



Uganda Sanitation for Health Activity (USHA)

Integrating BRAC Community Health Promoters into the Sanitation Supply Chain to Increase Toilet Sales

Overview

- The Government of Uganda assigns the responsibility for investment in onsite sanitation services to households. A Market Based Sanitation (MBS) approach encourages household investment in desirable and affordable toilets delivered by private sector actors. An effective MBS approach can help advance Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.2, the achievement of sanitation and hygiene.
- USAID's Uganda Sanitation for Health Activity (USHA) catalyzed private sector actors and social enterprises at all levels to manufacture and distribute affordable sanitation products that met household needs and preferences sustainably. USHA consortium partner BRAC collaborated with Lixil and Nice House of Plastics (NHOP) to promote and sell SATO products through its network of 500 Community Health Promoters across 13 branches in eight USHA districts.
- During the period of collaboration, BRAC CHPs improved the sanitation status of 206,960 people through the sale of SATO products. CHPs and masons also increased their incomes through sale and installation of the SATO products.

This brief describes BRAC's approach to promote access to basic sanitation in partnership with Lixil/NHOP between August 2018 and June 2022.

Background

USHA's consortium partner BRAC runs a social enterprise model to deliver essential medicines, family planning services, child growth monitoring, fortified foods for children and vulnerable populations, energy saving cookstoves, briquettes, nzas well as other products in rural areas. BRAC carefully identifies, recruits, trains and supports Community Health Promoters (CHPs) – an all-women team of community actors who stock and sell these products to households within their communities. The CHPs are microentrepreneurs who earn a profit on each product sold.

Lixil's Safe Toilets (SATO) is a social sanitation products enterprise aimed at increasing household access to safe sanitation. SATO products, which include the SATO pan, SATO flex, and SATO stool, can be fitted onto new or existing latrines to improve user experience and safety, as well as the SATO tap, a simple and affordable handwashing device. The SATO latrine products eliminate odor, flies, and other insects, while providing safety for children. Lixil/SATO entered the Ugandan market in 2016 with the

Lessons Learned

- Training in basic marketing skills, national promotional campaigns, the introduction of incentives helped increase Community Health Promoter participation in the program.
- Counterfeit products affected SATO sales but was countered by promotional campaigns, branding SATO sales outlets, and branded CHP identification.
- Training masons and then linking them to the BRAC CHPs increased product uptake and installation.
- The SATO market remains largely undeveloped outside of the USHA districts. There are opportunities for market growth and expansion.
- There are opportunities for government and development partners to channel resources to support these efforts. Specifically, community-based organizations engaged in WASH promotion can collaborate with masons, pit diggers, hardware stores, brick and sand sellers to bring sanitation related products and services closer to households.

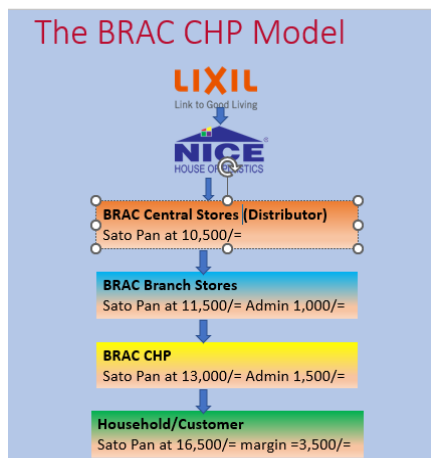
products imported from Bangladesh. To reduce product costs and ensure sustainability of the business model, Lixil partnered with Nice House of Plastics (NHOP) in Kampala. NHOP manufactures a wide range of consumer, agricultural and industrial products. Lixil signed a Production Agreement with NHOP in 2016 for the manufacture and distribution of SATO products.

