Editorial

Participatory approach is no more a novel phenomenon to the people working in the development sector. Community engagement in water and sanitation service delivery is key for ensuring project’s sustainability and accountability.

Active engagement of community members in social development projects is commonly undertaken to ensure sustainability and promote accountability (by empowering citizens to participate in such projects). Engagement includes a range of activities and approaches that are undertaken to varying degrees by different actors, ranging from public consultation to active participation in the design and delivery of projects. In addition, such activities tend to offer some form of empowerment for members of the community.

Development practitioners have been using it for a long time. Its use in the WaSH sector has achieved good results. The end user’s direct involvement in planning of the system i.e. Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS) from the start yielded a rapid improvement as to ODF.

User’s participation is essential for sustainability. First of all, involving and informing the user’s helps in ensuring that the identified problems and chosen solutions really reflect the needs and preferences felt by the users. This increases the chance that implemented solutions are really used.

Taking the great success assurance that community engagement approaches are well-tailored, effective and able to lead to sustainable outcomes of CLTS approach into consideration UNICEF has newly designed a new program named Community Approaches to Total Sanitation (CATS) to implement in Bangladesh. UST in partnership with Practical Action has been undertaking this project in three Upazilas of which one is in Jamalpur District and two Upazilas are in Sunamganj and Hobiganj districts since January 2015. There are some achievements. This issue of newsletter expresses some key achievements of the project.

Background

The project “Community Approaches to Total Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion (CATS)” aims at creating open defecation free (ODF) communities comprising of 100,000 people; promote hygiene among 333,000 people with hand-washing demonstration of at least 84,000 people. As part of the hygiene promotion intervention, it will rehabilitate water and sanitation facilities in 100 schools and hand-washing facilities in 180 schools to promote improved hand-washing and sanitation practices of 43,000 school children (as part of the 333,000 group mentioned earlier). The interventions will be implemented through Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach, government health workers’ capacity building for awareness generation and School Led Total Sanitation (SLTS).

Purpose of the project:

The purpose of this project is to implement WASH package in 500 communities and 200 schools in 6 Upazilas of Sylhet and Dhaka divisions*. Among these, UST is undertaking at three Upazilas.

The project’s purpose is to sustainably improve sanitation and hygiene behaviors among women, children and youth located in 234 communities and 50 schools in 03 Upazilas in Dhaka and Sylhet Divisions by March 2016.

Working Areas:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Jamalpur District</th>
<th>Hobiganj District</th>
<th>Sunamganj district</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upazila</td>
<td>Jamalpur Sadar Upazila</td>
<td>Baniachong Upazila</td>
<td>Dowara bazaar Upazila</td>
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**Key Approaches:**

There are a great variety of approaches UST follows in implementing the project. Primarily the project follows community approach to total sanitation including community-led total sanitation in combination with support and close coordination with LGIS and other public institutions like health, social welfare etc.

The project works to build capacity and coach the Health staff to promote hygiene practices (especially hand washing with soap) through awareness-raising and outreach interventions

The project Rehabilitates mass hand washing facilities along with rehabilitation of school water and sanitation facilities. Finally the project implement ‘fit for school’ and Three Star approaches

**Expected Outcomes:**

The project is designed for achieving Outcomes as follows:

- 2,00,000 people live in Open Defecation Free environment
- 1,00,000 people in targeted areas shift from open defecation to fixed-place defecation
- 85,000 people adopt improved hand washing practices after the use of the toilet
- 3,34,000 people have increased knowledge on hand washing with water and soap (including at least 75,000 school children)
- 45,000 students adopt improved hand washing practices after the use of the toilet

**Major Activities:**

A great variety of Activities are accomplished as of today. The project staff ignited the community through pre-triggering and post triggering process. Community people are motivated and as a result they construct improved latrine in the community by themselves. Apart from new construction the people also rehabilitates unimproved domestic latrines. The whole process facilitates community to gain access to improved latrines. As of 2015 some 44117 people have gained access to improved latrine.

**Declaration of ODF**

The ultimate achievement of the project is reflected in the declaration of open defecation free areas. That is, when all the households will be brought under sanitation coverage, the areas shall be declared ODF. Before declaration, the concerned officials visit the area and certify that the areas can be declared. The staff do visits to the site for post declaration monitoring.

People in the area have moved away from practicing open defecation, diarrheal diseases are still the second-leading cause of child and infant mortality, creating an urgent need for better quality sanitation options. Many rural households that do have latrines use direct pit latrines which belongs to water seal and are extremely useful against natural hazards.

