

# Governance for Rural Sanitation & Hygiene

*Workshop held at Surkhet, Nepal, 13 - 17 September 2011*

## Highlights

Nepal has an area-wide approach which proved to be successful for scaling up improved sanitation and hygiene. This is one of the lessons learned at the Governance for Rural Sanitation and Hygiene workshop. There were more lessons learned. Bhutan has shifted from unimproved sanitation to improved sanitation. Strong linkages with the private sector makes simple and low-cost technology options available to a large group of consumers in Cambodia. Laos works closely with line agencies, established linkages with the provincial authorities and is setting up a revolving fund for sanitation with the private sector. The involvement of the Women's Union in Vietnam's sanitation and hygiene programmes and the introduction of training to women masons. The workshop helped to share best practices on good governance and leadership.



*Photo: Woman speaks in meeting with Village-WASH-Coordination Committee in Jarbuta, Nepal. (Ingeborg Krukert/IRC).*

Participants also learned about the processes needed for good governance and exchanged practical examples on how to implement good governance in a specific country context. Thirty participants representing government and non government organisations as well as local development partners from Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and

host country Nepal all emphasized the importance of sharing country experiences and to go beyond a project approach.

Each country has its own specific conditions and challenges. The participants felt that they could adapt many tools and approaches for use in their own countries.

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## Progress in sanitation: what makes change happen?

Good leadership and community awareness and action are the key drivers for change according to the participants of Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal and Vietnam. Other drivers can also make change happen. The establishment of coordination mechanisms at each

administrative level was seen as very important. Having plans and policies as well as regulation and enforcement in place was another one. The cholera outbreak in Haiti due to open defecation practices and diarrhoea outbreaks in nearby communities were seen as examples of the role

of the public media and communications.

All five countries face the challenge to increase sanitation coverage; to make sanitation accessible for all; and to speed up progress with quality.

All drivers are important, but leadership is a prime condi-

*“Awareness does not come within a month or even a year. This takes time.”  
A.K. Mishra”, R.MSC,  
Pokhara.*

tion to overcome sanitation challenges.

## Strengthen drivers for change in Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal & Vietnam

In the Kalikot district in Nepal high progress was achieved in access to sanitation: from 3% to 52% since 2007, says Mr Ram Niwas Chaudrey, Regional Director of the Regional Monitoring and Supervision Office for the Dept of Water Supply and Sanitation. To make progress happen in all 75 districts, Nepal enhanced collaboration and coordination with partners and the support of the media.

In Vietnam an important driver is coordination of sanitation and hygiene programmes at the central and provincial level. Establishing WASH coordination committees from central level all the way to communities –as is the case in Nepal- could also work in Vietnam.



*Regional review and planning workshop, in 2011, Nepal /, 2011. (Nanda Khanal/SNV)*

Awareness at scale is possible thanks to the work of the Women's Union.

In Laos drivers for change are strong leadership at local and district level and giving the title of "model village" to

those that do well on sanitation. Proactively involving 'cluster leaders' at local government level as well as Community Based Organisations -including the Women's Union- could be of great value.

Key drivers in Cambodia are the coordination of sector stakeholders and the establishment of a national strategy and operational plan. Strengthening capacity on how to implement the strategy is seen as a priority.

In Bhutan there is strong commitment at the district and local levels and a clear vision and action plan are in place. The focus will be on strengthening coordination by defining clear roles and responsibilities and raising more awareness.

## Can good leadership be created?

Priority to sanitation and hygiene is low and responsibility for sanitation and hygiene is often fragmented. Political will is needed to provide access to good sanitation for all, to enhance real coordination and alignment, to ensure that vulnerable groups are heard, and that resources go to the right locations and households.

The type of leadership required depends on the types of action pursued: commu-

nity action, equity, coordination, etc. Not everyone in a leading position is automatically a good leader. A chairperson of a sanitation committee or a government official responsible for a department that includes sanitation and hygiene may still need to develop leadership.

What can also be done is to facilitate the coordination and linkages between existing leaders. Leaders can also support vulnerable groups in an active way and make sure they can participate in

*"It is difficult to encourage Dalit and Janajati to take up the leadership role; they do not want to do that." Chairman of FEDWASUN, district office Surkhet, Nepal*

meetings for example. Influential actors can be mobilised to influence the political agenda.

