

Case study: Bangladesh

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Sanitation Marketing: An approach to promote sanitation in times of humanitarian emergencies in Cox' Bazar



Rohingya refugee girls take part in producing sanitary pads for themselves and to sell in the market. (Source: ©UNICEF/UN0156998/Bindra)

Background

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is a significant underlying concern in Cox's Bazar District, with access to clean drinking water and improved sanitation below the national average. According to the WASH mapping report (2019), 76 per cent of households have a basic water supply, but only 18 per cent have access to safely managed water. Only 29 per cent of households use safely managed latrines, and 47 per cent have handwashing facilities. In contrast, only 33 per cent of households practice handwashing, and 28 per cent dispose of faeces from children under five properly.¹

Being a coastal district situated on the edge of the Bay of Bengal in the far southeast of Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar intrinsically experiences frequent cyclones and floods. The region's vulnerability has further escalated due to global warming, which resulted in increasing temperatures, the rise of sea level and salinity of the soil. In response to the frequent cyclonic events that affected coastal communities, around 2,000 shelters have been built in Bangladesh since 1960.² Unfortunately, the Water and Sanitation (WatSan) facilities within the community and in these shelters are in poor condition and get worse

¹ Cox's Bazar District WASH Mapping and Participatory WASH Plan, ICDDR,B, 2019

² Seeking Shelter: The factors that influence refuge since Cyclone Gorky in the Coastal Area of Bangladesh, 2021

during disasters, resulting in health hazards for those seeking refuge during and after the storm.

Promoting Sanitation Marketing (SanMark) is an innovative approach to increase access to sanitation facilities among the host community in Cox's Bazar District. Sanitation Marketing combines social and commercial marketing to stimulate supply and demand for safe sanitation facilities to benefit the poor community. It focuses on the development of the marketplace and helps entrepreneurs to produce and supply demand-based multiple sanitation products and services. The aim is to effectively support consumers and provide them with affordable options in hygienic toilet facilities.

iDE initiated Sanitation Marketing in Bangladesh in 2008 however, it started delivering marketing solutions in 2011 through an innovative approach that aimed to create a viable market system for private-sector-led quality latrine production at scale. iDE Bangladesh began its SanMark Pilot as a "Private Sector-Led Sanitation Project (funded by SDC and WSP) at three upazilas³ under Rajshahi district in 2012". This initiation was based upon the success of a pilot project funded by HYSAWA (2011), supported by the Local Government Division of Bangladesh (LGD) and UNICEF (2011). As a part of this system, UNICEF launched its project "Promotion of Sanitation Marketing-PSM" in 2019 at the Ukhiya, Teknaf, Chakaria & Pekua Upazilas under Cox's Bazar district.

Strategy and implementation

Refugee influx created socio-economic pressure in Cox's Bazar district, and the community faced challenges in launching any market-based approach in Ukhiya and Teknaf. More than 750,000 Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) fled persecution and ethnic cleansing from Myanmar to seek refuge in temporary shelters with uncertain futures in Cox's Bazar. This influx stressed the local services, resources, economy, infrastructures, etc. Although there was support from numerous development aid organizations, access to and use of improved sanitary products remains low.

iDE Bangladesh, in partnership with UNICEF, aims to build the capacity of local sanitation entrepreneurs on improved sanitation technologies and develop their promotional and marketing skills along with relevant hygiene messages. The organization has been acting as a catalyst for designing and developing sustainable solutions for ensuring access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene, thereby ending open defecation and directly contributing to SDG target 6.2. The project targets 250,000 people with sustainable access to safe sanitation through 50,000 household-level improved latrines and the capacity to practice healthy hygiene behaviours. This project also aims to create

³ An upazila is an administrative division in Bangladesh, functioning as a sub-unit of a district.

500 Open Defecation Free (ODF) communities by promoting SanMark and the community mobilization process using tools of the Community Approach to Total Sanitation (CATS) approach.

Strategy #1 Sanitation Marketing Component: Leveraging the private sector to reach last-mile consumers to ensure easy access, affordability, and sustainability.

