

Inclusive Urban Sanitation FAQ on Behaviour Change

What do we mean by behaviour change?

The goal of a behaviour change program, intervention or activity can be to motivate a particular group of people to adopt a new behaviour (thereby creating demand for a service or product) and/or abandon an existing behaviour. It can also be aimed at getting a particular group of people to maintain an existing behaviour, to practice it more consistently or to do it correctly.

What are the behaviours of interest for urban sanitation?

At the household level, some of the behaviours of interest are to connect to a sewer, improve a latrine, purchase a toilet and use it systematically, cease to defecate in the open or use a flying toilet, empty the septic tank when necessary and promptly pay the utility bill. Other behaviours can include correctly disposing of children's faeces into a latrine and washing hands with soap after using a toilet or before eating.

What are information campaigns?

Information campaigns, also called awareness-raising campaigns or Information, Education and Communication (IEC), focus on disseminating information, as the name suggests. The underlying assumption is that the audience targeted by the campaign will act or adopt the desired behaviour once they have the appropriate knowledge about its benefits.

Why are information campaigns not always effective or sufficient?

We know from personal experience that knowing and doing are not always fully aligned. For example, most people know they should wash their hands with soap after going to the toilet, yet the proportion of people who do it systematically is low, even in resource-rich settings. In the UK for example, a 2015 survey of 100,000 people revealed that 62% of men and 40% of women do not wash their hands after going to the bathroom. An information campaign on the importance of handwashing may increase knowledge but have limited impact on behaviour.

What types of behaviour change interventions are more effective?

For behaviour change interventions to be effective, they need to be tailored to the audience they are targeting. In particular, interventions need to address any barriers the target audience may have in changing their behaviour. This can include specific knowledge such as prices, poor cash liquidity, lack of access to desludging services, absence of affordable products that confer the desired benefits, lack of confidence, understanding an invoice, or competing household expenditures. Effective campaigns also recognize the drivers that can motivate behaviour change. These could include achieving a higher social status, complying with perceived norms, being good parents, reducing unpleasant smells or being an effective provider for the household. Most research shows that the main benefit or impact of improved sanitation behaviour, such as improved health, is rarely the most important driver.

What are possible sources of information to diagnose the barriers and drivers?

Qualitative research through focus group discussions or quantitative methods such as household surveys can shed light on the barriers and drivers for a particular behaviour in a given population. In the absence of specifically commissioned research, organisations can draw on national surveys (such as Demographic and Health Surveys), previous studies conducted by partner organisations, or a literature review.

What are possible approaches to changing behaviours?

Approaches will depend on the barriers identified, and may include communication campaigns, user-centred product development, marketing, nudges and microfinance to name a few. It is recommended to tap into the right type of expertise needed. The UK's [Behavioural Insights Team](#) (also known as the Nudge Unit) stresses that approaches need to make the behaviour easy (by removing barriers), attractive (socially or aesthetically for example), social and timely.

Where can I get more information?

A good online resource on social and behaviour change communication can be found at <https://healthcommcapacity.org/collecting-and-curating-sbcc-resources-and-tools/>. Examples of sanitation marketing and handwashing interventions can be found respectively at <http://wsp.org/toolkit/toolkit-home> and <https://www.wsp.org/hwvs-toolkit/hwvs-tk-home>.

What types of organization do I need to contract to help develop a behaviour change program? How to specify the work?

Sourcing the right type of expertise will improve the likelihood of achieving good results. Careful consideration should be given to developing appropriate terms of reference. The sanitation marketing online toolkit listed earlier contains a few templates which can be tailored to specific needs. Generally speaking, market research firms are often well suited to conduct household studies. Advertising agencies are often qualified to develop social and behaviour change communication campaigns. However, it should be kept in mind that availability, capacity and level of experience of qualified consultants and organizations vary from country to country and from year to year. Some degree of handholding is to be expected and strongly encouraged.