

How to reach men

The missing link in hygiene promotion



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1 Background

To overcome the challenges in reaching men and adolescent boys with effective hygiene promotion, the BRAC WASH programme piloted an adapted approach which targets men and boys at tea stalls. This seems to be an effective addition to the regular house-to-house visits and cluster meetings.

Delivering simple but life-changing solutions to massive numbers of people is what BRAC does¹. Since the start of their water and sanitation programme in 2006/2007 BRAC has reached out to some 51 million people in 250 upazilas (sub-districts) with improved services and sustained behaviour change – nearly half the population of Bangladesh!

Over the 8 years of the BRAC WASH programme more than 39 million people - including the ultra-poor - have gained access to a hygienic toilet that they are using and more than 2.3 million people have now access to improved water sources through the direct support of BRAC. Behaviour change communication has been a core element of the programme: hygiene promotion has been provided to an average of 12.3 million people per year in communities and 2.5 million more young people in schools.



Adolescent boy listening to hygiene session (Photo: I. Krukkert/IRC)

Behaviour change has been at the heart of the BRAC WASH programme from the start. With a long history of community empowerment and mass mobilisation BRAC acknowledges that

¹ Chowdhury, M., 2014. The mantra of delivery, in: Stanford Social Innovation Review. Available at: http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/the_mantra_of_delivery.

changing norms and habits are powered primarily by people and behaviours rather than by infrastructure. The increase in latrines generated by the programme is a huge achievement, but if people are not using them or are not keeping them clean and functioning, these achievements will be of no use. Similarly, if people contaminate the water before drinking it by storing and drawing it in an unhygienic way, the benefits of new water points and innovative water technologies will be lost.

It takes time for people to adopt new, safer, hygiene behaviours. BRAC WASH has created a very strong delivery system and has reached 51 million people through repeated contact in group meetings and home visits. More than 8000 field staff and 65,000 Village Water and Sanitation Committees demonstrate a daily commitment in helping people change their lives and that of future generations. And lives are indeed being changed. For example, according to QIS² data collected in 2012-2013, in areas where the programme has been in place for over five years, latrine coverage rose from 32% to 85%, almost all household members use their latrines (96%) and handwashing provisions are available near 78% of the facilities (Table 1).

Table 1 Monitoring data sustained sanitation, water and hygiene

Duration of intervention before monitoring	1 year	3 years	8 years
Number of upazilas (<i>sub-districts each with a population of between 150,000 and 400,000 people</i>)	152	25	73
Has hygienic household latrine	32%	57%	78%
Use of hygienic latrine by all household members	89%	98%	98%
Provision for handwashing after defecation	25%	38%	62%
Safe and protected drinking water source	57%	52%	64%

(Source: QIS data from three rounds of monitoring)

A costing study³ comparing hygiene practice levels with the expenditure on the promotion of safe sanitation and hygiene practices also shows that the money spent on hygiene promotion is great value for money. For each half a dollar spent by BRAC WASH targeting the poorest, in return, the poor spend US\$ 9 per person on latrine construction and about US\$ 1 per year on maintenance. When families have well-functioning toilets, the ultra-poor keep them just as clean as the poor and non-poor.

The overall behaviour change communication strategy of BRAC WASH is to personally visit each family member throughout a period of three to five years by engaging in neighbourhood/cluster meetings or home visits and through people trained by BRAC such as the Village Water and Sanitation Committee, school teachers, and through Imams. Communication about WASH practices can also take place through communication with neighbours and other members of the family and via mass media (TV and radio) programmes prepared by other institutions.

² Qualitative monitoring shows what people do with their facilities; what behaviours they adopt.

³ Fonseca, C. et al., 2014. Costs, equity and affordability of sanitation in Bangladesh: Applying the life-cycle costs approach to the Bagherpara Upazila. Available at: <http://www.ircwash.org/resources/costs-equity-and-affordability-sanitation-bangladesh-low-income-rural-households>.

2 Why is it important to target men with hygiene and sanitation promotion?

BRAC WASH reviewed its hygiene and sanitation promotion activities in an effort to reach all community members and contribute to demand creation for latrines and sustained behaviour change (using and maintaining the latrines and adopting safe hygiene practices). Evidence and field experience in the first phase of BRAC WASH revealed that house visits and cluster meetings are not sufficient for reaching men and adolescent boys.

This is a problem, because the behaviour of each community member affects the health of the whole community. It is also important to reach men because:

- Men have a key role in decision making.
- Often control finances.
- Have an important role to play in family and community health improvement.
- Are role models to others in the household and community.
- Can help reduce the overburdening of women.

