

# Reaching the Poor through Sustainable Partnerships: The Slum Sanitation Program in Mumbai, India

#8 March 2006

*In December 2003, the Bombay Sewage Disposal Project (BSDP) was completed. It was supported by a US\$192 million blended IBRD/IDA loan. The Slum Sanitation Program (SSP) component of the BSDP provided sanitation services for over a quarter of a million slum dwellers. This was achieved by a large-scale construction of community toilet blocks. SSP accounted for approximately 6% of the BSDP cost. The SSP shows how partnerships between municipalities, communities and the local private sector can create sustainable sanitation services at scale.*

## SLUMS IN MUMBAI AND SANITATION PROVISION

The city of Mumbai, which is home to about 14 million people and is spread over 438 km<sup>2</sup>. is India's financial capital. The main industrial and economic activities in city had undergone metamorphic changes over the years, yet it continued its unabated growth, challenging the availability of adequate housing within the reach of the work force. As a result, about 55% of its citizens live in about 2,000 densely populated slums which lack satisfactory basic services, principally, the access to sanitation facilities. Government and public bodies from time to time supplied toilets under various programs, but they have largely failed to provide sustainable access.

### Community Toilets

Community toilets are meant for a specific community of users and not for the general public. For this reason, users develop a sense of ownership of the assets and are willing to take full charge of their management.

## LINKING THE MUNICIPALITY AND COMMUNITIES

The SSP adopted a demand-led participatory approach to scale up sustainable environmental sanitation services in Mumbai in order to enable improvement in the quality of life of slum dwellers. This approach was grounded in an assessment that showed the willingness and readiness of communities to participate in the sanitation scheme. A mechanism for monitoring and evaluation was set up to support the implementation process and to evaluate the real impact on the ground.

The program adopted an innovative partnership between the Municipal Corporation of Brihanmumbai (MCBM) and communities, in which the municipality would provide the initial capital to build community toilet blocks, while the community groups would take full charge of operations and maintenance, including water and electricity charges.

## THE SANITATION MAINTENANCE FUND

Communities were mobilized around sanitation, and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) were created and obtained the legal status which allowed them to manage the community sanitation block. A sanitation maintenance fund was created by collecting an upfront

### India at a glance



Population: 1.08 billion – urban 28%, rural 72%; 1.4% annual growth rate

Surface area: 3,287,300 km<sup>2</sup>

Life expectancy: 63.4 years

GNI per capita: 620 USD

Human Development Index ranking: 127 out of 177 countries

% below the basic needs poverty line: 26.6%

% improved water access: 86%

% improved sanitation access: 30%



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contribution. These monies collected from the community were deposited in a joint account with the municipality.

The MCBM only issued a building permit for the community toilet block after 50% of the community contribution for the fund was collected and a technically sound plan for the toilet block was endorsed by the community.

### CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

Once construction was finished, the MCBM signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a CBO as a local service provider. The MOU provided the MCBM the prerogative to evaluate the performance of the CBO over time and replace them in case of low performance. The MOU defined standards on cleanliness, hygiene, transparency and accountability to user members, inclusiveness, and the proper maintenance of the asset.

The municipality adopted an output-focused approach, setting minimum standards but leaving to the construction agencies and the CBOs the freedom to decide how to operate locally. CBOs chose a variety of options, ranging from direct user involvement in all the activities to the outsourcing of management to private service agencies. This flexible approach has increased the local sense of ownership and accountability to the users, while reducing the burden for the municipality to micro-manage operation of services.

### RESULTS

The SSP constructed 328 toilet blocks with more than 5,100 toilet seats in slums across Mumbai. At design capacity, these facilities serve the needs of 250,000 people. Empirical observations suggest that the actual number of users exceeds 400,000 people.

Most of the CBO are performing well, raising enough funds within their communities to efficiently manage the toilet blocks and to pay for all the utility services.

### MAKING SANITATION A BUSINESS

The SSP followed a policy of contracting out the whole sanitation package, integrating health and hygiene education, community organization, planning, design, construction and community capacity building for operation and maintenance

under a single contract. The success of SSP is contributing to an increased interest of the private sector in construction and management of sanitation facilities in slums.

### SHOWING THE WAY FORWARD FOR SLUM SANITATION

The capacity and strong commitment demonstrated by the CBOs have contributed to a shift in attitude by decision-makers. For example, the municipal counselors, who were initially skeptical about the capacities of communities to become local service providers, are now amongst the champions of the SSP partnership approach.

The experience in Mumbai demonstrated the importance of adopting an integrated approach to slum sanitation. It showed how the provision of sanitation services can be an entry point for a more integrated approach to the provision of a wider set of environmental services, like solid waste disposal and improved drainage. It also showed that sanitation in slums is not effective and efficient without the provision of water and electricity.

The MCBM is determined to build on the positive experience of the SSP and scale up at city level, aiming at universal coverage of sanitation for slums. In scaling up, the municipality is adopting an integrated approach, combining the sanitation scheme with a water program. It also aims to use sanitation as an entry point for the provision of a bundle of other key environmental services. On the institutional side, SSP program management is being fully integrated in the MCBM structure. The coordination between complementary sectoral departments (both within and outside MCBM) and land owning agencies is being improved.

The scaleup of the SSP will also entail a wider involvement of private enterprises, while ensuring that community organizations maintain the role of equal partners. It will also be important to increase the sanitation choices available to slum dwellers by formalizing and regulation some of the innovations currently under implementation.

Bombay Sewage Disposal Project	
Country	India
Project ID	P010480
Project cost	US\$ 192 Million
Type	IDA credit/IBRD loan
Timeframe	1995-2003
Status	Closed

### REFERENCES

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