Supporting Governance through Monitoring of Results

Sustainable Sanitation Hygiene for All (SSH4A)
Programme SNV Cambodia

SNV

Sustainable Sanitation & Hygiene for All (SSH4A) is SNV's comprehensive approach to ensuring equitable access to improved sanitation and hygiene for those who need it most. SSH4A integrates best practices in demand creation, supply chain strengthening, hygiene behaviour change and governance. SNV focuses on strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders to plan, implement, monitor and sustain sanitation and hygiene interventions.

Developed since 2008, the SSH4A approach is now implemented with rural communities in over 15 countries across Asia and Africa, benefitting more than 9 million rural people and resulting in additional access to improved sanitation for 2.7 million people.

Introduction

In Cambodia, SNV has been supporting and collaborating with the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) and Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD) since 2010 as part of the Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All (SSH4A) programme. Currently, the programme is operating in the provinces of Kampot and Kampong Speu, with the aim of reaching full district coverage in Banteay Meas and increased sanitation coverage in Chumkiri and Basedth districts by 2017.

Strengthening performance monitoring is a key investment in improving local governance. This includes monitoring processes supported by capacity building of local authorities in data collection and analysis of results, alongside ensuring the information is used to review progress, identify issues and support evidence based planning.

The experience in Cambodia has shown that by engaging stakeholders in the development of simple monitoring tools and oversight of the data collection process, they develop a stronger commitment to both the quality of reporting and ownership of the results.

Analysing the data collectively encourages local authorities, at all levels, to critically assess ongoing work and innovate in developing localised solutions.

This learning brief provides an outline of the monitoring processes and tools developed, the lessons learnt and the benefits than can be achieved.

Monitoring rural sanitation and hygiene

SSH4A globally uses a standardised monitoring framework that includes key performance indicators that measure changes in sanitation and hygienic behaviour and practices, with qualitative information quantified with the help of progressive scales called ladders. Households at the lowest levels at the start of the programme can climb to a higher level on the ladders for each indicator. Each year household surveys[1] are conducted and district level results reported against indicators for review with projects partners.
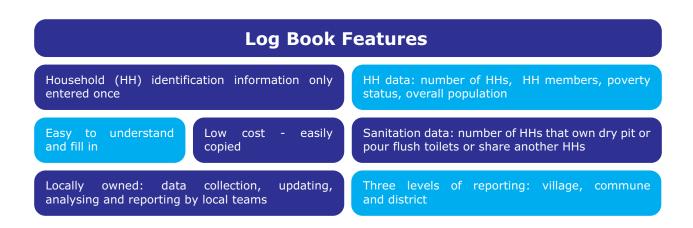
In parallel, development of localised monitoring processes and capacity building has allowed a continuous focus on progress across the intervention districts. In Cambodia, the tools developed support regular village level collection of sanitation data, and link to commune and district level reporting. This approach is intended to support local ownership of progress, with the information reviewed quarterly by the local authorities, and inform processes such as Open Defecation Free (ODF) verification and commune investment planning. The reporting from the local authorities and the SSH4A annual performance reporting complement each other.`

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1.   Trained enumerators collect data from an adult member of the sampled households using a structured questionnaire (supported by observations). Enumerators are largely drawn from MRD and PDRD. The Akvo FLOW tool, an Android smart phone application and an internet-based management tool, are used for data collection and reporting.

The local monitoring system

In consulation with stakeholders, a simple log book has been developed for recording and monitoring household sanitation access in a village, which can be consolidated and reported at the commune and district levels.

The log books have been rolled out by local authorities in the SSH4A target areas – covering 343 villages, 37 communes and three target districts. This is supported by a monitoring process, illustrated below.

Sanitation focal points support the collection and review of data. Focal points are volunteers selected from the village and commune sanitation committees, along with staff from the district authorities.

Log Book Features

Household (HH) identification information only entered once

HH data: number of HHs, HH members, poverty status, overall population

Easy to understand and fill in

Low cost - easily copied

Sanitation data: number of HHs that own dry pit or pour flush toilets or share another HHs

Locally owned: data collection, updating, analysing and reporting by local teams

Three levels of reporting: village, commune and district

Monitoring Process

Village

- Collection of sanitation situation before triggering and progress updates.
- Village focal points meet monthly to update log book, review and check data quality.
- Analyse progress results and report to commune.

Data used for:
- Reflection on progress.
- Household follow up actions.
- Prepare for ODF verification and ODF sustainability (once reached).

Commune

- Villages and commune meeting.
- Consolidation of village data.
- Review and check data quality, analyse results and report to district.

Data used for:
- Reflection on progress.
- Formulate appropriate intervention.
- Prepare for commune ODF verification and support ODF sustainability (once reached).
- Feed resource requirement into commune investment plan.

District

- Communes and district meeting.
- Consolidation of commune data.
- Review progress and check data quality, analyse results.