However, although cluster meetings had some success especially in engaging men on technical issues such as how to construct a latrine, and the importance of maintaining the water seal, reaching men remained a challenge. For example, in the year from July 2012 to June 2013, more than four million women attended BRAC WASH cluster meetings but only 1.6 million men. It was also found that men were more interested in participating in decision making rather than hygiene promotion sessions because of a traditional perception that this was something for the women in the family. House-to-house visits were not making up this shortfall. As one Union Manager (UM) stated: “Conducting home visits, the men do not give us enough time. They stay busy.”



Tea stall session in progress (Photo: I. Krukkert/IRC)

Following the review of the first phase of BRAC WASH, BRAC decided to reach out to men through a number of different channels, including discussions in the mosque and special sessions at the tea stalls.

3 The tea stall pilot: Hygiene messages with your tea

There are many tea stalls in Bangladesh and they are a popular place for men to gather. It has been estimated that about 1 million vendors spend 20 million Euro/month making tea⁴. Three studies were carried out to develop and test the feasibility and potential effectiveness of a hygiene and sanitation promotion programme in tea stalls.

The studies focused on the following:

- Testing whether tea stalls can become an additional channel to reach more men and adolescent boys.
- Improving and testing handwashing messages to see if they appeal to men and adolescent boys.
- Developing and testing visual materials to attract the attention of men and adolescent boys.



BRAC officer showing photograph during tea stall session (Photo: I. Krukkert/IRC)

Study 1: In 2013, 46 trial tea stall sessions were carried out in 22 tea stalls in seven upazilas across the country. Eleven BRAC Programme Officers (POs) and Field Officers (FOs) carried out the sessions, mainly between 4PM and 6PM, using flip charts with photographs and demonstrations related to two or three sanitation and hygiene practices. After each session, which lasted about 20 to 30 minutes, feedback was collected from BRAC staff, using two reporting forms. BRAC WASH staff were positive about the pilot, some quotes that illustrate this:

⁴ BRAC TARC mobile tea stall project (2008). Available at: <http://openarchitecturenetwork.org/projects/5286>.

- Conducting house visits, the male members do not give us enough time. They stay busy. But in the tea stall, they are much more receptive and more excited. Tea stalls are more like cultural centres for the villagers. (feedback from Md Ruhul Ain, Joypurhat UM)
- I prefer the tea stall session because I don't have to call up anyone to attend. More meetings should be done this way. It would mean the WASH message reaches more people. (feedback from nine POs/FOs)
- In the tea stall you find men from different socio-economic backgrounds and men not in cluster meetings. (feedback from four POs/FOs)

Some topics in the sessions reflected issues that are more popular among men, for example, constructing well platforms, repair of latrine superstructures, the water seal (breaking the siphon) and water purification. BRAC staff found it harder to engage men about handwashing. Messages and discussions were therefore designed to explore and promote men's role in ensuring that the family can afford to buy soap and that handwashing facilities are in place at the latrine. Once engaged on such issues, the discussion can shift to the topic of hygiene practices⁵.

Photos used in the session were appreciated by the audience and field staff. They showed real-life situations, for example a man repairing a bamboo door of his latrine.

Study 2: If they proved effective, BRAC WASH Union Managers would be responsible for organising tea stall programmes. To learn about their attitudes and suggestions for including a tea stall programme in the BRAC WASH interventions, 10 Union Managers (UMs) provided information via a written survey, at the end of 2013. All the Union Managers stated that women cannot, in safety, carry out the tea stall sessions.

Study 3: The third study was carried out at the end of 2013 and beginning of 2014 in 31 unions, across seven regions. Its purpose was to identify who would be reached by a tea stall programme and to what extent these men are already engaged through other BRAC WASH promotional activities. This would verify the potential added value of using teas stalls as a way to reach men. After each of the 40 tea stall sessions, information was collected from about 10 males in the tea stalls about their source of information on WASH, resulting in a total of 406 interviews. The information was collected through "closed questions" from 203 respondents who selected answers from a set of given options; and, "open questions" where the men told the interviewers where they heard about WASH from memory.

The study found that between 56% and 66% of the men in the tea stalls had not attended a cluster meeting and more than half of them (57%) had not seen a home visit. Only about one out of seven men (14%) said they had heard about water, sanitation and hygiene from other family members.

Most of the tea stall owners were cooperative. An unexpected result of the pilot may be that the cleanliness of the tea stall improves after repeated tea stall sessions. The tea stall programme also appears to be one way to approach the market bazaar.

⁵ BRAC WASH blogpost by I. Krukkert and S. Farhat Ubaid (January 2014) "The tea-time message for men is hot and strong – but first wash your hands!" <http://www.ircwash.org/blog/tea-time-message-men-hot-and-strong-%E2%80%93-first-wash-your-hands>.

