

PATH Safe Water Dissemination Workshop Day 2

Day 2 of the Safe Water Dissemination workshop delved upon some questions that were raised through discussions on the first day through two breakout working group sessions. The deliberations of these are summarized below:

1. Role of MFIs and complementary subsidies in promoting safe water

- MFIs are evolving from physical distribution of products to just loan provision and sharing the client base with product providers for a commercial incentive
- Additional parallel roles for awareness generation, understanding and communicating water quality issues, physical delivery and post sales service which require regular touch points with the consumer
- There are lots of existing channels at the last mile which can be utilized for these roles like village groups, development committees, existing entrepreneurs etc. These can be developed by providing livelihood development support through subsidies and capacity building (this is a gap which exists today and targeted subsidies can address this by developing these **facilitators**)
- There also exists a parallel role for social investors for a corpus of commercial loan for some products like water treatment systems and subsidies for products which enable use of the former e.g. community hand-pumps, water connections, rainwater harvesting systems.
- Additional role of subsidies is
 - to provide an interest subsidy to reach lower wealth quintiles
 - to support high operating costs of small loans for water filters
 - to provide awareness generation about safe water and micro-saving to ensure affordability of consumables

2. Closing the loop from HWTS to other WASH services

- Once safe water facilitators have been developed, additional income generation opportunities can be generated by adding sanitation and hygiene products and services. Existing awareness of diarrheal diseases through unsafe water will maximize impact and minimize cost of awareness generation for additional products. Sanitation behavior change is much more difficult and can benefit from the safe water relationship.
- We also need to consider the need hierarchy of WASH where access to water is the first step and provides instant gratification to the consumer, but needs public/social investment in creating this infrastructure. Safe water which can use market platforms comes next and sanitation rides on the behavior change created by these two, also using market platforms like water treatment options.
- Perfect opportunity for PPP where public/social investments can provide target subsidies while private investments can use market forces to maximise impact of social investments.

3. Public-private coordination: Role of Government and gaps in advocacy which can be addressed by NGOs and the private sector

- Task force for water quality and developing microbiological standards which can be translated into water quality for the consumer. This will create ground for testing of products against a common benchmark. WQA is doing this but there is a long way to go before the loop can be closed to take this information to the consumer
- Need for creating awareness about this issue at the level of the Government (MDWS)
- Gap for advocacy for convergence of WASH activities with other family and community health initiatives across the Government, NGOs and private sector
- Efficacy of public funds can be maximized by:
 - Creating awareness at the community level
 - Embedding water and sanitation with existing large scale maternal & child health, vaccination, ORS and other programs and providing holistic health plans for villages/slums
- Private sector can contribute by bringing in its skills/tools and demonstrating that people are willing to pay for good health services
- NGOs and private sector can help by gathering information on existing services from the Government and make a case of evidence based correction and future decision making
- Private sector data about water quality issues can help increase efficacy of programs if shared with the right entities
- Village Health and Sanitation Committees exist in the rural community system and can be mobilized by NGOs to get meaningful outcomes for WASH activities
- Private sector can provide technological solutions which the Government lacks while the Government can utilize its spread by mobilizing VHSCs which can be empowered to champion healthcare in a village
- Gap: need to facilitate dialogue between Government and private sector to bridge this gap