

CASE INFORMATION SHEET

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INDIA: Corruption Prevention in a Community Management Sanitation Programme in Kerala

The Kerala Sanitation Programme

The South Indian region Kerala suffers from a high morbidity rate featuring especially water and sanitation related diseases. This situation of poor sanitation and hygiene coupled with Kerala's high density of population causes the rapid transmission of infectious diseases and contributes to further problems of acute poverty, poor hygiene and inadequate garbage disposal and drainage facilities.

Jointly with the local communities, NGOs and the Kerala government, the *Socio Economic Unit Foundation* has carried out a participatory and community-based household sanitation programme to support villagers building their own sanitary facilities. The programme has served more than 200.000 families in 200 Panchayats (communities) and has become a model for many other regions in India.

Corruption Problems

Sanitation programmes can be particularly prone to corruption. The complex planning, construction and provision process involves large sums of public money and requires many different actors on several levels. This provides numerous opportunities for diverting public funds for personal gain and the effects of corruption can be devastating. It is estimated by professionals in Southern India that 20% to 30% of funds and materials are diverted from sanitation programmes due to corruption.

Other effects of corruption are:

- undeserving people benefiting from subsidies
- diverting funds from those in need
- over-charging services for construction works
- stopping poorer families from attaining proper toilets
- poor construction and inferior materials
- diversion of funds and materials from sanitation to other, unrelated purposes

Project Information

Homepage: www.seuf.org
Contact: **Kochu Rani Mathew**

Socio Economic
Unit Foundation
Kerala, India

Corruption Prevention

The *Socio Economic Unit Foundation* works since 1987 on issues of water supply and sanitation in the region. Hence, the organisation draws from a wealth of experiences proving crucial for the successful conception and implementation of anti-corruption measures. The success of the project owes to the practice of information sharing on all levels, starting at every single household.



Anti-Corruption Strategies

Access to Information and Knowledge

- Ensure that programme rules are known by all
- Distribute information to participants through a variety of agencies (local government, water and sanitation committees, field workers)
- Access to data such as technology, construction time and costs for everyone
- Training classes for project participants to learn how to read the data
- Develop construction checklist. Explain and improve checklists during meetings

Checks and Monitoring

- Involve local committees, local government and project staff in socio-economic mapping to ensure access of poor people to subsidies
- Visit households to introduce programme
- Public posting of names and addresses of households eligible for subsidies
- Introduce complaint mechanisms

Payment and Tendering

- Joint bank accounts and independent audits
- Double signatures
- Require at least 3 tenders with public and open selection
- Surprise and spot checks of suppliers

Complaint Mechanisms

- Action should be taken at the lowest level possible
- Upward referral mechanisms

"If information is shared properly, people will act responsibly" Kochu Rani Mathew, Socio Economic Unit Foundation

Lessons Learned

Learning from experience - There was no blueprint solution, the programme has adjusted, tested and built its governance strategies over many years

Variation of strategies -The programme included a combination of different activities

Inclusion of all stakeholders - A variety of groups participated in the monitoring processes (e.g. households, local governments, water/sanitation committees, women's groups, youth groups, etc.)

It is easier to prevent corruption beforehand than having to deal with it or mop it up after it has occurred

Participation and capacity building of community groups takes time and resources

Participants and staff involved usually don't perceive these tools as anti-corruption activities, but see them as ways of checking and ensuring quality and effectiveness