## Outreach and finance for the poorest

Often support mechanisms are not reaching those who need it most. From the baseline study in Vietnam in 2010 for example we can see that some ethnic groups have little or no access to sanitation, despite the fact that there is specific support allocated to these groups. Cambodia's experience shows that subsidised latrines go also to higher income groups and not only to the poor.

Other countries face the same challenges. Excluded groups can be single mothers or elderly people, members of ethnic groups, people living with HIV/

AIDS, disabled people or people who live in extreme poverty.

Countries have different strategies to support those who need it.

Nepal is introducing basket funding provided through the local bodies at all levels.

Bhutan has a traditional mutual support system "to assist those who cannot build a latrine", in particular in the rural areas. This works better than the formal credit system for improved sanitation as people do not like to pay interest and are uncomfortable with the monthly repay-

*"The influence of the technical quality or type of latrine on functionality seems to be much higher than the influence of subsidies." Result KAP study in 2010 in Cambodia.*

ment requirement.

In Vietnam the Women's Union assists women to form savings and loan groups and if desired helps them to take a group loan from the Social Development Bank.

## Building on the strength of the people

One of the positive changes that came out of the strength-based approach in Vietnam was that women mason helpers who did unskilled work could participate in the mason's training and become skilled female toilet masons.

The strength-based approach focuses on strengths and positive actions, rather than problems and weaknesses. The emphasis is on identifying what works well and why, then building on these positive factors to achieve goals and aspirations.

A detailed analysis of all the problems and their causes often doesn't achieve positive change. Instead, approaches can

be based on the belief that there is always something that has worked or is working well in every context and that people move in the direction in which they focus. The motto is: "focus on the positive and you will move in a positive direction."

During the workshop, sharing positive stories of change brought another positive example to light from Laos where a young woman from an ethnic group became a strong CLTS trainer, increased her status and felt empowered to convince her husband to build a toilet.

The workshop also saw a debate about the 'carrot' and the 'stick' approach

which is widely practised. Sanctions such as declining scholarship for children or no services from local authorities seem quite common, except in Bhutan. The participants came to the conclusion that negative sanctions have a role to play, provided that people also get enough opportunities to prevent punishment.

*"Women wear long dresses and I thought that a woman could not become a mason in our culture. Now we have started training women masons and it works!"*

*Mrs Thinh, Women's Union Vietnam*

## Doing it the gender way is more effective

To be effective in sanitation and hygiene approaches, all members of the community - men, women and children - should be involved. This is what is meant by **inclusive** sanitation and hygiene. In order to reach all we need to keep in mind that men and women have different priorities and perspectives. Traditional roles of men and women give disproportional responsibility to women for keeping toilets clean and

supporting child hygiene. The workshop discussed the importance of explicitly including men in hygiene promotion was discussed in the workshop, because men often are the main decision makers on investments.

Four principles can be applied to work effectively with women and men in sanitation and hygiene:

1) It is important to focus on ways of working that enable women and men to

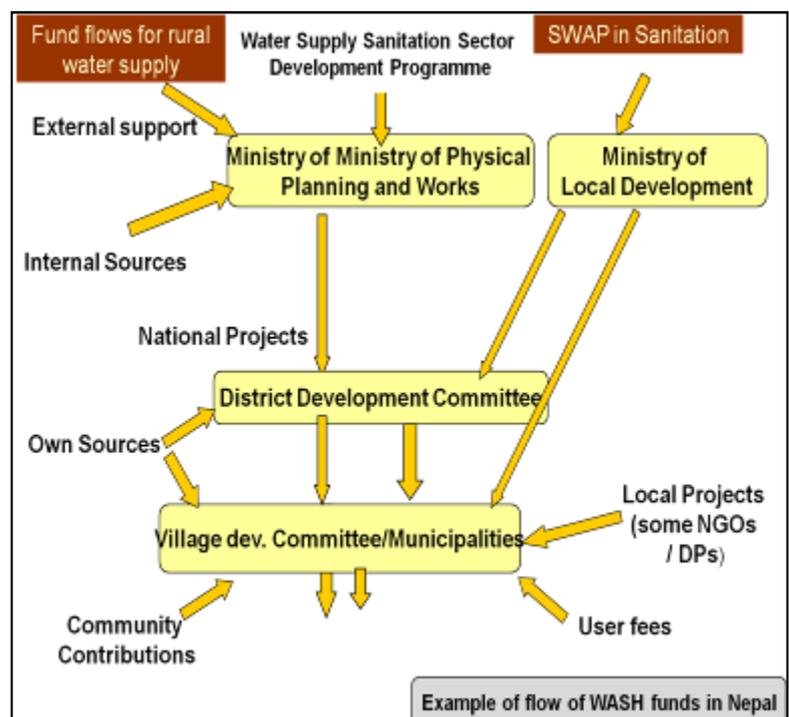
actively participate;  
 2) Focus on how decisions are made and by whom;  
 3) See, understand and value the different work, skills and concerns of women and men related to sanitation and hygiene;  
 4) To create opportunities to participate and benefit, like the example of the women masons in Vietnam.

