Synopsis of
1st Community of Sanitation Practice Meeting:
Sanitation at the household level in low income countries

The morning comprised of a keynote speech followed by three topic based presentations.

The keynote speaker, Professor Duncan Mara, reviewed the financial and technical feasibilities of different sanitation technologies, the boundaries of their application and the very different challenges of the urban and rural environments. The implications of the short time frame in which to reach the MDG for sanitation was underlined; the question is, ‘can we learn to apply at scale what we already know?’

Subsequently, three presentations focused on the household level of sanitation covering i) investment decisions for household sanitation; ii) the implications of slum environments for sanitation; and iii) the impacts and dynamics of Community Led Total Sanitation at the household level. The complete presentations can be found on http://sanitationcommunity.grouphub.com.

Discussion points
The emergent themes from the presentations were discussed in more detail in the afternoon session. General discussion was followed by smaller group work where participants considered the role and responsibilities of the government in supporting sanitation at the household level. Groups were asked to bring forward suggestions or known examples of improvement on each point. The key elements are summarised below:

Motivation / Demand
We have a good understanding of the main drivers of demand for sanitation at the household level. We have tools to unpack the complexities of this to target specific segments of the population. A key challenge for rural sanitation is meeting the demand that has been created; in urban areas the diversity of the population and high tenancy rates requires consideration.

Suggestions on government role re: motivation & demand:
- Coherence of messages at policy / national level (example of rural sanitation program of Benin).
- Ensure effective communication channels across all stakeholders using existing networks of communication (example from CLTS: local people can be champions).
- Provide incentives through making land available to community / recognise informal settlements – 5 year schemes / halfway house options.
- A percentage of national sanitation budget goes to sanitation marketing.
• Reinforce the supply chain to link the customer demand that has been created to service delivery and availability.

**Technology**
Sanitation technologies remain a key issue. The morning presentations raised issues on the boundaries of technology application and how household sanitation technologies interface with the wider community. The broader supply chain of sanitation was discussed where there is a need for not only sanitation technology, but mechanisms to satisfy the demand that has been created.

Suggestions government role re: technology:
- Need to clarify roles & responsibilities of government in the sanitation supply chain.
- The central government’s role as providing minimum technology specifications, rather than prescriptive guidelines.
- The government can support the supply chain by ensuring availability of materials, technicians’ training, quality assurance of household latrine construction (Uganda example).

**The development time lag**
There is a need for realism in approaching the MDG for sanitation. If we are to meet this objective, we are, in effect, restricted to the options that are available to us at present. The time lag associated with innovation, adaptation, mainstreaming of new ideas and effecting behaviour change must be considered in sanitation developments.

Suggestions on government role re: time lag:
- Incremental planning frameworks – how to survive today, & build for tomorrow.
- Build upon reality of today’s practices – improvements which reach a majority of people (example for the short term of improving bucket latrines, such that they can be emptied more hygienically)

**Cost / financing**
Financial models which match the diverse characteristics of urban and rural challenges are also required. A key question remains how to provide access to credit & where to target subsidies. Decentralisation of responsibility without authority is especially relevant to finance.

Suggestions on government role re: cost / financing:
- Tax breaks for businesses involved in sanitation to encourage entrepreneurs.

**Institutional fragmentation**
Who to go to as there is not always a bespoke sanitation ministry and there is a lack of government priority for sanitation. Who is ultimately accountable for sanitation? Is this an opportunity as there are multiple sectors to work through?

http://sanitationcommunity.grouphub.com
for a login account or more details please email p.c.scott@lboro.ac.uk
Decentralisation
Responsibility without associated authority, lack of resources, (human, financial). diversity of skills needed for sanitation

Actions

Suggested topics for discussion at next CoP meeting
- Financing and investment via IFIs → identify other sectors to take part, eg Micro Finance.
- Supply chain issues: how to satisfy demand that has been created.
- Technology improvement / development.

Follow-up Actions
- Dissemination of the outcome and findings of COP # 1
- Develop agenda for CoP # 2
- Action plan
- Identify, contact with other, related sectors - our missing skill sets.
- Widening the YP scope [in terms of numbers and institutional base] and ensure we focus on these.
- Discussion web platform.
- Letter to Gareth Thomas MP (DFID).