Box 1 Example of how male project officer works in the tea stall

Programme Officer approaches a table or one to five men and says: My name is _____. You probably know that BRAC has a project working with families about water, sanitation and hygiene in this upazila. May I tell you what it is saying to the women and children, more specifically to mothers and children?

Let them say something, and thank them. Take the first card and show it to them. Say: One thing BRAC WASH works on is handwashing. The idea is: tell two messages about handwashing. Let them say something if they wish.

Take out the second card showing the water seal and let them look at it. Say: The idea here is ____ (give one or two messages about latrine use) and explain how the water seal works.

If three to five minutes have passed or if people do not seem interested anymore, then stop here. If they are still listening, then go on to the next step of showing the video (or if the tea stall does not have a video, start a conversation with the man on his role: what can he do to improve the situation at home?)

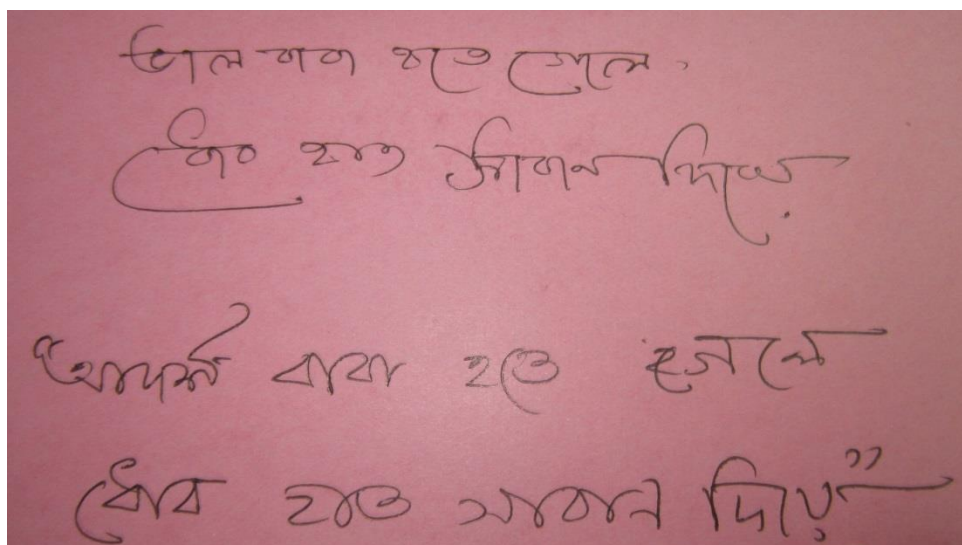
Take out the third card showing a superstructure of a latrine. Say: what do you think people - especially heads of families - can do to make sure that the toilet can be used in privacy?

Stop at this point. Go to another group.

Staff are advised to select different messages for different visits.

4 Hygiene promotion messages

BRAC WASH prioritised key water, sanitation and hygiene behaviours. A range of handwashing, hygienic latrines and safe water storage messages was developed and provided to staff in their training guide. For the tea stall sessions, the Field Officer or Programme Officer would select at least four of the messages and translate them into appealing messages in Bangla.



"Be a good father wash your hands with soap" (Photo: I. Krukkert/IRC)

Generic messages developed for men/ boys based on these key focus topics include:

- Handwashing
 - Be a good father; buy soap for your family so they can wash their hands.
 - Wash your hands with soap and be a good (clean) Muslim throughout the day.
- Hygienic latrine
 - Build a hygienic toilet near the house for the dignity of your wife and daughters.
 - Do you want your daughter to keep going out in the early morning or late at night to relieve herself?
 - Keep bad smells and flies away. Keep the water seal in your latrine.
- Safe water handling and storage
 - It pays to keep water clean, stored above the ground and covered. It pays in good health.
 - Help your sister/ wife/ mother carry water to reduce harassment and eve-teasing by others.

5 Recommendations from the tea stall pilot studies

To successfully incorporate a tea stall approach in the BRAC WASH programme it was recommended to:

- Provide field staff with communication training and additional support to be able to respond honestly and convincingly to some of the difficult issues that men can raise during the tea stall session.
- Review the effectiveness and feasibility of the approach in hard to reach areas, where there may not be enough tea stalls, or they may be frequented by very few men.
- For successful tea stall sessions, staff need active listening and communication skills. It may be useful to undertake a small study to determine whether there is evidence of improved communication, in the tea stall sessions, following the staff communication training. This would be evident in more interaction and active listening and engaging instead of lecturing.
- Verify the anecdotal evidence of additional benefits such as improved hygiene of tea stalls, a review or monitoring effort is recommended.

Tea stall sessions are now an integral part of BRAC WASH hygiene promotion activities.

