

Strategy 2016-2020

BRAC Environmental WASH programme **WORKING DRAFT 7 for discussion**

Everyone, everywhere, all the time.

Summary

The BRAC Environmental WASH Programme for 2016-2020 works towards a vision of Bangladesh with safe, sustained water supply and sanitation and hygiene for everyone, everywhere, all the time. In the five years from 2016 through 2020, the wider scope of the programme is reflected in a new branding: BRAC Environmental WASH. A gradual expansion in scope is planned beyond WASH to initiate water resources management interventions aimed at increasing security of supply.

Based on the successful interventions in rural areas over the past 10 years, and a gap analysis at national level, innovative WASH programmes are foreseen in low income small towns, urban areas and coastal areas. Specific areas of intervention include solid waste management at scale, faecal sludge management, water security and quality, enhanced secondary school programmes and alternative sanitation technologies at scale. **In all its programmes, BRAC Environmental WASH will continue to adhere to BRAC's core values of inclusiveness (including the less able), innovation, integrity and effectiveness, working to empower the women and serve the poor (right's base approach).**

The new elements of the BRAC Environmental WASH strategy imply a gradual shift in operating styles from direct service to facilitation, advocacy and joint implementation, learning and monitoring the impact of programmes. Operational partners will include Government at all levels, civil society and the private sector as well as cooperation with other NGOs already operating in the same regions. Planning and budgeting will need to be flexible because programmes in each of the regions will not necessarily focus on identical issues with similar manpower or financial needs. These new developments will also require on-going investment in staff and partners capacities.

The strategy builds on ten years of experience in large-scale rural WASH programming. On going support to the rural population which has had access to sanitation services over the years, is a critical factor of success of BRAC interventions. Much of this work will continue and be enhanced, for example, dealing with the well-known challenge of sanitation in difficult hydrogeological settings, and will be integrated into other local BRAC programmes. Staffing will be reduced where earlier programmes have achieved their objectives and appear sustainable within existing institutional structures.

This strategy is meant to guide BRAC in planning and mobilizing resources. In terms of its financing, a mix is envisaged of grants, joint implementation of programmes with government and multi-lateral institutions and business models that apply market solutions to large scale change. Cost sharing and user payment in some activities will remain a feature of the programme. Direct BRAC support is being applied to programme development and piloting, for example, alternative water services in the coastal region. The broad based development of these strategies will depend on multiple sources of finance, as in the past.¹

¹ Support has been provided by the Government of the Netherlands (from 2006), Governments of Great Britain and Australia from 2011 and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (from 2011). Technical assistance has been provided by IRC (Netherlands).

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Introduction

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in providing basic water and sanitation services to its people. It is now estimated that throughout Bangladesh, 85% of people have access to improved water and 57% use sanitary latrines. Open defecation has almost ended with only about 3% of the people not using toilets of any kind².

BRAC WASH and related BRAC programmes have made a substantial contribution to the nation's MDG targets for water, sanitation and health and will continue to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. Over 8 years, the BRAC hygiene and sanitation programme reached more than 66 million people, about half of the rural population of Bangladesh. It has successfully worked to improve household sanitation by creating demand for hygienic latrines³ while supporting an extensive supply chain and local businesses. Piped water supplies especially have been an outstanding success. 2.3 million people⁴ have gained access to safe water, free from arsenic and protected from saline intrusion. Current coverage with hygienic and adequately maintained toilets is 82% in 152 upazilas where the programme has worked for 8 years⁵. All this has been underpinned by the strong provision of service to the poor and ultra-poor and by a unique hygiene promotion programme focusing on universal use and sustainability of services in communities, households and schools⁶.

² WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation (2014).

[http://www.wssinfo.org/documents/?tx_displaycontroller\[type\]=country_files](http://www.wssinfo.org/documents/?tx_displaycontroller[type]=country_files)

³ The hygienic toilet separates the feces from the environment and it seals the path between the squat hole and the pit to effectively block the pathways of bad smell, flies and other insect vectors thereby breaking the cycle of disease transmission.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Data is from two Independent monitoring activities, the QIS (qualitative monitoring system) and RED (Research and Evaluation Department, 2014).

