



Learning brief: Achieving District Wide Sanitation – lessons from Banteay Meas, Cambodia



Introduction

Access to improved sanitation is a basic human right, yet more than 60% of the rural population in Cambodia still live without a safe, sanitary toilet.¹

Operating district-wide, compared to supporting only selected communes or villages, achieves economies of scale and is more effective in building momentum and achieving sustainable results. The commitment and leadership of the local authorities is essential, and greater buy-in can be achieved when working area-wide. This does not mean that the entire district will immediately become Open Defecation Free (ODF), but works towards changing the dynamics and mindset of the stakeholders, which is the key to reaching full coverage.²

Through capacity building, learning and sharing, the building blocks for a scalable district-wide approach have been established in Cambodia. This brief provides highlights of the SSH4A approaches implemented to support further district-wide progress.

Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All (SSH4A) is SNV's comprehensive approach to ensuring equitable and sustainable access to improved sanitation and hygiene by supporting the delivery of district-wide rural sanitation and hygiene services.

Developed since 2008, the SSH4A approach is now implemented by SNV in 15 countries and 75 districts in Asia and Africa. More than 2.7 million additional people now have access to improved sanitation and more than 9 million have benefitted.

1. The 2015 Update and MDG Assessment of the Joint Monitoring Programme (WHO and UNICEF, 2015).
2. When working at a village level the tendency is to go for the easier villages without addressing the bigger institutional picture that is essential for sustaining behaviour change.

SSH4A in Cambodia

SNV, in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) and Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD), is implementing SSH4A in Cambodia. The SSH4A model is recognised as an innovative and integrated approach to scaling up access to sanitation in the rural areas of Cambodia and supports the objectives of the Royal Government of Cambodia's National Strategy for Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene 2011-2025.

In 2012, SSH4A was implemented district-wide in Banteay Meas, Kampot with a focus on building the capacity of the partner agencies at provincial, district, commune and village level to plan, implement and monitor the sanitation and hygiene interventions. In 2016, Banteay Meas was declared the first ODF district in Cambodia.

The leadership and commitment of local authorities is key to this success. Utilising learnings from Banteay Meas, in 2015 SSH4A was scaled-up in Basedth district, Kampong Speu and Chum Kiri district, Kampot. The 2016 mid-term results showed that in both districts access to sanitation had more than doubled since the 2015 baseline.³

SSH4A Integrated Approach

In order to ensure equitable and sustainable access to sanitation, a comprehensive and integrated approach is needed. Strategies such as demand creation and sanitation marketing need to be embedded in longer-term processes that develop sustainable service delivery models at scale.

Designed to address this need SSH4A is essentially a capacity building approach, supporting local government to lead and accelerate progress towards district-wide sanitation coverage with a focus on institutional sustainability and learning. SNV, through SSH4A, focuses on strengthening local stakeholders to plan, implement, monitor, and sustain sanitation and hygiene interventions. The SSH4A approach integrates best practices in sanitation demand creation, sanitation supply chain strengthening, hygiene behaviour change communication, and governance, including gender and social inclusion.



The SSH4A approach recognises the need to:

- understand that sustainable sanitation and hygiene is first and foremost about behavioural change. However, whilst demand creation should come first, affordable hardware solutions also need to be in place so that people are able to act upon their newly defined priorities⁴
- reach all by making explicit inclusive strategies with local stakeholders that aim to ensure that the needs of women and men from a range of social groups are taken into account, that effective participation is achieved at all levels and that gender equality is advanced
- develop capacities and approaches that can be scalable, through a government-led approach, as opposed to focusing exclusively on individual communities
- innovate in hygiene promotion practice, linking this to the sanitation drive, but also embedding this practice in long-term health promotion; and a long-term strategy is required to sustain sanitation and hygiene behaviour change, beyond one-off triggering and ODF-focused programmes
- measure progress in small steps (moving up the sanitation ladder) and to measure access as well as the use and maintenance of toilets and handwashing with soap.

Highlights of the key activities that have supported the government-led district-wide SSH4A approach are as follows:

Capacity for steering and implementation of sanitation demand creation

To build capacity for implementing demand creation activities at scale that create momentum, SSH4A focuses on building the skills of individual community led total sanitation (CLTS) facilitators to implement effective triggering and follow-up activities that take into account differences between communities. SSH4A also works towards building organisational capacity of the local authorities across different levels (province, district, commune and village) to organise and steer demand creation activities, with attention to quality.

As a result of the capacity and technical support, PDRD/DoRD has led the planning, implementation and monitoring of the demand creation activities and local sanitation committees have been established and regularly review progress. In addition, regular and frequent follow up and sanitation promotion has been conducted by commune focal points and mainstreamed through key local stakeholders including health centres, schools and pagodas.

Capacity for sanitation supply chains and finance

Based on SNV's experience in value chain development and sanitation marketing, SSH4A works towards realising market-based solutions

3. Details at <http://www.snv.org/public/cms/sites/default/files/explore/download/160523_progress_brief_basedth_and_chumkiri_lr.pdf>.

4. For affordable supply to be available to households at the moment of triggering, work to improve the supply side should start well before.

that meet a range of consumer needs and preferences. They must also be responsive to changing demands, as communities progress beyond ODF. Consumer studies, supply chain analysis and business modelling are used to understand sanitation demand and identify supply constraints. The experience in Banteay Meas highlighted the need to target different consumer segments⁵ - adjusted or alternative products are needed for lower-income groups. Analysis is developed in partnership with MRD and local government agencies; this increases local capacity to undertake this work in future and understand potential barriers to private sector engagement and financing mechanisms.

