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Effect of integrated social marketing on sanitation promotion in urban slum communities; Case of three parishes in Kawempe division, Kampala – Uganda

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Background

This paper presents experiences of work in nine zones from three parishes of Bwaise II (*Bukarazi, Nakamiro and Tebuyoleka zones*), Kyebando (*Elisa, Kisalosalo and Kyebando central zones*) and Mulago III (*Lower Nsooba, Kifumbira I and Upper Nsooba zones*) that form part of the 19 parishes that make up Kawempe division in Kampala. These parishes have large informal settlements (slums). Most inhabitants live in low lying areas of reclaimed swamps and which are prone to flooding during heavy rains. The slum dwellers have dynamic cultures since most of them come from different parts of the country with the hope of finding “green pastures” in Kampala. The majority of the working population is within the unskilled labor force. Thus both men and women engage in small business activities with men engaged mainly in hawking while women have small food stalls in the market areas or beside their households. However the largest proportion is unemployed.

Like most slums in Kampala, sanitation and good hygiene practices are not priorities in these parishes, and most households lack access to toilet facilities while the existing toilets are very dirty, filled up or at the verge of collapse (SSWARS, 2008). Some households with latrines take advantage of the floods in the rainy season to empty the latrine contents directly in the flood water, thereby putting the lives of most of their neighbors at risk of disease as the polluted flood water often flows back in their dwellings (Kamara et al., 2009). Those without access to toilets resort to “flying toilets” (shit in polythene bags) which are thrown into the environment or open defecation (Katukiza et al., 2010). As a result, the slum population used to suffer from diarrhea, cholera among other infections especially in rainy season, with most victims being children and pregnant women (Kamara et al., 2008).

In order to address the poor and hygienic state of the communities, SSWARS adopted an integrated sanitation social marketing intervention approach. Sustainable sanitation and water Renewal Systems (SSWARS) is a non profit making, Non-Governmental Organization registered to operate in Uganda. SSWARS was certified and duly registered on 30th September 2005 by the National Board for Registration of NGOs in Uganda under the Non-Governmental Organizations Registration Statute,



1989. The organization has a total of 6 full time staff and two part time volunteers in each of the communities where projects are located. The organization also offers training opportunities for students on internship.

Description of the initiative

Sanitation social marketing adopts the principles of a capitalistic economy to sanitation. Marketing sanitation as a “*social good*” using the 4Ps (*product, price, promotion and place*) necessitates designing and implementing programs that will socially be accepted by the target populations (Budds et al., 2001). The strategy is to create demand led by responding to the felt needs of the target audiences. Visibility and demonstration of gains from improved sanitation influences those initially uninterested to become involved in sanitation and hygiene improvement initiatives (Niwagaba et al., 2008).

Bwaise II, Kyebando and Mulago III were among the parishes with least sanitation coverage and most prone to cholera outbreak especially in rainy season. SSWARS thus carried out a needs assessment in these parishes in which poor sanitation, hygiene and waste management came out as one of the main challenges.



Picture 1: Open defecation practices



Picture 2: Flooded waste water during rain season

From the assessment, an intervention was launched with the following components:

- I. Awareness and demand creation campaigns were started in the three parishes. Regular community mobilizations for sensitization and follow-up on improved sanitation and hygiene practices were done through out the three year period SSWARS worked in the zones (2007 to 2010) to enhance the behavioral change processes. The follow-ups were mainly in form of community and home visits while sensitizations were done through community meetings, drama illustrating dangers of inadequate sanitation and hygiene and the benefits of good practices. IEC material were also developed and supplied in the communities with some put in public areas as continuous reminders to the communities.
- II. Toilet technological options catalogue, desk models and demonstration units were developed and made accessible to the communities. For learning, accessibility and construction, community



members from the three parishes were sensitized on the various toilet options, suitable sites for each option, materials required and cost estimates for each toilet option. Such options included ventilated improved pit latrines (VIPs), Fossa Alterna, Alternative twin pit VIP, Single pit VIP with a manhole for emptying, single pit Communal VIP, Ecological sanitation toilets, pour flush. In addition, communities were told to select artisans (masons) in their respective areas who were given practical training by SSWARS to assist people who wanted to build toilets of their choice and taste from options available. A sanitation resource centre was built in one of the slum zones for easy reach to information and it is also where the toilet desk models are housed.