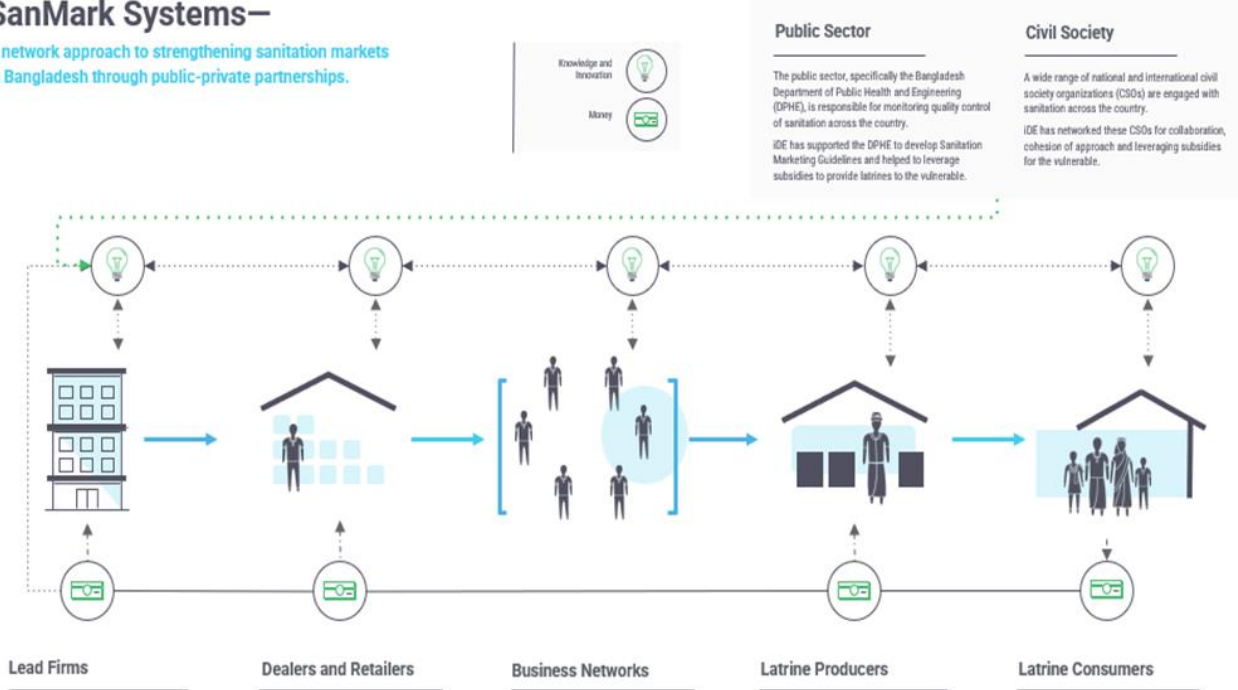
The project considered the following three domains to ensure the effectiveness of private sector engagement in promoting improved sanitation in the rural market:

- **Use of Services:** Increase access and use of improved sanitation and hygiene services and hygiene behaviors by targeting individuals and households.
- **Service Delivery:** Stimulate sanitation and hygiene service providers to sustainably expand access to improved sanitation services to the targeted individuals and households
- **Enabling Environment:** Strengthen the capacity of the local and national-level government institutions to accelerate and coordinate equitable access to improved sanitation and hygiene services for poor and disadvantaged individuals and households.

PSM ensures a sustainable value chain to reach the last mile consumer with improved/hygienic solutions by strengthening the linkage and networking between Latrine Producers (LPs) and the private sector. The PSM Project ensured the smooth supply chain of improved sanitation products in rural areas. The project also facilitated LPs to deliver improved sanitation products (according to govt, improved sanitation means the human excreta is separated from human contact) to users' doorsteps. The project promoted products with a trap door or water seal, separating human excreta from human contact and fly-proof.

SanMark Systems—

A network approach to strengthening sanitation markets in Bangladesh through public-private partnerships.



Strategy# 2 Integration with Community Approach: WASH in Schools and Health that boosts sanitation demand and disseminates critical messages in the community.

- Hygiene promotion and demand creation followed by community mobilization and engagement process/(CATS) - UNICEF CXB WASH team, iDE CXB team, Department of Public Health Engineers (DPHE), Education Department, Health Department, and Local Government realized that behavioral change through hygiene promotion is crucial to achieving sanitation goals. SanMarks in CXB is not limited to only latrine sales from LP centers, but they monitor the installation of facilities. UNICEF provided in-depth training on the CATS approach and hygiene promotion to SanMarks team. Accordingly, the project targeted to create of 500 ODF communities through the promotion of SanMarks and community mobilization process using CATS tools which included pre-triggering (WASH Inventory assessment and establishing relationships with local people/elite/LGIs/LPs) and Post-triggering (Community Situation Analysis-CSA, wealth ranking, faecal calculation, CBO formation and action plan, session wise module, and schedule development, re-activation of Ward WatSan Committee,**

development of joint monitoring plan, and result based reward (RbR) celebration by selection of best hygiene champion rewarded by LGIs).