BRAC investments in the ultra-poor leverage 18-20 times their value in further investments made by the families themselves. Data from one upazila shows that for every dollar BRAC WASH spends targeting the poorest, the poor themselves spend \$18 per person in latrine construction and about \$2 a year on maintenance. Additionally, for each dollar that BRAC invests per student for WASH facilities the schools invest \$10 And for each dollar that BRAC spends on supporting school hygiene and menstrual hygiene management, the schools and students invest 4 times more on major and minor maintenance⁷.

However, significant challenges remain. In water supply, the availability of safe domestic water is threatened by saline intrusion in coastal areas and seasonal deficits elsewhere. Water quality is a concern that undermines the effort to provide safe services. For sanitation, the sustainability (slippage) of safe services remains a concern. In difficult hydrogeological conditions, the standard low-cost toilet models cannot be used throughout the year. Other challenges include achieving universal safe hygiene practices which requires long-term commitment from supporting organisations. There are also emerging issues such as the demands generated by rapid urbanization, the impacts of climate change and the fragile situation in coastal areas.

The national enabling environment for water, sanitation and hygiene is strong. The Government has submitted to the United Nations its post-2015 development agenda (2016-30) the goal of “Safe and sustainable sanitation, hygiene and drinking water used by all”. The Government has developed six national policies/strategies⁸ for the sector and other development partners are actively aligning their activities to this.

Vision and draft strategy

The Environmental WASH Programme for 2016-2020 works towards a vision of Bangladesh with

***Safe, sustained water supply and sanitation and hygiene
by everyone, everywhere, all the time.***

The five-year strategy is organized around guiding principles and three strategic priorities which are described in this paper. It is consistently aligned to BRAC’s overall Strategy (update December 2013) and it conforms to the policies of the Government of Bangladesh.

⁷ BRAC/IRC 2014 Life-cycle costing studies

⁸ (i) National Sanitation Strategy 2005, (ii) Pro-Poor Strategy for Water and Sanitation Sector 2005, (iii) National Cost Sharing Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation in Bangladesh 2011, (iv) National Hygiene Promotion Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation in Bangladesh 2012, and (v) National Strategy for Hard to Reach Areas and People of Bangladesh 2012, (vi) Draft Final National Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation 2014.

Guiding principles

The following cross-cutting principles have formed the basis of the BRAC WASH programme and will continue in the future:

1. Equity and inclusiveness (including the less able)
2. **Gender**, particularly the empowerment of women and girls
3. **Innovation** through research and pilot projects
4. Strong **monitoring quality assurance** so that the programme is carried out as intended, honestly and transparently
5. **Improved WASH behaviours** through promotion and repeated inter-personal communication reaching each member of the household
6. Participatory and demand driven approaches
7. Blend of financial tools and sources with **co-funding arrangements**
8. **Collaboration and synergy** with Government, other institutions, private sector and civil society
9. Measuring **sustainability of services** provided: impact assessment prioritizing health and social changes

Strategic priorities

The strategy and its priorities have been designed to sustain what has already been achieved in the past eight years but most importantly to address urgent and second generation challenges once basic services and coverage are provided. With the aim to deliver services to everyone BRAC Environmental WASH will also have to expand to areas which are the most difficult to reach or that have been falling in between the rural and urban divide: coastal areas and small towns for instance.

The five year strategy is organized around three strategic priorities:

Strategic priorities of BRAC Environmental WASH 2016-2020

1. WASH in all geographic settings (rural, urban, fragile coastal areas)
 - Water quantity, quality and reliability
 - Use of hygienic latrines
 - WASH in schools
 - Sustained WASH behaviours
2. Emerging issues
 - Water resource management
 - Faecal sludge management
 - Waste management
3. Ensure effective delivery mechanisms
 - Management, collaboration, monitoring, capacity, learning, finance and business models

Operationalizing the strategic priorities

BRAC Environmental WASH will develop activities that transform these themes into high quality programmes based on national priorities and funding sources. Some of these are listed below.

After the sector consultation, specific theory of change, indicators and outcomes will be drafted for each of the areas. Further rationale and background, including lessons from other organisations in each of the areas will be added.

