was 4.74%. The district is one of the very few in the country to be declared as totally literate under the adult literacy program of the Literacy Mission of the GOI's HRD Ministry. As in any other place in Bengal, the people of Midnapore are politically conscious.

The Project

2. ISP became operational in the district since March 1990. The project is sponsored by UNICEF and implemented by Ramakrishna Mission Lokashiksha Parishad (RMLP).

The Project

- makes people realize the need for sanitation through advocacy and generates demand through presentation of options;
- facilitates revelation of demand through a range of technical options with price tags;
- builds capacity for advocacy through training;
- builds capacity for production of materials through training and working capital;
- builds administrative and accounting support through training.
- brings together already existing village level organizations and enables them to effectively play all of these roles.

3. The Project had a set of *assumptions*:

the mobilization of huge resources required for construction of latrines would generally not be possible except from the beneficiaries themselves;

NO SUBSIDY – assistance available from UNICEF will be for creating better motivation;

by proper advocacy it is possible to create awareness and motivate people to accept the package (para 12) of sanitary facilities;

full cost recovery* is possible by making technology options affordable and acceptable;

the village level youth clubs would voluntarily implement the program;

NGOs are more likely to achieve better results in creating awareness and in motivating because of

- a) better rapport with the community and
- b) flexibility in approach.

*The Project is now recovering costs on training, advocacy and establishment as well in addition to construction costs. (see para).

4. The project did not assume a target oriented approach in the traditional sense. The emphasis was on defining a process and direction which sets the pace for achieving physical targets. The process adopted and the forces unleashed are of such abiding nature that there is life and a self-sustaining momentum after the project assistance is over. The central piece of the process is advocacy to be done by properly trained local persons. Advocacy coupled with presentation of options will create demand to respond to which it is necessary concurrently to build capacity for production and delivery of latrine components. To manage the process an organization as detailed in para 8 was conceived: and norms such as one village level club for 1000 families, one motivator for 200 families were adopted. It is considered important by the project authorities to create one focal point per village and enable it to perform as a responsive repository of information and focal point for liaison and "know how." In other words the defined direction will lead to the desired destination and the pace will depend upon the variables encountered in the operational context and the ability of the organization and mechanisms put in place to respond to these variables. Thus the project made assumptions on outcomes — 50% of the households would come forward to accept the package after advocacy to 80% of the population - on the basis of a well orchestrated process, rather than setting target in the traditional manner. With such an emphasis on the process the project's reach has been more than its aim as the results show.

Intermediation

5. The NGO chosen for intermediation enjoys an enormous amount of good will in the entire state. Apart from their work during emergencies like floods they have also been active in health and sanitation sectors and in adult literacy. The NGO's excellent reputation was a significant asset in launching the project. The intermediation consisted of advocacy and training.

Advocacy

6. WALL WRITING BY VLOs	: 9,999 spots
VILLAGE LEVEL MOTIVATION CAMPS	: 2,486 camps and 1,491,600 people
HOME VISIT (effective tool through accredited motivators, field staff and VLOs)	: 571,490 families
EXHIBITION DURING FESTIVALS AND VILLAGE FAIRS	: 385
VIDEO AND SLIDE SHOWS	: 1,580
VILLAGE GROUP MEETING	: 4,822; 159,126 PEOPLE ATTENDED
SANITATION SONG SQUAD	: 1,526 performances

Advocacy materials used were flash cards, calendar, technical guide book, Q&A book and audio cassette folders

Training

7. There are two categories of training. One is technical. The other is organizational and motivational. The former cater to the needs of Seed Masons, village Masons, Drilling Mistries, Women caretakers of Tara Hand Pump and includes training on construction of improved Chullah. The latter consist of orientation of project personnel, cluster leaders, youth club leaders, Panchayat members and training of motivators and training on book-keeping. The training module developed by the UNICEF have been used for conducting training for Masons, motivators and village leaders with modifications to suit the local needs. The modules for other

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training courses have been developed by the project personnel. A total of 636 courses have so far been organised to train 23,456 persons.

Organization

8. ISP is implemented by the already existing village level organizations (VLOs) like youth clubs or mahila mandals. The project is under operation in 6272 villages and there are 1107 youth clubs. The next tier is the cluster organization that is a consortium of village level organizations. Typically there would be one such cluster for 2-3 community development Blocks. At present there are 14 cluster organizations for 54 Blocks. Ultimately the idea is to have one cluster per block. The cluster organizations manufacture pre-fabricated concrete materials like rings, Y junction and pit covers. They also plan, implement, supervise and monitor the project and act at the middle level to make a bridge between RMLP, Block and VLO. In the beginning the pan and traps are made only at the central production center at Narendrapur, the state level head quarter of RMLP. Now these are made at two places in the field. There are plans to make these components ultimately at all the production centres in a spirit of truly decentralised capacity building. The project employs professional staff. There is one work assistant per block. The clusters have one programme assistant and one work assistant each. The club and cluster levels have a Accountants.

