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ENSURING AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT
OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

Strengthening demand, supply and enabling environment for sanitation in the Philippines

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Two years after Super Typhoon Yolanda hit the Philippines, a semblance of normalcy is slowly returning to affected areas as victims build back stronger from the disaster. As part of the initial response, NGOs including Samaritan's Purse (SP) supplied sanitation facilities for free but as conditions transitioned into recovery SP shifted to sanitation marketing strategies. Samaritan's Purse created self-sustaining markets through demand creation of sanitation products and services, working to increase affordability and accessibility through the market channels, and supporting the private sector supply side of the sanitation chain in partnership with UNICEF, the Philippine Department of Education and other NGOs. This paper reflects the lessons learned from experiences with motivational factors involved in demand creation to purchase sanitation products, the engagement by the financial sector, and the growing activity of the local governing units in the program.

Introduction

In rural areas of the Philippines, 31% of people do not have access to improved sanitation (WHO, 2013). The situation worsened when Typhoon Yolanda hit the Leyte Island on November 8, 2013. Almost all homes and latrine facilities were destroyed. Addressing sanitation issues has frequently been side-lined as sanitation is largely a private responsibility in the Philippines. However, poor access to sanitation has serious implications for health, productivity and dignity. Therefore, it is most strategic to improve sanitation by providing households with access to latrines as the burden of constructing sanitation facilities presently falls on the households. In line with this idea, Samaritan's Purse (SP) selected two municipalities in Leyte Province most affected by Yolanda, Santa Fe and Tanauan, to benefit from free sanitation during the recovery stages of the response.

From an initial assessment it was observed that the two municipalities were underlain by shallow groundwater rising up between 0.5-1.2 m below the ground surface. This compelled SP to implement a septic tank sanitation system where the excreta could be contained and later desludged when the reservoirs were full. The sanitation program provided 11,700 households with safe sanitation. The program also developed many skilled sanitation technicians. To move the program past the free sanitation provision, a sanitation marketing strategy was designed to benefit from the existing skill set. This strategy provided business opportunities for these skilled technicians to become entrepreneurs, as well as created an enabling environment for many poor households to access sanitation facilities. In partnership with the Local Government Units (LGUs), UNICEF, and other NGOs, SP implemented the new initiative. This case study provides experiences from the programs as well as discusses lessons learnt.

Free sanitation strategy

Based on assessment data, every household in the targeted municipalities were invited to participate in the program as community sanitation is an issue that demands 100% participation from every household. As the goal of this latrine program was to improve the health of entire communities, a team of dedicated mobilizers and trainers were deployed to engage Barangay leadership which included the Barangay Chairman, Health Worker and Sanitary Inspector in awareness creation and hygiene education. The team explained how the

SP latrine program was going to work, clearly defining what SP would provide and expectations for each participating household. At the completion of the training, a set of digging tools was loaned to each participating barangay for beneficiaries to dig their latrine pit. Once a pit was dug, the barangay chairman recorded the households with a completed pit and reported to SP. Once all the pits in a barangay were dug and ready, SP sent a truck load of mixed coarse sand to dump at the barangay hall. Each household was then required to transport 35 (50kg) sacks of the coarse sand to their homes. Contractors were then hired to install the septic tanks, each 1 m long by 1 m wide by 1 m deep, and fully sealed with an access hatch at the top to allow for desludging, in each barangay. Having set up a toilet bowl production site, each household that had completed the construction of the septic tank was given a sitting toilet bowl and assistance to construct their latrine. The superstructure was the responsibility of each household. This process led to the installation of 11,700 pour flush sanitation facilities across the two municipalities.

Sanitation marketing strategy (Sanmark)

In order to continue to provide adequate sanitation facilities to reduce outbreak of disease, SP designed the Sanmark strategy in partnership with the LGUs, Philippines Departments of Health (DOH) and Education, UNICEF and 11 other NGOs. "Sanitation Marketing combines social and commercial marketing approaches to stimulate supply and demand for hygienic sanitation facilities for the benefit of poor consumers. It focuses on the development of the market place and helps entrepreneurs to produce and supply demand-based multiple sanitation products and services. The aim is to effectively empower consumers and provide them with a choice of affordable options in hygienic toilet facilities" (WSP, 2013). Sanitation marketing has been observed to have great potential in improving access to sanitation (Jenkins, 2004, Cairncross, 2004). Focusing on the municipalities of Pastrana, Santa Fe, Tanauan, and Basey, the Sanmark strategy, which is part of the DOH's Philippines Approach to Total Sanitation (PhATS), enrolled 25 local entrepreneurs in training and coaching on topics such as latrine product fabrication, marketing, and business model development, with the goal of supporting them to develop small sanitation businesses that could serve their neighbours with the sanitation products they so desperately needed. Using the Human Centred Design (HCD) approach, participants were taken through the evaluation of existing low-cost sanitation products already on the market and to design new products or improve the existing options. After the training, each entrepreneur was provided with a promotional sales kit which included: a product catalogue (Photo 1), 50 brochures, and a tarpaulin to be hung at a construction site during an installation, 50 stickers for long term advertisements, 50 business cards, and an UNLI Asenso (sanitation group) T-shirt. Additional brochures and business cards were given to the entrepreneurs as needed.