1 WASH in all geographic settings

In rural areas, BRAC WASH has worked in 152 upazillas for 8 years and another 98 upazillas for 2 to 4 years. Achievements are significantly greater where the programme has been involved longer (see appendix 1). This implies that interventions should continue in the “newer” areas for a second project phase. In the 152 “old” upazillas, inputs and staffing will be reduced in stages as the upazillas reach higher levels of achievement, for example, 85% coverage with sanitary and maintained latrines. In all upazillas some activities will be implemented to support sustainability of the WASH outcomes and processes after the project period. These activities include:

- targeted improvements in the supply chain;
- integration of some processes within other BRAC programmes which are established in the upazillas;
- identification of appropriate partnerships and financing mechanics to ensure maintenance and monitoring activities
- identification of vulnerability and disaster preparedness
- inputs to schools and village WASH committees including participatory monitoring and own planning for the future;
- advocacy with the education departments on specific school WASH issues.

In all upazillas some highly targeted work will continue particularly for hygiene, maintaining and upgrading facilities and faecal sludge management. Within this, the focus will continue on empowerment of women and services for the poor and ultra-poor.

Small towns (pourashavas) have fallen between the cracks in service delivery throughout Bangladesh. The capacity to develop and manage services is limited and the role of government is critical⁹. BRAC is well positioned to demonstrate comprehensive approaches in small towns, building on its peri-urban work. The start-up in small towns is an iterative process and likely to be slower than in rural areas. Focal points will be:

- Initiating change which requires building and managing (new) partnerships, joint learning and testing, cooperation, moving from direct service delivery to facilitation, and using flexible working methods.
- Growing package: initial activities focus on a small number of themes, based on the pourashava needs and drawn from BRAC’s proven past experience: building trust locally, upgrading sanitation, school activities, hygiene promotion, and well protection. The number of themes in the package or

⁹ A world-wide problem in urban sanitation, existing models have not been delivering basic services at the scale that is urgently required. See Galli, G. (2014) Towards systemic change in urban sanitation (IRC Working Paper) The Hague: IRC.

menu will grow over time as successful pilots establish new ways of working.

- New activities from successful pilots. These may include: sanitation in crowded areas such as group toilets and pay toilets in markets; solid waste management; faecal sludge management with treatment and commercial marketing of products; piped water in collaboration with other institutions; source protection and water recharging.

BRAC Environmental WASH work in the **coastal areas** began in 2006 in the context of the BRAC WASH projects. In 2015 BRAC launched, with its own resources, a pilot in coastal areas giving greater emphasis to water provision and water resources. Future development will be undertaken with communities on:

- Scaling up appropriate water technologies
- Water management including water safety planning
- Contributing to better and affordable access to safe water to the ultra-poor by using and upgrading the existing water vending networks and supporting the creation of new water vendors; dissemination of water hygiene knowledge among them.
- Ensuring proper disposal, collection, treatment and maintenance for faecal sludge management and sewerage systems (see next point)
- Emergency mitigation in terms of designs, technologies and planning to reduce the human and financial consequences of climate related disasters.

The details for each of the geographical areas will need to be targeted to the needs and will focus on the following critical components: water quantity, quality and reliability; use of hygienic latrines; WASH in schools and sustained WASH behaviours.

1.1 Water quantity, quality and reliability

With particular focus on difficult hydrogeological settings, two focal points are:

- Water technologies: Together with user groups, the programme will develop the sustainable technology which is most appropriate, from a menu of well-tested options. Focus will be on working in challenging hydrogeological settings, coastal areas and hard-to-reach areas.
- Piped water: BRAC WASH developed five small piped water systems that communities have continued to operate successfully for 5 to 6 years. Building on this experience, the programme will focus on providing software inputs¹⁰ for new piped water systems in collaboration with other agencies that provide support for hardware.

Ensuring safe water requires attention to the whole cycle from water source to user's mouth. Particularly difficult water quality issues are: chemical contamination, primarily arsenic¹¹; saline intrusion in many coastal

10 Activities may focus on site selection and design of distribution networks, finance, household and group connections, operation and maintenance and equitable service provision all together with strong community participation and community monitoring.

