

How Does SuSanA Generate Impact?

Case Story 6: The SuSanA India Chapter

At a Glance



Country: India

Topic: The SuSanA India Chapter

Actors: India Sanitation Coalition (ISC), Ecosan Service Foundation, WaterAid, CARE, Save the Children, Oxfam, World Vision, Arghyam, Tata Trusts, Bharti Foundation, Hindi Water Portal

Impact Argument: The SuSanA India Chapter serves as a platform for exchange and knowledge management in India. It reaches out to a community of more than 8,000 international and 2,000 Indian sanitation practitioners. ISC is a key partner of the SuSanA India Chapter and has used outputs of the Chapter for advocacy efforts with industry and the Government of India. Particularly, the ISC-SuSanA India Chapter has pushed for enlarging the focus of the Swacch Bharat Mission from mere hardware to software issues like behavioural change.

Introduction

Approximately 1.2 billion people live in India – a sixth of the earth’s population. About half of them defecate in the open. With Swacch Bharat Abhiyan (“Clean India Mission”), the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated a campaign to keep India clean, which is India’s largest cleanliness initiative ever. Officially launched in 2014, the Indian Government has declared the goal of making India Open Defecation Free (ODF) by 2019. In this endeavour, the government is actively seeking technical, capacity strengthening, and monitoring support. In response to the government’s call for action, various actors – NGOs, foundations, companies, individuals, etc. – have pledged support. To provide a collective and collaborative response to the WASH challenge, the India Sanitation Coalition (ISC) was formed. To further strengthen discussion on sanitation and support the Clean India Mission, ISC partnered with the Sustainable Sanitation



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Alliance (SuSanA), setting up SuSanA’s first regional chapter for India. Nitya Jacob from ISC talked to us about the work of the chapter and its contribution to “Swacch Bharat Abhiyan.”

Interview

SuSanA: Nitya, you work at the India Sanitation Coalition (ISC). Can you tell us more about the work of ISC and its objectives?

The India Sanitation Coalition (ISC) was formed with the objective of bringing all stakeholders in the sanitation field onto one platform where they can share information, learn from others, partner and collaborate. Today, the ISC has NGOs, donors, corporations, foundations, trusts and the government as partners, working together to create a larger impact, rather than each one working separately.



Nitya Jacob,
India Sanitation
Coalition (ISC)

ISC has four task forces on (1) advocacy, branding and communication; (2) learning and knowledge management; (3) government engagement and; (4) partnerships and collaboration. Through these, the Coalition conducts its strategic businesses. Each task force meets regularly and the chairs and co-chairs interact at steering committee meetings to ensure inter-task force collaboration.

Each task force has defined objectives as reflected in its title. “Advocacy, branding and communication” develops material and reaches out to critical stakeholders such as the government. “Learning and knowledge management” seeks out case studies that can inform sanitation work in the private sector and the government. The “Government engagement task force” works with the central and state governments of Rajasthan and Maharashtra. The fourth task force reaches out to companies and other stakeholders in sanitation.

SuSanA: ISC is a key contributor and partner of the SuSanA India Chapter. When was the Chapter created and what motivated you to collaborate with SuSanA?

The Chapter was set up in May 2016 with the objective of both promoting knowledge building and sharing among sanitation practitioners and creating a network. It also disseminates relevant information from SuSanA that is relevant for India. This way, SuSanA adds tremendously to the current corpus of knowledge of ISC on sanitation and furthers the Coalition’s objective of being at the cutting edge of sanitation.

SuSanA: What activities have been taking place so far as part of the SuSanA India Chapter? And how have these supported you in achieving your goals?

Under the umbrella of the SuSanA India Chapter, the India Sanitation Coalition has organised six thematic discussions

so far. Topics included “On the way to a “clean India” – 2 years of Swacch Bharat Mission (Gramin/rural)” (July/August 2016), “On the way to a “clean India” – 2 years of Swacch Bharat Mission (Urban)” (September/October 2016), “Corporate Engagement in Sanitation” (November/December 2016), “Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) - India’s Pathway to ‘Clean India?’” (January 2017), “Case Studies are Signposts for Recognition and Encouragement” (April/May 2017) and “WASH in Schools - What’s next after 100% coverage?” (September 2017). A

“The SuSanA India Chapter provides critical, practical knowledge inputs based on research and field experiences to promote sanitation.”