- **WASH in School** – Considering schools as a vital institutional setup and children as the most powerful change agent, the PSM project targeted 50 schools within the catchments of LP centers to implement a 3-star approach to improve hygiene practices and WASH facility operation & maintenance. UNICEF provided in-depth training on the 3-star approach to the PSM project team. 3-star benchmarking is an approach designed to improve the effectiveness of hygiene behaviour change programs for children. This action is being carried out in collaboration with education departments at upazila and district levels. The project links schools with DPHE, UNICEF, and other actors for WASH infrastructure support. The project also links LPs with schools, followed by their presence in various sessions and demonstrations.
- **WASH in Health** – considering local health centers as the only primary health care support providers for 6000 community people, the project targeted 20 health clinics within the catchment of LP centers in collaboration with health departments at upazila and district levels. Here, the project discussed health-related negative impacts of poor sanitation and economic losses amongst the health staff and outpatients. In parallel, LPs demonstrate various sanitation options.

Strategy#3 Advocates for the support and scaling of safe sanitation to the actors of private, public, and development sectors in the rural market:

- iDE has been actively engaged in the CXB District WASH Coordination platform led by DPHE and co-led by the CXB UNICEF Field office, where upazila-wise monthly progress, interventions, challenges, learning, and relevant issues are shared and discussed.
- iDE has been co-leading four Upazila coordination and support Upazila DPHE to organize monthly progress meetings, actors mapping, and reporting.
- iDE helped connect LPs with Local Government. This connection allows LPs to contribute to the LGIs WASH planning.
- iDE maintains strong coordination with Local Government, Education, and Health departments in the overall implementation approach along with LP, community, schools, and health centers.

Key success

Supports for one million refugees & discriminated host Communities:

The largest refugee (FDMN) influx in Cox's Bazar drew the world's attention and has been a donors' priority since 2017. The government was requested to include poverty-stricken host communities in improved sanitation services as FDMN. There was much stress on resources, and likewise, the local market was also affected. The PSM project introduced SanMarks approach for the upgradation of sanitation facilities coupled with community sensitization to support the local community. The project trained 32 targeted LPs of Ukhiya and Teknaf to produce improved sanitary products. Ultimately, those 32 LPs now have a strong linkage with the regional and national private sectors, WASH agencies, etc., to sell their improved sanitary products.

Producing improved/quality materials for rural consumers:

Technical and Business Training adds value to their installation services. The trained LPs are now promoting improved latrine and sanitation products, including Offset-Plus, Offset-Single, Basic, Sato Pan, San Box, Collection Box, V-Trap for twin pit latrines, etc. These latrines & improved products ensure adherence to the Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) ladder of sanitation. The technical training knowledge provided by iDE Bangladesh and DPHE under the UNICEF project encouraged local latrine producers to take innovative initiatives to expand their sanitation business, resulting in improved sanitation coverage in the targeted areas.

Door-to-door marketing/demand creation for boosting improved latrines:

Group sales meetings (GSM), mobile campaigning, product demonstrations, distributions of promo materials, and smart subsidies are a few initiatives to boost demand creation. Sales agents facilitate group sales meetings in rural communities. These agents work on a commission basis on behalf of LPs and sensitize community people on the importance of improved sanitation. On each sale from the session, the agents receive 50 Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) incentive from the LPs. Latrine Producers sometimes join with sales agents in these sessions for the demand creation of their products.

Voucher system inspires disadvantaged poor to purchase improved latrines:

In early 2020, iDE Bangladesh notified LPs that they would have the opportunity to participate in a voucher program in which iDE would distribute paper vouchers that LPs could share with this opportunity for poor and disadvantaged customers to get latrine

slabs at a discounted price. For every latrine slab sold using a coupon, iDE would verify that the latrine was installed at the household and then reimburse the voucher amount to the LPs. A significant increase in demand was seen when the vouchers, typically valued at 400 BDT (4.66 USD), were provided. 17,741 (61%) out of 29,098 latrines sold in the first phase of the PSM project during the three-month voucher period.