Data used for:
- Reflection on progress and formulate appropriate interventions.
- District sanitation planning and target setting.
- Report to provincial planning department.
- Prepare for commune and district ODF verification and support ODF sustainability (once reached).
- Feed resource requirements into district investment plan.

What we have learnt about strengthening localised monitoring systems

Engaging local users in the design and review of the monitoring tools and system both improves the system and, importantly, also means that they see themselves as an integral part of the process. This in turn helps improve the overall quality of reporting and accountability of the results. The following are the key learnings of embedding a localised monitoring system with local government authorities, supported by interviews with district, commune and village focal points in the three SSH4A districts.

- **Roles and responsibilities for monitoring** need to be assigned. Village, commune and district sanitation focal points were appointed by the local authorities and identified as the key contact for data collection, monitoring and reporting.

- **Leadership and commitment** from village and commune chiefs, as well as the focal points, is important to the success of implementing and sustaining the monitoring system, as well as overall progress in sanitation coverage.

- **Procedures and a format** for data collection, verification, analysis and reporting, **that are clear and easy to use** need to be developed. Clearly established processes allow the focal points to understand the requirements of their role, including the expected frequency of data collection and reporting. Processes need to be tested for usability - earlier reporting formats included collection of hand-washing and drinking water information which was difficult for focal points to accurately collect and assess.

- Develop and update **terms and definitions** with the users, so **they are simple and standardised**. As definitions were first developed in English and then translated to Khmer, testing their meaning with local users was important to ensuring the intention is understood and maintained. Experience also showed that there can be different understanding among focal points on what key terms mean and what or when data should be collected (e.g. if toilets under construction should be included in results). Ongoing discussion and review of these terms and, if required, further clarification of definitions, helps builds a shared understanding and approach.

- Providing one-off training is not sufficient. **Annual refresher training** which included data collection, updating log books, checking for errors, analysis and reporting **was needed**. As well as ensuring users have the capacity to collect and report results correctly, training session provided the opportunity to collectively identify issues and review the process.

Focal points cross check data in log book and village sanitation map

"Through SNV training and coaching, we can read, interpret data and write reports on key information. Through (using the) log book, we know what the data is telling us. We know our roles and responsibilities in monitoring, following up and improve sanitation access in our community, Through this monitoring work, and with evidence based data from the log book, I can see that our focal points at commune level have improved a lot in sharing ideas in the meeting, facilitating and providing inputs to decision making and commune budget allocation for sanitation activities."

Deputy district governor, Banteay Meas district

Commune focal point collects village sanitation progress

"I will continue using this book because this book makes it easy to fill in information. It contains information about number of households, families and their access to sanitation. This book is useful for monitoring those households who do not have or use toilets yet. I will keep the book properly."

Village focal point, Poh village, Chumkiri district

- Visualising information recorded in the log book through a **village sanitation map** can help focal points to better understand and present the sanitation situation in their village. The map shows the location of all households and their sanitation status, along with main roads, schools, pagodas and water sources. The village sanitation map allows easy presentation at village meetings to reinforce progress and issues, and supports discussion on follow up requirements.

- Regular **spot checks** help to **improve data quality**, as well as the capacity and understanding of data collection requirements. Every quarter, after the district progress meeting, a spot check of data in the log book has been conducted in randomly selected villages. The spot check is conducted by SNV, P/DORD, district and commune focal points, and helps assess localised issues and whether additional support is required by village focal points.

- In order to motivate focal points to regularly update and check accuracy **it is important to demonstrate that the information in the log book is used**, not just collected. As part of SSH4A, the village reporting is provided to the commune and districts on a regular basis. The results are presented and discussed during the quarterly district progress meeting, at which stakeholders work together to review successes, address issues, solve problems and tailor activities and messages.

- There are **motivations to under/over report** progress data. Desire for sanitation subsidies or other support can motivate households and/or focal points to under report sanitation progress. Conversely, focal points may wish to show good progress and over report local results. While spot checks help offset this, they also need to be mitigated through ongoing review of data, training and managing expectations.

> *"I can see the change in perception toward sanitation and hygiene at commune and district levels. Before, they thought that it was SNV's work. But now, they have changed their perception and understand that sanitation and hygiene work is their responsibility at the local level. SNV has built their capacity. Now they know what to do."*
>
> **Deputy district governor, Basedth district**

District and commune focal points meet households that do not have latrine

What we have achieved

The monitoring systems have been able to build ownership and decision making. Users at all levels now have a common understanding of the monitoring system and how it works so that the information provided is reliable and consistent. Working with local stakeholders to develop and implement the monitoring tool has led to improvements in regular access to sanitation data and commitment to achieving improved sanitation results. Monitoring results are presented quarterly at progress meetings and have been critical to assessing progress and identifying modifications to approaches and messages.

