

Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All (SSH4A)

Things to share

1. Approach and findings of the inclusive disability study
2. Development of innovative behaviour change communications and hygiene cost effectiveness study
3. Strengthening the government's sanitation and hygiene monitoring system



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Context

1. Bhutan is the last Himalayan Buddhist kingdom and the land of Gross National Happiness, a unique development philosophy that also includes sanitation as one of the indicators for happiness.
2. Landlocked between China and India, the programme operates from the southern plains bordering India to high altitude Himalayas, which are characterised by difficult access, environmental conditions and remoteness.
3. Basic sanitation coverage is high and open defecation is almost eradicated (<4%). The focus is on increasing access to improved sanitation, hygienic usage and safe hygiene practices since, despite high basic coverage, poor sanitation and hygiene continues to place a significant and preventable burden on the rural health care system, accounting for an estimated 30% of annually reported health cases and one of the highest infant mortality rates in South Asia. There is also a correlation between areas with highest stunting, poverty and lowest sanitation coverage.



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Things to learn

1. Ways to motivate local implementers in monitoring and regular follow-up
2. Ways to support people living with disability to access improved sanitation facilities
3. Advocacy to increase efforts and investment in hygiene promotion, alongside sanitation.

Highlights of the approach

1. SSH4A is an integrated programme approach to build capacity with government, private sector and local partners in sanitation demand creation, supply chain development, hygiene behaviour change communication, governance and performance monitoring to develop area wide sustainable sanitation services, at scale.
2. In Bhutan, SSH4A has been developed with the Ministry of Health (MoH) since 2008 and endorsed as the national approach in 2011 which led to the establishment of a dedicated 'Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Programme (RSAHP)' under the Public Health Engineering Division (PHED) of the MoH. RSAHP is now leading the national scaling up in 9 of 20 districts and has the buy-in and support of international and local development partners.
3. SSH4A operates at: i) district level through targeted support to 4 districts to achieve district wide coverage; and, ii) at the national level with support to the development of the national policy, strategy, guidelines and evidence base through formative research and supply chain analyses.

Let's celebrate!

Bhutan which was until recently 'off track' in its efforts to achieve the MDG sanitation target, but is now more 'on track' to meet the Royal Government of Bhutan's 5 Year Plan target to increase improved coverage with hygienic usage from 54%^[2] to over 80% by 2018. The programme declared and sustained the first three sub-districts with 100% access to improved sanitation, celebrated on World Toilet Day in 2015.