Through SSH4A, local suppliers have been supported to engage or expand their businesses into rural sanitation, including through training on marketing and business management, and strong cooperation and coordination among supply chain actors has been established. PDRDs now provide technical support to suppliers and commune and village sanitation focal point are directly coordinating with them.

Capacity for behavioural change communication (BCC)

Recognising the need for local innovation in hygiene promotion practices and translating international insights into local understanding to achieve better quality results, SSH4A works to introduce and build capacity in BCC methodologies at the local level with the active involvement of MRD and PDRD. The approach consists of a participatory review of existing information, education and communication (IEC) or hygiene promotion work, definition of priority behaviours, building skills in formative research, development of BCC strategies, design of messages and campaigns and, finally, monitoring effectiveness.

Outreach includes radio and TV spots, pagodas, schools and health centres along with community campaigns using parades, special sanitation school events and National Sanitation Day. Strategies are being adjusted in response to evolving priorities, including additional focus on promoting menstrual hygiene management and safe emptying practices.

Capacity for WASH governance

SNV's experience has shown that building capacity and leadership from the start is essential to delivering sustainable and scalable WASH interventions. SSH4A works to build the capacity of local authorities to promote and achieve district-wide coverage, which requires addressing equity through targeting both the poorest communities and households.

Through SSH4A, local leaders and sanitation focal points now work together in setting goals to improve sanitation in their area. The development of sanitation and hygiene plans with clearly defined objectives, annual targets and action plans has been fundamental to building commitment and collective understanding of issues and actions required. The district-level focus incentivises stakeholders to discuss the needs and approaches to

reach different geographical areas and poorer households, including prioritising use of the commune fund, and sets clearer standards that can reduce contradictions between the approaches.

The planned sanitation and hygiene needs are now integrated into the commune development and investment plans and regular village, commune and district meetings are held to review results and share experiences and solutions for addressing difficult issues. Close monitoring of sanitation progress has strengthened local commitment to achieving results.

SNV engages both locally - local government, the private sector and civil society - and at national level: working with MRD, national agencies and development partners to support sector reform. Many barriers for accelerating progress and effective up-scaling are found in having competing or contradictory WASH approaches implemented within the same area. Presence at the different levels of government not only creates synergies, but also facilitates learning with the ultimate aim of improving the overall performance of the sector.



Second ODF commune: Sdach Kong Khang Leck

5. It was found that while the "Easy Latrine" would boost sales, it closer met the needs of middle to lower-middle class customers.

Key Learnings from SSH4A in Cambodia

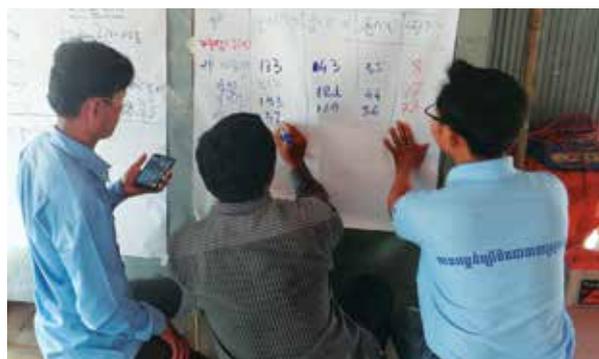
Achieving sustainable district-wide improvements in the sanitation situation and hygiene practices takes time as well as tailoring of messages and approaches so as to reach all communities and households, including the poorest.

- To ensure institutional sustainability it is important to embed sanitation and hygiene requirements within established local government administration processes.
- Local leadership commitment to sanitation is key to success. Supporting local leaders and sanitation committees to take ownership and be accountable for the results and progress in their areas also encourages them to identify local solutions and incentives.
- Supporting the capacity of the district authorities to lead consultation and development of sanitation and hygiene plans with clearly defined objectives, annual targets and action plans has been fundamental to building commitment and collective understanding of issues and actions required.
- Working collectively helps build and accelerate momentum. A multi-stakeholder approach helps harmonize competing or contradictory approaches within the same area, as well as strengthening and expanding the reach of the key messages.
- Knowledge sharing, exchange visits, learning and reflection of successes and lessons learnt among stakeholders and sanitation focal points locally and internationally have been seen as important in motivating and strengthening commitment of local leaders working to improve sanitation and hygiene.

What Next?

The emphasis of the current phase of the SSH4A programme is on quality, equity and sustainability. Commitment and leadership of the local authorities has been shown to be the key to building momentum and sustaining ODF status, however, while ODF provides a milestone for leaders to mobilise around, it is not the end-point. The challenge is looking beyond ODF towards the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals and universal access.

The lessons learnt from the SSH4A approach in Banteay Meas, which has been demonstrated to be effective in achieving accelerated impact in rural sanitation and hygiene, will continue to be used to support the government to scale up the comprehensive approach in Cambodia.



Review of sanitation progress data

Author

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SNV is a not-for-profit international development organisation. Founded in the Netherlands nearly 50 years ago, we have built a long-term, local presence in 38 of the poorest countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Our global team of local and international advisors work with local partners to equip communities, businesses and organisations with the tools, knowledge and connections they need to increase their incomes and gain access to basic services – empowering them to break the cycle of poverty and guide their own development.

Further information

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