Each entrepreneur was supported to obtain a Registration of a Business Name from the Philippines Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The process of registration took one day and cost 215 php (US$1=45 php) for the Barangay level registration and 15 php for a document stamp. Upon completion, businesses were assigned Social Security System, PhilHealth and Tax Information Numbers. They were further required to obtain a Business Permit which took a month to process and is 3% of the business capital to obtain. Once the registration process was completed entrepreneurs were set to begin. Prior to sales, SP launched the programs with promotional activities. The Sanmark initiative was begun by applying the Demand Creation component of the PhATS approach. Before Sanmark was introduced, the barangay was "triggered" by the SP Hygiene Promotion team, motivating them to reach Zero Open Defecation (ZOD) status, which signals that there is need for low-cost sanitation options within the community. This created a platform for entrepreneurs to capitalize on the prevailing demand to offer services as requested.

In order to ensure that all households had opportunity to access the sanitation facilities, SP identified the Centre for Community Transformation (CCT), who gave out loans to households at 1% interest per month to pay for the services of the entrepreneurs. Loans were given based on latrine products and installation costs which ranged from 6,391.80 php and 24,000 php, and approved credit line up to 50,000 php was available if needed. This greatly improved the program resulting in over several 1,000s of households placing orders and having sanitation facilities installed. Table 1 shows the sanitation design models, cost/unit, and number of units installed by SP and some of its partners.

Determining the motivational factors for sanitation marketing

Although the sanitation program started as a "free gift", it was observed that some households who had improvement in their household incomes changed their concrete toilet bowl to a porcelain bowl. This clearly showed that people had specific preferences. In order to understand the driving force behind the patronage

of the Sanmark program, a questionnaire was administered among 183 households. Similar techniques have been applied to determine the driving force of households adopting sanitation technologies and the marketing strategies adopted (Jenkins and Scott, 2007). Results from the survey indicated that a number of factors influenced households in barangays to buy toilets (latrines). Figure 1 shows the graphical representation of the responses. Affordable cost, safety and convenience were the top three motivational factors to have a toilet at home. Furthermore, when asked how much households were willing to pay for toilets and weekly loan repayments, 87% (160) of households preferred to pay less than 10,000 php, out of which 43.7% (80) preferred to pay less than 5,000 php for a toilet (Figure 2). Also, 60% (110) of households wanted to pay less than 100 php on a weekly basis (Figure 3).

Discussion

When responding to disasters, NGOs start by helping to meet the immediate needs of survivors. Initially, interventions in the crisis period do not require any obligations to be met by the beneficiaries, due to the short term nature of the intervention, funding availability and the urgency to save lives. However, during the transition from response to recovery and as development funding opportunities reduce, there is a need for more sustainable interventions. It was therefore important to transition from the free sanitation program where over 11,700 households were supplied sanitation facilities to the Sanmark program where beneficiaries were expected to pay.

The transition was challenging as some of the adjacent municipalities were aware of the free sanitation program. However, the strategy adopted by SP in consulting with barangay leadership, creating awareness, advertising and creating the successful business steps encouraged beneficiaries to change their behavior. The demand creation provided an enabling environment for the entrepreneurs to launch their businesses. The SP training provided business skills for the entrepreneurs, facilitated business registration and connected entrepreneurs and barangay members to CCT's credit opportunities.

It was observed that the success of the Sanmark program depends on the enabling environment and also the motivating factors that drive the beneficiaries to purchase the product (Photo 1). From SP field surveys, cost was the most influencing factor as communities want to have a sanitation facility that they can afford. Out of the 183 households surveyed, 160 mentioned that they would like to access sanitation facilities at a cost less than 10,000 php with 43.7% (80) of households wanting to pay less than 5,000 php. Since many households could not afford the cost from their savings and wanted to access loans, about 60% (110) of households preferred to repay their loans at less than 100 php per week. This clearly shows that the cost of the sanitation facility and the loan repayment amounts influence decisions. Besides cost, safety was another important factor which was considered by 16% of households. Having a sanitation facility within the house means women and children are less vulnerable to being harmed by criminals in the community. In some cities within Asia, women have been raped while practicing open defecation outside their homes (Heise, 2013). It has been reported by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) that there is worrisome trend where women are raped due to lack of toilets (BBC, 2016). In addition, about 10% of households were influenced to own a sanitation facility because they were either married or going to be married. Giving the family centred nature of the communities in Leyte Island, it was not surprising that marriage influences decision making.

Furthermore, the convenience of having the toilet within the premises brings about dignity, social status, and one can use the facility at any time of the day without fear of being victimized. These findings are in line with what has been reported in literature (Jenkins, 2004; Cairncross, 2004).