The BRAC CHP-led Model to Promote and Sell SATO Products

In August 2018, USHA launched a collaboration with Lixil as part of a broader effort to improve household access to improved sanitation. In late 2018 BRAC piloted the stocking and selling SATO products through its network of CHPs in 13 branches across eight districts.¹ A total of 500 CHPs were selected for the pilot and completed a four-day training covering sanitation and hygiene, community engagement, sanitation promotion and marketing, as well as understanding of the SATO product range and functionality. USHA connected the CHPs to trained masons in the project areas under each branch’s jurisdiction.



As a distributor, BRAC aggregated demand to purchase SATO products in bulk at distributor prices. BRAC branches, with input from the CHPs, submitted SATO demand plans to BRAC Regional Offices, who then aggregated the demand plans for the BRAC Head office, which procured SATO products from NHOP. Once delivered to the BRAC Central Stores in Kampala, the Logistics Team dispatched the products to the Regional Stores, and subsequently to the Branch stores. To make the model sustainable, an administrative charge was levied at each level within BRAC. The CHPs buy SATO products in cash from their local BRAC branches and sell these products to households within their communities at a profit. To ease community entry and mobilization, the CHPs are introduced to the Local Council One (LC1) leadership as well as the Village Health Teams² (VHTs).



¹ Buwama (Mpigi); Nyendo (Masaka); Kinoni (Lwengo); Kaliisizo (Kyotera); Kaliro (Kaliro); Buwenge, Buyala, Bugembe (Jinja); Buikwe, Lugazi, Nkokonjeru, Njeru (Buikwe); Kitgum (Kitgum)

² VHTs are community resource volunteers who act as the first point of contact for health-related issues in their communities. VHTs are considered as Health Centre Ones in the Ministry of Health Structure in Uganda.

CHPs promoted and sold SATO products using three mutually reinforcing mechanisms: (i) door-to-door household visits, (ii) community events including weekly markets, participation in national day celebrations (Sanitation Week, World Toilet Day) and (iii) targeted sales events organized by BRAC staff, such as community promotions and market drives, in urban areas, densely populated locations and big markets days. The CHPs then link buyers to trained masons for installation of the SATO products.

Accelerating Promotion and Sale of SATO Products

BRAC, Lixil and NHOP undertook several joint activities to support the CHPs to promote and sell SATO products, and expanding access (especially in hard-to-reach areas):

Incentives for High-Performing CHPs: Lixil provided performance-based incentives to high-performing CHPs. For every 10 SATO products sold by a CHP in a month, Lixil provided a free SATO pan that the CHP could sell for additional profit. This incentive helped increase in CHP participation from 35% at the start of the pilot to over 90% at the end of the pilot.

Incentives for High-Performing Branch Teams: BRAC established monetary incentives for the best performing branch teams. Targets were defined for each branch based on the number of CHPs attached to the branch. Branches that achieved 85% or more of its SATO sales and CHP participation targets received a financial incentive which was shared among the branch team members.

DATA-Driven Support: USHA introduced a data-driven support mechanism whereby CHPs were trained to upload their SATO sales into ONA, an online database program that allows for offline sales data capture daily. After data collection, the CHPs upload their data onto the central database, which were reviewed by the BRAC Project and Program Managers.

Monthly and Weekly Team Review Meetings: Monthly, Branch teams met the CHPs to review performance, share experiences, as well as discuss emerging challenges and find solutions. Weekly, Program and Project Managers also met to review performance, discuss emerging challenges and share solutions and experiences.