## Maximising benefits for all

In most of the sanitation and hygiene programmes financial resources are limited. Transparency and accountability are therefore crucial to ensure that funds are used well and people trust their leaders.

The workshop participants tested a tool to determine where things can go wrong and what can be done to prevent this. This kind of tools are so far only available for the water sector but not for sanitation.

*"This is a very useful checklist for me as a governance advisor." Thoin Lay, SNV Cambodia*





There are many outputs produced during the course of the Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All programme: country products as well as regional products synthesizing the work of the five countries. Workshop reports, guidance materials and articles are available on the project pages at <http://www.irc.nl/page/57188>.

In the coming months additional outputs will be finalised and shared.

## About the workshop

This workshop is part of the learning & sharing component of the Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All Programme, currently being implemented in Nepal, Bhutan, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam with funding from AusAID and DGIS. It is the third workshop organised within this programme by SNV Netherlands Development Organisation Asia and IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre. We are grateful for the support of the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, the government and development partners in and around Surkhet and of SNV Nepal who helped to make this workshop a success.

The programme has the following implementing components: sanitation demand triggering and follow-up; strengthening sanitation supply chain development; developing behavioural change communication for hygiene and sanitation marketing; and improving WASH governance and multi-stakeholder sector development.

## Take home messages

*"We can adapt our behaviour change communication strategy from what we learned with hygiene promotion for men" (Bhutan)*

*"If leadership will concentrate on one level it will not work, leadership is needed at all levels" (Nepal)*

*"Collecting success stories and what works well for leadership" (Bhutan)*

*"Ensure women participation in higher level meetings too, now only participating at lower levels." (Laos)*

*"Putting men in the picture in hygiene promotion and setting up a hygiene forum for men" (Cambodia & Vietnam)*

*"Involve community based organisations more strongly." (Laos)*

*"Focus on multi-stakeholder involvement and establishing coordination mechanisms." (Cambodia & Vietnam)*

*"Regular sharing and learning events generate new insights and perspectives" (Nepal)*

## Participants

**Bhutan:** Gabrielle Halcrow (SNV), Tshering Choden, (SNV), Yeshe Lhaden (PHED, MOH), Raj Kumar Bhattarai (SNV)

**Cambodia:** Thoin Lay (SNV), Chreay Pom (DRHC, MRD), Khonn Lydo (DRHC, MRD)

**Nepal:** Ram Niwas Chaudhary (RMSO, Surkhet), Bimal Tandukar (SNV), Henk Veerdig (SNV), Nanda Khanal (SEIU/MPPW), A.K. Mishra (RMSO, Pokhara), Hom Nath Acharya (SNV), Bhojendra Aryal (DWSS), Govinda Bahadur Shahi (KIRDARC), Dil Bahadur Shahi (DDC), Govinda Raj Rokaya (SNV), Lek B. Shah (SNV), Buddhi Prasad Sapkota (BNA), Reejuta Sharma (SNV Asia), Henk van Norden (Unicef ROSA)

**Laos:** Robert Deutsch (SNV), Mr Boulaphanh Phethlavanh (PRD), Ms Souksakhone

Chanthachon (NaamSaat), Mr Valin Inthasone

(Phalanxai district), Mr Somsack Souvannalath (Enterprise & Development)

**Vietnam:** Petra Rautavuoma (SNV), Doan Trieu Thanh (SNV), Nong Thi Thinh (Dien Bien Province Women Union)

**United Kingdom:** Kyle Alexander (SNV consultant)

**Facilitators:** Antoinette Kome (SNV Asia), Christine Sijbesma (IRC Netherlands), Ingeborg Krukkert (IRC)



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