

# **East Africa Regional Conference – Accelerating Access to Sanitation**

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**“Awareness Raising and Marketing Concepts for Sanitation”**

**by**

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## Challenges

- At any one time, more than half the developing world's poor are ill from causes related to hygiene, sanitation and water supply
- Hygiene and sanitation is connected to environment, education, gender equality and the reduction of child mortality and poverty and has
  - great advantages for public health, livelihoods and dignity
  - economic benefits generated that engender positive impact and can be a catalyst for development in Africa.
- In most African countries hygiene and sanitation access has progressed little since the 90's.
- Hygiene awareness may have increased in a number of countries, however translation into behaviour change is still lagging

## Why the dire situation?

- **Leadership, or rather its absence – a consideration that sanitation is a personal and private matter and thus is the responsibility of individuals.**
- **Women tend to attach more importance to sanitation than do men, but hitherto female priorities carry less weight in household budgeting.**
- **A combination of multiplicity of institutional homes, weak national planning and low political status – a root cause of many failures in sanitation service delivery.**
- **Lack of (or inadequacy of) coordination and dialogue among the multiple agencies and institutions – non-optimal interaction with societies on sanitation issues**
- **Inadequate information on the interface between: service providers (supply) and consumers (demand); different types of service providers operating within the same programme**
- **Societal perceptions, cultural norms and religious beliefs – does not help provide a welcoming platform for the demand of sanitation services by communities**
- **Poverty – poorest households often lack the financing capacity to purchase sanitation facilities.**

## Changing hygiene and sanitation practices

- It requires more than physical infrastructure to deliver the benefits of hygiene and sanitation - changing hygiene and sanitation practices involves education, awareness raising and personal behaviour change.
- Promoting demand for sanitation - this demand is much less clearly expressed than for other services and as a consequence awareness of the importance of sanitation can be very low.
- Consumers need to articulate their latent demands in looking for affordable sanitation solutions.

## A need for communication to promote hygiene and sanitation

- **Communication - crucial in processes that seek to get different stakeholder groups and individuals together to act based on consensus and in a concerted manner**
- **Information and knowledge - becomes effective and practical only when it is properly communicated.**
- **communication and content of messages on hygiene and sanitation - must necessarily carry specific information for groups with often divergent interests, perceptions, religious and cultural norms**

## A Hygiene and Sanitation Communication strategy

- **The act of communication – and how it is performed – is a key factor to ensure that institutions, groups and individuals are kept informed, understand and appreciate the issues and tasks to be addressed.**
- **Need for a structured plan to continuously raise awareness and consciousness and educate.**
- **A communication strategy and action plan for sanitation, primarily provides a 'tool' for playing the expected role as 'communicator of messages'.**
- **Ultimate aim – to raise consciousness of organisations and people towards changing behaviour and securing positive attitudes towards hygiene and sanitation**

## Communication Elements

- A number of elements should be recognised and incorporated into a communication strategy to stimulate and realise effective communication.
- These include:
  - message development, selection of appropriate medium and an audience whose attributes and characteristics are properly known.
  - a measurable message (in terms of impact such as observable change in behaviour or attitude) and feedback at all levels are essential for monitoring message effect.
  - communication process achieves various levels of results over time - necessary that indicators of success are identified at the early stages.
  - useful to agree on specific deadlines for achieving a priori set objectives.
  - measurement of the efficacy of messages and the delivery mechanism, and whether it is engendering the desired impact.

## Putting people at the centre of hygiene and sanitation

- Informational and awareness raising approaches alone are very unlikely to achieve complete improvement in hygiene and sanitation.
- Actions that focus on individuals and wider societal factors need to be considered in tandem.
- Need to encourage and release the energy, skills that societies have and the desire for good health that improved hygiene and sanitation services provide.
- Additionally adapt and work with marketing methods and mechanisms to the specific and distinctive context of hygiene and sanitation - an important element for successful upscaling of access to sanitation.

## Social Marketing as a tool to put people at the centre

- Social marketing approaches use elements of commercial marketing and try to strengthen a more sustainable, demand driven investment process.
- An important and currently under-utilised approach, it has real potential to enhance and make a significant contribution to hygiene and sanitation promotion
- It is part of the toolkit that can be used in a strategic way, to inform the mix of interventions such as regulatory action, or practical, hands-on methods (such as OBAs) to support specific behaviour change.
- Effective OBAs can strengthen the demand for sanitation services, e.g. encourage the delivery of sludge from cesspits and septic tanks to proper treatment facilities and thus reduce cost for individual households requesting cesspit emptying.

## The way forward

- **Governments and other stakeholders must move sanitation to the top of the agenda.**
- **Need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of various actors at different levels of government with respect to sanitation and include the issue of awareness campaigns and education on sanitation as an important component of these roles**
- **Establish budgetary and fiscal decentralisation in accordance with those roles and responsibilities**
- **Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different actors within the service delivery framework on sanitation promotion and hygiene education**
- **Adopt school sanitation hygiene education to develop healthy behaviours – children adopt new practices quickly, and can act as agents for change for improved hygiene behaviour in the wider family group.**