11 The National Survey of Drinking Water Quality (2009) found that 1 in 8 water sources were contaminated with arsenic exceeding national standards. Specifically, 13.4% of samples exceeded the Bangladesh drinking water limit of 50 µg per litre and 32.0% of samples exceeded the WHO guideline value of 10 µg per litre.

areas; and bacterial contamination of drinking water at home and in some wells¹². Two focal points for the programme are:

- Water management and hygiene in the household:
 - Promotion of safe water storage.
 - Ensuring safe distance between well and toilet: A safe distance will be maintained between the shallow well and toilets under construction. Where the household does not have enough land to maintain this distance, the programme will start work to introduce group toilets¹³.
 - Protect wells: The programme will continue to work for well protection, largely through provision of safe platforms through cost sharing with community members. Other interventions such as hyper-chlorination may be considered.
- Water safety plans and water testing:
 - Development of water safety planning, a systematic approach to ensuring water quality
 - Water testing on a commercial and continuing basis, including building public demand for water testing (arsenic and bacterial) and ensuring the quality, affordability and convenience of testing.
 - Ensure the safety of commercial water vending.

1.2 Use of hygienic latrines

BRAC Environmental WASH has played an important role in achieving basic levels of sanitation provision. The next steps continue to include this but also move beyond the basics:

- Alternative technologies: The programme has carried out two research studies on alternative sanitation technologies for difficult hydrogeological settings¹⁴. More learning and piloting with other organisations will lead to scaling up beyond the BRAC programme. Because these designs are more expensive than the standard latrines, it will be important to identify financial mechanisms that will ensure services to the poor.
- Continue to implement improvements and reduce slippage: BRAC Environmental WASH will continue to implement improved designs and technologies, including double pit latrines, improved seals and pans. Maintenance and repairs will be stimulated through continued hygiene promotion. To reduce slippage, community-based monitoring will be initiated after construction by groups such as the women in Village WASH Committees.
- Explore further options and demand for group toilets and pay-and-use toilets.

The supply chain¹⁵ will be supported to respond to changing demand, ensure quality and serve all households, including the poor¹⁶:

- Quality assurance: The programme will work to apply and encourage the newly improved BRAC quality standards and certification system of Rural Sanitation Centres (RSCs).

12 While national data is not available, the research of BRAC WASH and the Research and Evaluation Division (RED) has found contamination with faecal bacteria in some wells and much higher levels of contamination in drinking water stored in households. The latter can be addressed through hygiene promotion and further water testing.

¹³ A group latrine is two or more toilet cubicles, each owned by a family. The cubicles are usually attached with shared pits.

¹⁴ See: BRAC and IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre (2014) Sanitation demand and supply in rural Bangladesh: rapid assessment to identify supply chain challenges. Dhaka and The Hague, 19 pp.

¹⁵ A supply chain is the term used for the process that relates all activities involved with the flow and transformation of goods from the raw materials stage through to the end-user, as well as the associated information flows.

- Link RSCs and existing finance institutions: Toilet options should provide a good 'match' to households with different demands and ability to pay will be considered. A more flexible approach will provide financial support to the poor to reflect actual construction costs and the ability of the ultra-poor and poor households to pay. The programme will also stimulate new credit arrangements through, for example, BRAC financial institutions to help households upgrade their toilets.
- Capacity building: Training activities will be considered for sanitation entrepreneurs focusing on the quality of production and increased knowledge on different toilet types as well as business skills. Information will be made available to the consumers, both women and men, who are upgrading their sanitation facilities about construction (quality, construction time, costs for upgrading of facilities). Transportation of hardware to hard to reach areas is still a challenge and different arrangements will need to be investigated.