**Sanitation entrepreneurs:**

The project has created Entrepreneurship i.e. startup company offering a sanitary products, service in the community. These entrepreneurs pick out new business opportunity and sell sanitary products in the community. This initiative has helped the project attain ODF so easily, because UST by this project has made all the sanitary materials available at their doorsteps.

**Hygiene promotion:**

Project entails hygiene promotional activities. This project sets the community in process whereby people (women, children and men) effect and sustains a hygienic and healthy environment for them. It does for more effective investment in sanitation and hygiene promotion. This project is just not about implementing a projects and it does not give blue-print solutions like other WaSH project for project-level interventions. Rather it lays out a process for long-term change with respect to health and hygiene.

The project imparts training to health workers, natural leaders, and created some volunteers. UST facilitate and monitor the practice.

**Hand washing facilities**

One of the vital activities of the project is hand washing. The project disseminated the knowledge regarding importance of hand washing to the people to develop and
sustain hand-washing practice.

People are keeping good health and hygiene by maintaining hand-washing practice.

**Making WASH facilities available with water and soap in school:**

Project has developed hand washing device and distributed to various schools. It organizes training for school teachers and members of the school management committees and school brigades on health and hygiene. These sections of people practice themselves and make others aware on keeping sound health.

The project takes it as mandatory activities that every school should have water and soap available at its premises. Accordingly the project distributes jar and soap to the schools so that the students get access to water and soap there. The project does follow up of the performance of the school’s students.

**Case study-1: Ruhili Government Primary School**

Ruhili Government Primary School of Jamalpur Sadar Upazila has been selected under CATS project to promote Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, especially for increasing the hand washing knowledge and practice among the student. At the beginning the project carried out a baseline survey at Ruhili Govt. Primary School and identified that the Latrines of that area are not functional and those were very unhygienic. The school lacks access hand washing facilities and as a result all the students and teachers do not practice hand- washing. Teachers, SMCs do not feel that hand washing are important part that can keep people away from being affected by water borne. Teachers, students and SMC members neither take care of their sanitation facilities nor do they tell others.

It was a dismal scenario all about. UST under this project took it with great importance and organized training on WASH in school for teachers and SMC members. Total six schools, 4 primary school and two Action Bangladesh staff, where 18 teachers and 12 SMC members participated in this training. Three teachers and two SMC members participated in this training from Ruhili government primary school. All the participants learned the concept of WASH in school, standard indicator of WASH in school, Importance of WaSH, impact and component of WASH in school, concept of three star approach, role of student council, teachers and SMC members etc. hand-washing and its importance, school based rehabilitation, rehabilitation management process etc. This training made them learn about the concept of WASH in school, negative impact in life if they do not practice hand-washing especially at five critical times.

Now all the teachers, SMC members are very much aware and ensure safe water, sanitation and hygiene in the school also in the house hold level of the student. Ruhili primary school now rehabilitates the non-functional latrine for the students, providing soap to the student for hand washing from school fund. The trained teachers are conducting the session on hand washing as per plan. Some student started to carry the water bottle.

During student council training, an observation, demo and practice session was conducted where all the student councils including other students observed their non hygienic water and sanitation facilities; they wash all the sanitation devices collectively and participate in the hand washing demonstration session. Teachers and SMC members of Ruhili School accepted it and said, ‘GoB-Unicef CATS-initiated WASH project in school is very much effective, it has played pivotal role to keep a hygienic environment in the school compound. Students maintain their own as well as
environmental health. Now all the students know of the process and all the students continue this hygiene practice. They are free from disease now.

**Shafiqul: A Masson for latrine**

Shafiqul lives in Rabber dam village. He is first among four children of his parents. He has read up to class eight. But it is irony of fate that he had to take over the charge of his family at that age. At first he started driving car, but he could not love driving car for a long time. But there was way as he had to earn for his family. So he took up a business of iron, rod and cement. But he could not make headway in his business.

Then he started making latrine. Chelai and Surma rivers flow by the side of his village. Usually the dwellers by the side of river are accustomed to defecate in the open place. Shafiqul had hidden objectives behind the making of latrines was that villagers would be in a position to install latrine. Firstly he would not know how to make latrine. So he received training from ASA for five days. He would prepare latrine and sell. The community people would purchase those latrines. Gradually his business turned into an enterprise, he started making money. He has two children and his business is named after his daughter, “Shohagi Enterprise”

Shafiqul involved with this project from the very beginning. Firstly he took training for natural leader of union Parishad. He learned in the training about ill effect of open defecation, ways and means and usefulness of hand washing properly. After receiving training Shafiqul talks with the people and persuade them for construction of hygienic latrine. Later his motivational work does not remain within his village only rather it is extended in other villages. As a result the sale of latrines is increased. Subsequently he became owner of big business and every one of his village defecate in a hygienic latrine.

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