Adoption of improved latrines means pride for community people:

A sanitation marketing approach integrated with a hygiene promotion approach; as a result, iDE started conducting a Community Situation Analysis (CSA) at the outset of the project, reporting that 75 per cent of households had access to soap and water for handwashing. Based on the findings of CSA, iDE Bangladesh designed an awareness program to address gaps in hygiene knowledge and practice. UNICEF/iDE sought to understand existing knowledge in the community of critical hygiene practices & then designed an awareness program to address any gaps identified. The practices included latrine usage, handwashing with soap, food preparation, waste management, water storage, and menstrual hygiene management. iDE recruited and trained 61 community volunteers for hygiene promotion, profiling of households, data collection process, facilitation of community sessions, and household-based visits and follow-ups to address gaps identified in CSA. In addition, a hygiene promotion working committee was formed to assist in coordinating and prioritizing hygiene messages based on the community's needs. This working committee meets monthly. Over 4,500 households received hygiene messaging throughout the project period. People who purchased improved latrines got sensitized through hygiene promotion sessions.

One-stop service solutions boost sanitation demand:



Picture 2: One-stop service solution

A one-stop service solution refers to a latrine production centre offering various goods or services under the same roof. Under PSM Project, some of the latrine production centres

were recognized as 'one-stop' service centres that include sanitation facilities (products and services), handwashing devices (with their operations and maintenance), hygiene materials (soaps, sanitary napkins/Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) products, brushes, cleaning agents), etc. Public and private sectors are linked to ensure the availability of required products and services sustainably. As part of the project's strategy, local sanitation entrepreneurs (Latrine Producers-LPs) are the key market actors to ensure the availability of improved sanitation facilities (products and services) in rural areas. Likewise, the project facilitated LPs to promote various sanitation technologies which are affordable and socially acceptable to local users/consumers. As a result of these **One Stop Service Centres**, people can easily access sanitary & hygiene products within their reach. LPs' sales have remarkably increased as they provide numerous indispensable products within a centre.

Lessons learned

Strategical shifting and magical achievement:

- Usually, SanMark Approach focuses on demand versus supply by creating an enabling environment. But in this project, particularly in Cox's Bazar, iDE, with the support of UNICEF, is implementing the project through an integrated approach of SanMark with the Community Approach to Total Sanitation (CATS) approach. Such blending helps communities create demands, and LPs extend their services through improved sanitation products.
- Through its integrated approach, the PSM project can sensitize communities, thus helping to eliminate open defecation.
- So far, the project has helped 30 communities to achieve ODF by the end of 2022. Local government administration, civil societies, and community-based organizations (CBOs) highly appreciated this achievement.
- This approach promotes key hygiene messages amongst children in schools, thus impacting the reduction of water-borne diseases and enhancing healthy life.
- Likewise, spreading the hygiene message amongst patients also positively impacts human behaviour and helps reduce illness/diseases.

Voucher System:

- The voucher system helped increase latrine product sales. However, agencies should consider different criteria as a marginalized group of people, their affordability, and acceptable to them.
- Proportional cost contributions from customers, iDE, or other organizations will help sustain this approach.

- Future programming should limit the number of vouchers for each LP to ensure fair distribution amongst all LPs.

Boosting latrine sales through the integration of hygiene Promotion:

- iDE found hygiene promotion helps increase sales of improved latrines. Thus, latrine sales should integrate with hygiene promotion.
- The sanitation marketing approach contributed significantly towards achieving ODF as it increases supplies of sanitation options and materials through private sector engagement.

MHM entrepreneurs:

- Promoting menstrual hygiene management will boost the use of improved sanitary pads among adolescent girls. This promotion helped boost 'sanitary pad' production by local entrepreneurs.
- Linking MHM entrepreneurs at schools would be an effective option to reach an untapped market of MHM products.

Recommendations

- Only the Sanitation marketing approach is not enough to reach the last-mile consumer. Integrating the Sanitation Marketing (SanMark) Approach with the CATS is crucial to reach last-mile consumers and improving the public health situation in Cox's Bazar district. This is also important for host and impacted community people. Therefore, this integrated approach ensures **“No One is Left Behind from the access to improved sanitation and hygiene”**.
- Reprogramming the existing voucher system into smart subsidies will increase the adoption of improved latrines in rural communities through the collaboration of CBO leaders and LGI members. This can be targeted only to disadvantaged poor or ultra-poor who can't afford an improved toilet.
- Integration with MFIs would be a crucial part of future programming. Particularly for business growth and capital support of LP, the project can link them with potential local MFIs. MFIs can provide loans to LPs for capital support and business growth as well as MFIs can also introduce a separate WASH loan for consumers. This integration will make the sanitation portfolio more robust in scale and sustainability.
- The private sector has enormous scope to work in schools to enhance the demand for hygiene products such as easy handwashing devices, improved toilets, MHM pads, etc.

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This case study is based on the outcome of the UNICEF-funded project in its area of responsibility in Cox's Bazar host community. This study is more about the importance of community engagement in Solid Waste Management, and the story is from camp 14.

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