1.3 WASH in schools

The programme has focused with success on secondary schools where it has been able to address the overlooked issues of menstruation hygiene, sanitation facilities for girls, and has also stimulated production of sanitary materials for women and girls. In primary schools WASH education has been provided. The school is not only a target improvement in this programme but also a vehicle to promote hygienic practices in the community. The scope of the current package will be expanded to include:

- On-going **software activities** such as training, work with school management committees, student brigades (also called school health clubs) with outreach into the community. Schools co-share the costs of their sanitation facilities and this will continue but with specific strategies for the poorer schools. Special focus on student brigade and their WASH activities.
- **Hardware:** sanitation facilities for both girls and boys, water supply and handwashing facilities in secondary schools with continuing focus on sustaining and maintaining school WASH facilities and overall school cleanliness.
- **Collaboration:** the programme has been funded through external resources. Partnerships and joint programming will be developed strategically to scale up the programme.
- **Menstrual hygiene programme:** This innovative programme, which includes both facilities for girls and education, including adolescent health messaging for boys through male teacher will be upgraded and scaled up in secondary schools.

1.4 Sustained WASH behaviours

Consistent safe WASH practices and behaviours are essential to create the health benefits of WASH investments. Focal points will be:

- **Integration in other activities:** Hygiene promotion will be integrated into each new activity of the programme. While hygiene promotion traditionally focuses on women and girls, the innovative hygiene promotion activities for men will also continue in all within each programme.
- **Integration within BRAC:** Other BRAC departments will be encouraged to integrate WASH hygiene promotion into their on-going programmes. Effective promotion methods may be developed through training and refreshers of staff of other departments, administered by the BRAC Learning Division in collaboration with the WASH programme.
- **Communication:** Hygiene promotion is not just giving messages. The programme will continue to train staff and provide refreshers on two-way communication methods. Key indicators for



behaviours may change over time to reflect new priorities.

2. Emerging issues: water resource and waste management

2.1 Water resources management

The need for improved water resources management in riverine and coastal areas, as well as water scarcity settings, calls for complex and collaborative responses. Focal points will include:

- Pro-actively looking for opportunities to undertake joint programming with other institutions and civil society, in programmes that may include:
 - Surface water management, micro-recharge of water
 - Watershed management especially in coastal and drought prone areas
 - Multiple use water provision and management (fisheries, agriculture and domestic use)
 - Activities to reduce pollution and contamination of drinking water sources
 - Integrated polder (land enclosed by dykes: land reclaimed, flood plains or marshes) rehabilitation in collaboration with others.

2.2 Faecal sludge management

Building upon the three research studies BRAC WASH are being undertaken. Current research and pilots on treatment of faecal and agricultural waste will continue and be scaled up in stages.

- Firstly, the programme's current experience would be expanded in promoting double pit latrines of sufficient depth to eliminate the removal of dangerous sludge. In addition, safe disposal of dangerous sludge in closed dug pits will be promoted more aggressively.
- The second stage of faecal sludge management will focus on practical and safe treatment and marketing of products such as fertilizer on medium and large-scale. This activity has good prospects for generation of new business models. Advocacy is needed to simplify administrative processes for certification of products and deal with troublesome subsidy issues for inorganic fertilizers.

2.3 Waste management

In rural areas, promotion will continue of household management of solid household waste through individual or group pits. In towns, working closely with local government, the activities will be developed in stages such as:

- Solid waste clean-up with communities, civil society, schools and market committees.
- Encourage development of entrepreneurs to deal with faecal and solid waste management.
- Disposal in dedicated sites set aside by pourashavas/towns. This will be coupled to separation of waste and transport on payment by waste wholesalers in towns.

3. Ensuring effective delivery mechanisms

“There is much excitement today about the potential for new technology to end human poverty, but it’s easy to forget that many solutions already exist. We’re just missing effective delivery mechanisms. We can reach millions more today by focusing less on what and more on how.”

Dr. Mushtaque Chowdhury, 2014, Stanford Social Innovation Review

The implementation of such an ambitious strategy builds on the strengths of how BRAC manages and operates its programmes. Compared with the previous strategy, more focus will be put on learning platforms (collaborating with existing, or where necessary creating new), monitoring impact and collaborative action-research that focuses on delivering the evidence needed for Bangladesh to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. BRAC WASH programme believes that sector change can only be delivered by understanding best practices and collaboration with key implementing partners in the sector.