Pictures 3 & 4: Some of the toilet desk models in the sanitation resource centre

- III. Since lack of adequate funds by most slum dwellers is one of the other reasons given for lack of toilets, a revolving fund to boost latrine construction was initiated and managed by the community (members consisting mainly landlords). This was to enable them have a lump sum for toilet buying or construction. Any member of the group could borrow top up funds for his toilet and pay back in installments on terms agreed by the members such that others also access the funds. Landlords were mobilized to join together and form groups which were formerly registered with Kawempe division to be legally binding. The group consisted of 10 to 30 people. A committee made up of a chair person, secretary, treasurer and two signatories was elected by the group members to head the groups. They also had to open a bank account where the money was banked. Seed money worth UGX 50,000 was given to these groups by SSWARS as a supplement the funds on their account. In case one of the group members needed funds to build or complete a toilet, he or she would apply to the group for the amount wanted and a memorandum of understanding would be signed on how to pay back.



Pictures 5&6: One of the toilets constructed with support from revolving fund in Bwaise II parish

- IV. Community members were also trained in solid waste recycling and a recycling centre built in one of the zones too. In addition they were also trained in biogas use and taken for field exchange visits in other communities where it was being used for visual and practical learning. This was done to prepare them for introduction of bio-toilets. Three biogas plants were constructed in Bwaise II parish. The beneficiaries were landlords with animals who participated in the training. They contributed 20% of the total cost. These are still operating.

Major drivers of the process and success

Community champions are necessary for the success of projects in urban slums. SSWARS continually worked with resource persons in the communities for the success of the project. These included: community leaders, elders, local council chair persons, and people with disabilities, village health team members and volunteers within the respective zones. These played a great role in community mobilization. Kawempe division authorities such as the division health inspector were greatly involved and invited in some sensitizations. In addition, the village health teams (VHT) that were already established in the community by Ministry of Health and SSWARS community volunteers were also given training in use of participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation (PHAST) tools to equip them with knowledge since they are the ones mainly involved in health and sanitation programs in communities. SSWARS community volunteers were sixteen people from the three parishes where we were working. These mainly used to assist in community mobilization. They were given facilitation if they were used in activities in their zones. They also help in monitoring practices as well as identifying areas that need more attention.

Resources

The sanitation social marketing project in the three parishes entailed development of sanitation products (toilet options, desk models, toilet catalogue, training of masons, construction of demonstration units, providing seed money for sanitation saving groups and development of IEC materials) and community sensitizations were mainly funded by WaterAid Uganda. The French Embassy supported the waste recycling training and biogas while UWASNET also supported the hand washing campaign that was implemented in the whole division. The total cost of the three year project was United States Dollars (USD) 150,000. While SSWARS, implemented the work, it also hired



some expertise where needed as in the case of training for waste recycling. SSWARS also worked closely with community volunteers during mobilization and sensitization programs. Over twenty toilet demonstration facilities were built, beneficiaries were selected from among the elderly or the most poor and these were often identified by the local leaders or resource persons in the communities. Some of these facilities included ventilated improved pit latrines (VIPs), Fossa Alterna, Alternative twin pit VIP, Single pit VIP with a manhole for emptying, single pit Communal VIP, Ecological sanitation toilets, pour flush. However, they had to contribute 10% of the total cost of the facility, often in form of sand, bricks or excavation of the pits for the toilets.