Revolving Fund

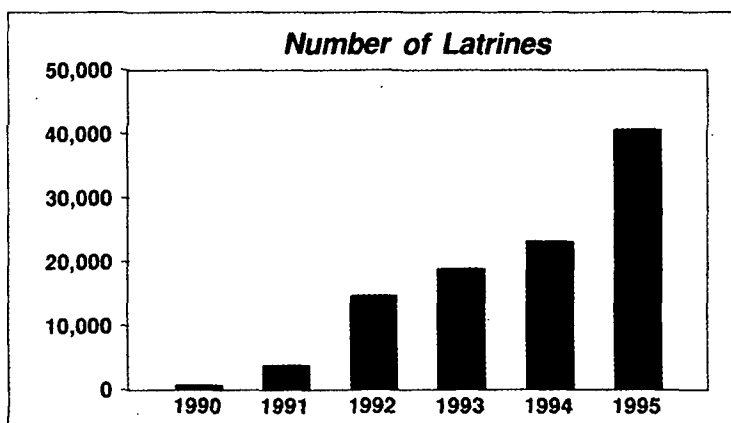
9. Sizable portion of the contribution from UNICEF goes into a revolving fund to meet the working capital requirements of the production centers and to provide interest free loans to those who cannot make full payment up-front. **There is no subsidy – not even for the poor.** In the beginning either full contribution was made or loans were provided to the extent required. The project has stopped giving loans from January 1994. The practice initially was to provide loans to the better-off on the assumption that repayment will be better. This had to be abandoned later in view of willful defaulters and the project provided loans to the lowest cost options only. Loan repayment has been satisfactory and is 52% of the total dues. In terms of dues on date of repayment of this percentage is much higher and is over 90%. By March 1996 the project had executed construction worth four and a half times the amount of revolving fund. No further support is required for revolving fund.

10. It has been noted by a review team of UNICEF, GOI AND GOWB that as of August 1993 40% of the families had paid the full cost of constructing a latrine at the beginning while the rest had opted for a loan. In the initial two years of the project the percentage in the former category was only 20%. The project proposal envisaged only 25% for this category. Now, of course, all the families are paying the full cost.

COVERAGE (As on March 1996)

11. FACILITY	NUMBER
(a) Low cost Latrine	115,484
(b) Soakage Pit	387
(c) Improved Smokeless chulla	8,553
(d) Garbage Pit	4,450
(e) Bathing Platform	431
(f) Direct Action TARA Hand Pump	467
(g) Biogas linked to Low Cost Latrine	184
(h) ORS packets Sold	47477

There are 127 villages and 3 Gram Panchayats in the districts which are fully covered under the project with household latrines. These have been declared as **sanitation villages and sanitation Gram Panchayats**. This is a matter of extreme pride as an anecdotal report indicates that parents would prefer to give their daughters in marriage in such villages.



Other Benefits:

12. One of the indirect benefits of the project which has significant implications for poverty alleviation is the wage employment of Rs 12.12 million involving 4 lakh mandays. The other benefit is that the community gets one Tara

Handpump free as incentive for every 50 latrine installed. The other features are that a water committee is established; two ladies from the community are trained as caretakers; beneficiaries contribute Rs 500/- as initial fund for maintenance; each family contributes 50 paise per month towards maintenance.

Monitoring

- Monthly review meeting with cluster leaders, Program Assistant and central level staff to review progress and to sort out problems.
- Monthly meeting of youth club leaders and motivators at cluster level to review the progress and to render support to overcome difficulties.
- District level meetings for categorizing strategies for effective implementation, securing the cooperation of bureaucracy and elected Panchayat.
- State Level Committee to discuss strategies and problems and to review the progress and problems.

Role of UNICEF

13. UNICEF extended funding support for activities of a software nature like advocacy, training/orientation etc. Over 50% of the total funding have gone for the revolving fund that has made a signal contribution in ensuring production and supply of materials to meet the demand in a timely fashion. This has also contributed towards sustainability for future coverage even after UNICEF funds are discontinued. In the beginning, UNICEF financed the overhead costs. These costs are now recovered from the beneficiaries as service charges at the rate of Rs 40 for latrines costing upto Rs 800 and at the rate of Rs 50 for latrines above Rs 800. In fact these costs accounted for 15% of the unit cost initially and they have come down to 5% as can be seen. The recovery of these costs did not have a negative impact on demand either

Influence on Policy

14. The guidelines under Central Rural Sanitation Programme of Government of India provides for a subsidy of Rs 2000 per unit. GoI has agreed for relaxation of these guidelines in the state of West Bengal where a subsidy of Rs 200 is provided for beneficiaries below poverty line alone. Also the subsidy is administered in

kind, in terms of materials and no cash disbursements are made.

Lessons Learnt

15. Adoption of sanitary latrines by a household depends on availability of a range of option which alone determines what people want and what they are willing to pay for it. While awareness creation plays a social role the option performs an economical function by converting need or preference into effective demand.

16. Once the demand is revealed it should be effectively backed up by financial arrangements (revolving fund in this case) and institutional/management arrangements to oversee disbursements, to obtain commitments and to enforce them. The Midnapore experience shows the way for a much needed alternative delivery mechanism for both achieving the coverage and sustainable investments.

17. The loan repayments tend to be prompt as the loan is consciously opted for and linked to repayment capacity unlike the loans of a thrust-upon variety driven by norms.

18. The approach is successful in quickening the pace of sanitation coverage and particularly in reaching the poor.

Issues

19. The approach adopted is effectively changing the habits of people from open defecation to use of latrines. There may however be a valid criticism or concern in some quarters that this process, to the extent it errs on the side of willingness to pay, may compromise the technical requirements? UNICEF have therefore initiated investigative studies on the use, effectiveness and the technical soundness of the latrines.

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