Working with other institutions: facilitation, advocacy and collaboration

BRAC Environmental WASH will gradually shift from providing direct services to facilitation. For example, it will help pourashavas plan, monitor implementation and manage piped water supply but probably not to do construction directly. It will advocate locally and at other levels for supportive policies and regulations:

- Stronger collaboration and joint activities with Government at various levels, civil society institutions, private sector as well as other BRAC programmes. Collaboration will require establishing agreed practices for channeling funds in ways that are accountable and transparent among the partners involved.
- Flexibility in programming and budgeting according to scale and needs identified through monitoring, reporting and reflection mechanisms (with re-planning and re-budgeting at regular moments).

Monitoring, evaluation and research

The future vision requires the ability to take new learnings and findings into programmes efficiently and flexibly for adaptive management. BRAC WASH proposed to set up or support existing *learning platforms* that combines research, pilots (experiments), innovation and monitoring. Many elements of this already exist in the sector and within BRAC:

- Intensifying collaboration with other sector platforms and create platforms around “orphan” priority themes and topics. Develop capacities of staff in facilitation of learning events.
- Institutionalizing research and innovation: Both the BRAC WASH and BRAC’s independent Research and Evaluation Division¹⁷ (RED) have greatly enhanced their WASH research capacities. Institutionalization of this will involve enhanced management of innovation.
- Monitoring & evaluation in the WASH programme is unique and measures inputs and outputs measured by the MIS system and verified by continuous quality assurance checking in the field, and
- outcomes, through the participatory Qualitative Information System (QIS) that is verified by the RED.
- An area of future development is to expand the uses of monitoring tools and outputs. For example, QIS

¹⁷ The RED also carries out studies on challenging issues relevant to future programme development, such as water quality, participation of women and so on.

will be extended as a tool to promote safe WASH behaviours. In monitoring, sustainability indicators should always be included in each WASH sub-programme from the beginning.

- Capacity building of staff and local partners calls for a dedicated budget for frequent training and refreshers at all levels. Capacity building in a programme that is this mature may go beyond training, for example, with exchange visits among staff and local groups to other, successful areas within and outside the programme area.

Finance and business models

In its finance and business models, the BRAC Environmental WASH programme will continue its current approach to develop these models:

- **Strong range of financial mechanisms.** For WASH implementation and sustainability, expand its success in creating business models that respond to demand and need while being aware of affordability constraints of part of the population it serves
- **A range of loans and subsidy models.** For costly infrastructure, such as piped water, treatment and equipment for faecal and liquid waste treatment implement with a blend of public and private investments. The programme will stimulate equitable cost sharing for services among all economic groups.
- **Joint funding and cost sharing.** Work with mechanisms that help other institutions use their financial resources, particularly to serve the poorest. An example has been the use of the ADP grants for the ultra-poor.

Appendix 1: Highlights from BRAC WASH effective proven delivery mechanisms

This appendix highlights 8 years of achievements of the BRAC WASH programme in terms of scale, sustainability, impact on the poor, women and girls and value for money. BRAC WASH has made a major contribution to better hygiene, sanitation and water provision in rural Bangladesh – changes that are powered primarily by people rather than by infrastructure.

1. Scale: significantly increasing access to water and sanitation services

BRAC WASH and related BRAC programmes have made a substantial contribution to the nation's MDG targets for water, sanitation and health and will continue to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. Over 8 years, the BRAC hygiene and sanitation programme reached more than 66 million people, about half of the rural population of Bangladesh.

Hygiene promotion is the critical factor in BRAC WASH success – it is the missing link in most other WASH programmes globally. Between 2006 and 2014 about 43 million people have participated in BRAC WASH hygiene promotion meetings at village level. As a result, 35.8 million people¹⁸ have gained access to clean toilets with the support of BRAC WASH, an un-paralleled achievement by an NGO. The achievement is equally divided among ultra-poor, poor and non-poor.

The programme's rate of increase in access to hygienic toilets is 1.5 times that of the national programme in the same period (2006-2013). A significant proportion of this success was achieved by motivating and helping people to make existing latrines hygienic.