- Nitya Jacob, ISC

synthesis document was compiled for each discussion. These synthesis documents

and additional white papers are available in the SuSanA India Chapter Library and have been used in advocacy with the government, companies and other agencies working on sanitation. This has served two goals – government engagement and knowledge management. In addition, it has supported the other goals of outreach and branding since all the documents are co-branded.

Moreover, the SuSanA India Chapter has compiled an overview of all SuSanA partners active in India to further enhance knowledge exchange and networking in the region. Also, we created a mailing list specifically for the SuSanA India Chapter to keep SuSanA members updated on all India-related sanitation news.

In addition, in February 2017, the 23rd SuSanA meeting was organised by the Ecosan Services Foundation and the India Sanitation Coalition in Chennai, India. More than 200 sanitation enthusiasts were brought together during the two-day event and a fruitful exchange between Indian and international practitioners on the political drive towards sustainable sanitation in India took place.

Finally, a seminar on “ODF+ urban Maharashtra” was organised by the India Sanitation Coalition and the Ecosan Services Foundation in Pune, in November 2017, to provide a platform to discuss holistic sanitation solutions for cities that encompass FSM, solid and liquid waste management, in addition to access to toilets.

SuSanA: One of the goals of the SuSanA India Chapter is to contribute to the Indian Government’s Clean India campaign “Swacch Bharat Abhiyan”. Please tell us a little bit more about the campaign and SuSanA’s contribution to it?

The Swacch Bharat mission aims to eliminate open defecation in India by 2019. Toilet construction, which is the main activity, has picked up since 2016 and is now in full swing in many states. Consequently, the country is making rapid progress on hardware. Yet hardware should not be our only focus. Indeed, the SuSanA India Chapter has played a crucial role in increasing the scope of our endeavours. It has tried to bring about a balance in the campaign between hardware and software issues by emphasising the need for behavioural change messages to encourage the government, companies and NGOs to focus on the software aspect of sanitation in addition to hardware. This need has been continuously highlighted in the thematic online discussions and regional events.

SuSanA: The India Sanitation Coalition serves as an umbrella for stakeholders in the field of sanitation. Who are your main collaboration partners with regard to your work for the SuSanA India Chapter?

The main collaboration partners are ISC members, which include companies and NGOs. The government is a major stakeholder as well and the list includes most senior government officials from the central and several state governments. Other major agencies engaged in sanitation such as UNICEF and the World Bank, and NGOs such as Ecosan Services Foundation, WaterAid, CARE, Save the Children, Oxfam, World Vision, Arghyam, Tata Trusts and Bharti Foundation are also members that are noteworthy.

SuSanA: As you mentioned, ISC has several task forces, including one on engaging the government. Can you elaborate on your work in this area? How has your work impacted the Government’s Clean India Mission, for instance?

Through ISC’s task force on government engagement, all of SuSanA’s synthesis documents have been presented to various government ministries. Additionally, they are circulated on the mailing list that includes officials from the Government of India and state governments.

White papers on the state of sanitation, corporate engagement and faecal sludge management have also been prepared, released and acknowledged by the Government. In addition, several ISC members have referred to these papers in their sanitation programmes and policies. These publications are based on the thematic discussions and secondary research. They have been prepared by the India Sanitation Coalition and disseminated actively by the Coalition at its meetings.

Thank you very much, Nitya, for taking the time to talk to us. We are looking forward to hearing more about your work with ISC and the SuSanA India Chapter.

Further Information

India Sanitation Coalition (ISC)
www.indiasanitationcoalition.org

SuSanA India Chapter
<http://www.susana.org/en/regional-chapters/indian-chapter>

Concept Note of the SuSanA India Chapter
http://www.susana.org/images/documents/Regional_Chapter/SuSanA-india-chapter-2015-08-18-v1.pdf

Thematic Discussion Series – India Chapter
<http://www.susana.org/en/knowledge-hub/regional-chapters/indian-chapter/thematic-discussion-series-indian-chapter>

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