- The monitoring tool and process has **improved the commitment to, and quality of, the reporting and has moved the focus to ongoing access**. In the past, if local reporting did occur, it focussed on toilet construction. The log books provide clear guidance, supported by training, for focal points to confirm that toilets can continue to be accessed.

Commune focal points spot check data quality in village log book

> *"Monitoring data is very important for us (the district). We used it in the commune and district investment plan to set priority activities and targets. We have shared the plan with stakeholders to help find partners to support us with implementation. At commune level, we have seen that communes have committed and allocated budget to implement sanitation activities to reach the set target. The information in the log book about ID poor household access to sanitation has helped us understanding the number of ID poor households that need more support and has provided us with helpful information to share with stakeholders and the district Red Cross for support."*
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> **Deputy district governor, Banteay Meas district**

- **Successful villages and communes take pride in presenting their results**. Reporting can maintain community motivation and commend focal points for their effort, thereby encouraging further improvement.

- Reporting based on localised monitoring **supports mobilisation of local resources and builds commitment to achieve results for all**.

- The monitoring system **enhances localised planning and interventions to improve and sustain progress**. The villages own their data, which can then feed upwards into commune and district decision making on investment.

- Localised monitoring **supports processes for ODF planning and verification**. Communes that plan to be ODF by 2016 have used the data in the log books to identify villages that require follow up interventions and support.

- Monitoring activities provide an opportunity to **reinforce post triggering and behaviour change messages**. Focal points can use the household visits as well as presentation of results at village meetings to reinforce post triggering messages and activities.

- The localised monitoring system can **feed into provincial and national reporting systems**. The information generated by the districts is provided to PDRD, providing real time information on coverage that can be discussed with MRD.

> *"I am so proud that my commune reached ODF in March 2014. We (the commune focal points) have conducted frequent triggering events, monitoring and follow up. I am so happy with this result and will not let it turn back to open defecation. I will continue follow up ODF status, spot check for open defecation and push for upgrading dry pits to pure flush. From the information in the log book, we can see households that have dry pits that might be full in one year or less and therefore risk falling back into open defecation. So we continue to advise them to build pour flush toilets for longer-term use. To date, sanitation has been integrated and will continue to be integrated into the commune investment plan and commune meeting agenda every month."*
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> **Commune focal point, Sdach Kong Khang Lech commune, Banteay Meas district**

What local monitoring does not do

The local monitoring system only captures information on household access to sanitation facilities. It does not report on access issues for people with disabilities nor on behaviour aspects such as hand-washing or hygienic usage as these require more sophisticated data collection and observation skills. To understand these aspects, the SSH4A programme conducts a detailed annual household survey. SNV has been working with MRD/PDRD to build their staff's capacity to observe these factors and collect information using mobile-based tools that align to both the SSH4A and national reporting requirements. The localised system has successfully been used to drive progress in targeted intervention areas, however it has not been designed to be used nationally given the significant capacity support required to establish and assess quality of local reporting.

Focal points from MRD, PDRD and DORD support annual household survey and data quality control

What next?

On-going support, coaching and spot checking will continue under SSH4A to further build the capacity of local stakeholders and the quality of reporting and analysis in the target districts. This will enable sustainability of the monitoring system and continue to build local ownership and commitment to results.

While the monitoring process has been adopted by local authorities in the SSH4A programme areas, this is not the end. SNV is working with MRD and PDRD to continue to integrate and embed monitoring systems into existing local government structures. These monitoring systems can support the Cambodian government's long term objective to decentralise rural water and sanitation services where interventions are planned, managed and monitored at local level. Under the decentralised model being developed for rural sanitation in Cambodia[2] the oversight and coordination of local level monitoring and reporting would be formally integrated into the responsibilities of local government.

Further improvements to the accessibility and timeliness of the monitoring data, along with opportunities for scalability could also be considered. This includes options for digitisation of village and commune information through, for example, use of data transfer via (non-smart) mobile phones,[3] however this will require further investment in training, web-based platforms for data consolidation and communication costs, such as SIM cards and data transference.

Authors

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SNV

SNV is a not-for-profit international development organisation. Founded in the Netherlands nearly 50 years ago, we have built a long-term, local presence in 38 of the poorest countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Our global team of local and international advisors work with local partners to equip communities, businesses and organisations with the tools, knowledge and connections they need to increase their incomes and gain access to basic services – empowering them to break the cycle of poverty and guide their own development.

Further information

To learn more about SNV and our work in Cambodia, visit our website at www.snvworld.org/en/cambodia

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All photos by SNV staff

2. National Action Plan Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene 2014-2018, Ministry of Rural Development

3. SMS text (mobile phone) of village level data, using standard definitions provided in logbook on latrine type (pour flush, dry pit, shared) and open defecation, as well as if village declared ODF. This village level data can then be compiled by commune, districts and provinces electronically.