Water has been supplied through 6146 deep tube wells, 5 piped water supply systems, 28 pond sand filters¹⁹, and through innovative technologies. Piped water supplies especially have been an outstanding success. 2.3 million people²⁰ have gained access to safe water, free from arsenic and saline intrusion.

BRAC WASH has worked with schools to install latrines and facilities that make it possible for adolescent girls to attend more regularly and to build socially aware groups of young people who will lead the journey to complete generational change. The programme has installed 5,039 separate toilets with menstrual hygiene provisions for girl students in secondary schools.

Efficiency has been gained through routine simplified processes used at scale: with top down management and bottom up community involvement.

¹⁸ MIS October 2014

¹⁹ Ibid,

²⁰ Ibid.

2. Sustainability: focusing on how services are delivered and local partnerships

The most important factor is not so much what to deliver, but how to deliver it, while ensuring sustainability: delivery through the most appropriate channels. To be able to work effectively with village women and men, the hygiene and sanitation promotion has been delivered by 7602 personnel (of whom 5,818 are female) and 5,000 are community members.

Hygiene and sanitation is managed in the community by 65,500²¹ active Village WASH Committees, where more than half of members are women.

BRAC WASH has introduced innovative monitoring for hygiene behaviours and hygiene for men. Over the years the BRAC WASH team has used findings to improve the programme. For instance, it was found earlier that men were not being reached with the hygiene promotion as effectively as women and new ways to reach them were tested. As a result, hygiene promotion sessions in tea stalls are now integrated into the programme.

Provision of toilet loans for the poor and subsidies for the ultra-poor were based on community-made social maps and cross-checked by an independent control unit. 213,520 poor families²² have been able to access BRAC loans to improve sanitation.

BRAC WASH facilitated and supported sanitation entrepreneurs to work in hard to reach areas. As the generated demand was huge, BRAC-WASH trained 5,603 people on sanitation demand and on materials and construction of low-cost sanitary toilets.

To reach the men, the BRAC WASH programme has assisted the highest authority on the Islamic faith in Bangladesh to develop a guide for WASH motivation during the Khutba. BRAC-WASH also conducted a training programme for 18,555 imams.

The programme has helped form 5,039 school WASH Committees. More than 42,682²³ students have been trained to lead their classmates and more than 8,000 teachers have also been trained in WASH issues.

3. Impact on the poor, women and girls

BRAC WASH had a dramatic effect on equity. Before the programme it was rare for ultra-poor families to own a hygienic latrine. Most indicators show a greater improvement in circumstances and practices for poor women, men and children than for the non-poor.

²¹ MIS October 2014

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.



The WASH programme specifically benefited the poor(est) women and their families. By the end of WASH I significantly lower access to improved sanitation by the (ultra)poor had already disappeared (Akter and Dey, 2011). Halfway through WASH II, there were no significant differences in consistent latrine use related to income levels.”

More than a million ultra-poor families (5 million people) have received subsidies for long-lasting and hygienic double-pit latrines. Local government provided substantial financial contributions for sanitation for ultra-poor families.

Without the grant for latrine construction, twin pit latrines would not be affordable for the ultra-poor since they would require them to spend almost 6% of their reported income. Hygienic latrines provided by BRAC for the ultra-poor can be maintained at a low cost to the households. The typical annual operating expenditure is 402[৳] (5US\$) per year per household for the ultra-poor households and 948[৳] (12US\$) per year for non-poor households.

4. Excellent value for money

BRAC investments in the ultra-poor generate 18-20 times their value in investments made by the families themselves. Data from one Upazila shows that for every dollar BRAC WASH spends targeting the poorest, the poor spend \$18 per person in latrine construction and about \$2 a year on maintenance. This is excellent value for money.

For each dollar that BRAC invests per student for WASH facilities the schools contribute \$10 .For each dollar that BRAC spends on supporting school hygiene and menstrual hygiene management, the schools and students invest 4 times more on major and minor maintenance.

BRAC WASH has demonstrated that an integrated approach to hygiene, sanitation and water is the only one that can deliver long-term change – but it requires sustained and intensive engagement with communities, and a long term commitment to maintain and improve on gains already made. A strong commitment from the Government and the donor community had played a very crucial role in gaining these achievements.