Successes

Successes of the intervention included:

- *Reduction in the outbreak of cholera in the three parishes.* However, this can not only be attributed to SSWARS alone but a combination of efforts with other NGOs, CBOs, VHTs involved in sanitation and hygiene activities together with the support of Kampala City Council – Kawempe division, community resource persons and community members as well. No cholera cases were reported in Kawempe in 2007 and 2008 (Kulabako et al., 2010) compared to 333 cases reported in 2006.
- More than 100 toilets ranging from ventilated improved pit latrines (VIPs), Fossa Alterna, Alternative twin pit VIP, Single pit VIP with a manhole for emptying, single pit Communal VIP, Ecological sanitation toilets, pour flush have been constructed on demand using the trained masons. The trained masons during an evaluation of their work in 2009 reported their skills to have improved and to be constructing toilets in different areas beyond their zones.
- Training of community members in waste recycling was also not only a boost to household and environmental cleanliness; it also resulted as an employment opportunity to the over 100 community members who participated in the training. This has mainly been taken up by women who constituted 60 percent of the trained participants. Organic composting, briquette making, plastic weaving using collected polythene bags littered in the environment. Garbage sorting at the source of generation was encouraged. In addition, an organic composting skip was set up in Bwaise II where dwellers could as well drop their decomposable garbage such as banana peelings. Such skills are being replicated to other members in the communities who did not take part in the training. Briquettes and hand bags and baskets weaved from polythene bags have been the most lucrative. These are sold in the markets and at times orders are received from their homes. Also as a way of boosting their activities visitors of SSWARS who wanted to visit such groups were often encouraged to buy some of their products. However, the issue of proper hygiene practices especially washing hands with soap was always emphasized in community sensitizations as they engage in waste recycling.



Pictures 7&8: Waste recycling centre in Bwaise II and one of the beneficiaries of the training who has taken up waste recycling

- From biogas plants that use a mixture of animal droppings, now some community members are eventually accepting bio-toilets which are already being constructed. Like biogas generated through use of a mixture of animal droppings with urine or water, the same concept was introduced to the communities for use of excreta and urine to generate biogas. This can be used for cooking or lighting.



Picture 9: Bio-toilet constructed in Lower Nsooba zone in Mulago III parish

- The drama groups that were formed to promote good sanitation and hygiene practices are also earning a living as other organizations have continued to use them in scaling up best practices in community sensitizations.

Lessons learned



- Sanitation social marketing is a visible approach that has to be scaled up to have transformations in urban sanitation. SSWARS has continued the promotion of social marketing now with the support of GIZ under the private public partnership in Bwaise I.
- Engagement of the community to identify establish the reasons for the poor sanitation and hygiene situations, in addition to learning about their other main problems is vital in designing interventions that will create impact on the target groups
- Continuous sensitization and awareness creation is needed to keep communities aware of their responsibilities in ensuring proper sanitation and hygiene practices
- Having a mechanism of follow-up after project implementation by the division, local leaders or implementing NGO is vital in strengthening sustainability and continued improvement in community sanitation and hygiene practices.
- While the focus of interventions is often on latrine construction and hygiene promotion, integration and capacity building in income generation opportunities boost the morale of the communities such as was the case with waste recycling. Urban poor engage most in areas where there are quick benefits or profits
- Cooperation of local leaders in ensuring implementation of sanitation and hygiene practices in communities is important to scaling up better practices.
- Cooperation, experience sharing and integrated work efforts by all stakeholders such as CBOs, NGOs and government working within the same areas enhances joint plans and success. Communities are at times split between the NGOs as each may seemingly have a different approach.
- Strict law enforcement is needed for the landlords with rental houses or commercial structures without sanitary facilities or even tenants living in houses without toilets/latrines. This goes in hand with need for strong political involvement and prioritization of sanitation by the political leaders.
- There is need for strong community involvement to enhance the quality of services by the service providers involved in the respective communities.
- There is need for community awareness about different toilet options for their areas depending on the locations, costs and the type. Most of the toilets in slums are traditional pit latrines which can not be emptied. Most are full with no more space for new constructions. As a solution people need to be encouraged to build lined toilets that can be emptied.

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