Contrary to the free sanitation program where SP had only one product, the Sanmark program allows beneficiaries to choose the kind of sanitation facility they want to install at home. This further boosted the participation and the pride in ownership and maintenance. It is therefore important that beneficiaries be given the opportunity to make decisions on what sanitation facility type they need, how much they want to pay and be part of setting the loan repayment amount. These privileges in addition to other motivating factors coupled with good enabling environment would propel Samark to a success.

Lessons learnt

The following were key learning experiences from the free sanitation and Sanmark programs:

- Whether disaster or development context, beneficiaries have preferences that should be taken into consideration in WASH programming. Despite handing them sanitation facilities, some beneficiaries replaced the facility with a much higher priced product of their choice.

- In starting Sanmark programs, empowering entrepreneurs through training and facilitating them to acquire the needed permits to operate as a business is very important in building confidence between entrepreneurs and communities.
- Although private financing for sanitation marketing is a problem, a more organized and government recognized entrepreneurs will be a boost and could help promote the willingness of a financial group to offer loans to communities to install sanitation facilities and repay with interest.
- Having many entrepreneurs promotes competition and more customer centeredness. There were instances where some entrepreneurs would arrive at the barangay much earlier than they had scheduled meetings in order to gain new customers.
- The government bureaucracies further added credibility to the Sanmark program. This implies that just picking artisans and training them to support communities would not be weighed similar to getting government certification. There is much more transparency in dealing with the communities as the entrepreneur is bound by tax, quality and performance standards.
- Vigorous community education, advertisement and marketing strategies in addition to the motivating factors were necessary for ensuring successful Sanmark program.

Table 1. Sanitation facility model types and number of units installed

Product model type	Number installed	Cost (php) / unit
Concrete ring septic tank, flooring with concrete/ ceramic toilet bowl, amacan walling, nipa roofing	1,498	6,392.00
4x5x5 hollow blocks septic tank, concrete flooring and ceramic toilet bowl with floor drain, 1/3 hollow blocks for walling and 4 ft plain sheet, Corrugated iron (CGI) sheet roofing with bathing facility	167	18,090.00
5 ft. Concrete ring septic tank, concrete flooring and ceramic toilet bowl with floor drain, 1/3 hollow blocks for walling and 4 ft plain sheet, CGI roofing with bathing facility	165	15,710.00
4ftx5ftx5ft hollow blocks septic tank, concrete flooring and ceramic toilet bowl with floor drain, 1/3 hollow blocks for walling and 4 ft plain sheet, CGI roofing, PWD latrine with ramp and roofing with bathing facility	1	24,000.00
Free latrine model- 4ftx4ftx4ft cube septic tank, concrete toilet bowl and flooring, amacan walling, CGI roofing with bathing facility (No profit and service charge of the entrepreneur included in this design model)	9,778	6,390.00

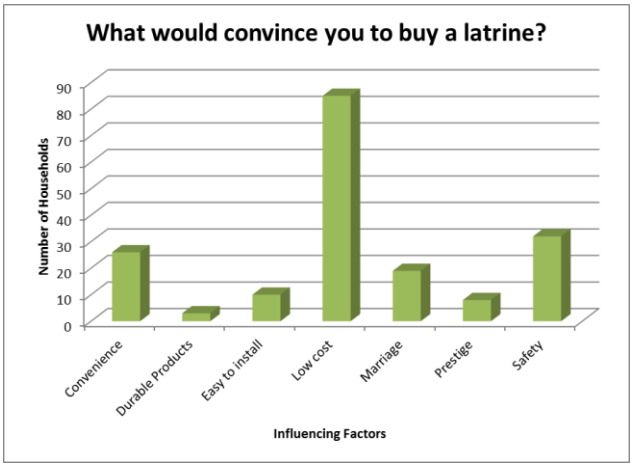


Figure 1. Influencing factors for having a toilet

Source: Authors

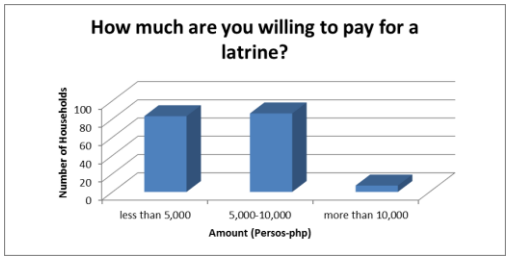


Figure 2. Amount households are Willing to pay for a toilet

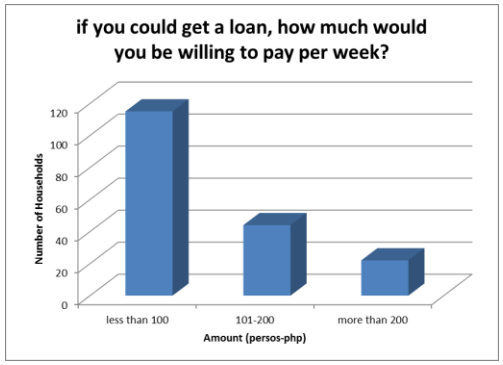


Figure 3. Amount households are willing to pay weekly as loan repayment



Photo 1. Sanitation Latrine Product Model

Source: Samaritan's Purse Philippines/ UNLI Asenso

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