Joint Promotional Campaigns: To increase product awareness and uptake, USHA, Lixil, NHOP and BRAC jointly developed and ran a series of integrated campaigns on radio, social media and TV, and print media. The campaigns amplified the SATO as an available product to improve household sanitation and benefits accrued from product use. The promotion campaign included the following:

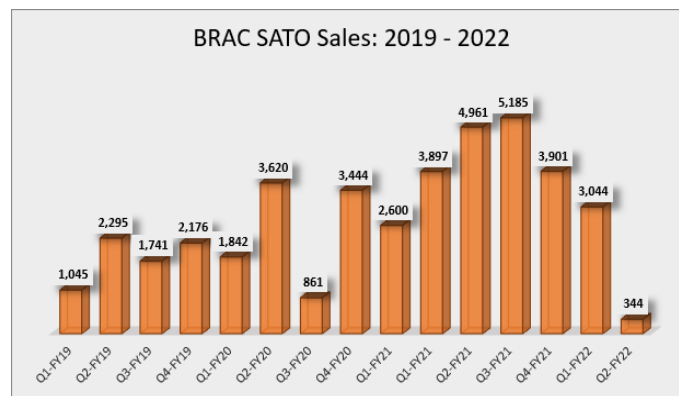
- Brochures, flyers and do-it-yourself installation guides were printed and provided to the CHPs to increase uptake and ease installation.
- “The Sons and Daughters of the Soil – SODAS” campaign appealed to working urbanites to improve sanitation facilities in their rural villages with SATO products.
- Incentives to end user customers who bought and installed a SATO product during the campaign, including SATO-branded jerricans for handwashing and/or cleaning the SATO, SATO-branded exercise books, as well as pens and keyholders. SATO sales in Q2 FY20 immediately after the launch of the SODAS campaign increased nearly 100% before dipping due to Covid-19 movement restrictions.
- USHA supported the Water and Environment Media Network (WEMNET) to undertake a media tour of project activities and impact. The tour captured stories, testimonies and experiences of select district, sub-county and local leaders, value chain actors, implementing partners, as well as the CHPs. The memories were shared with Lixil for future campaigns.

Overall Results and Impact of the Collaboration

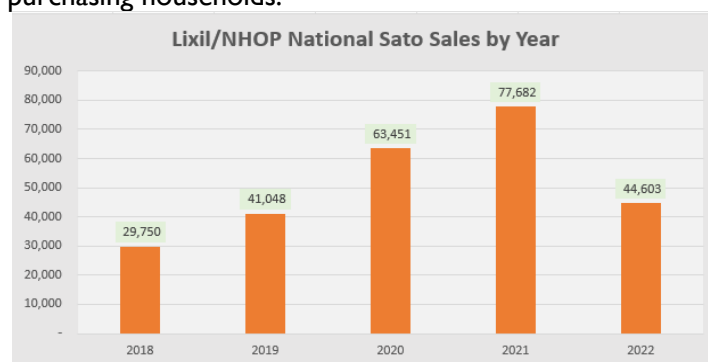
Expanded SATO Distribution Network: At the start of the collaboration, NHOP had only eight SATO product distributors in Uganda, four of which were in Kampala Capital City. BRAC greatly expanded the distribution of SATO products through its 13 branches in 8 districts and end mile point of sales through the 500 CHPs. Additionally, USHA onboarded 227 hardware stores in 20 districts to stock SATO products in their communities. This increase helped reduce product prices as SATO products became readily available in local communities.

Increased CHP (all women) Incomes and Assets: Most CHPs reported increased household incomes from SATO profits. Moreover, many CHPs reported community recognition and improved status from promoting and selling products that enhance household sanitation.

Increased National SATO Awareness and Sales: From the first quarter of 2019 through the end of the fourth quarter of 2022, 41,392 SATO products were sold in the 8 USHA districts by the 500-BRAC CHPs supported by 13 BRAC branches. This provided improved sanitation for 206,960 people.³ Moreover, SATO sales through BRAC account for 55% of total sales in the USHA districts, and 18% of national sales. The start of the SODAS campaign in Q1 FY20 led to the biggest increase in sales during Q3 FY21. However, sales declined sharply during the second quarter of FY22, which also marked the end of the BRAC sub-contract.



Overall, national SATO sales also increased during the period. At the start of the collaboration, national annual SATO sales in 2018 were 29,750. The increase is attributable to the additional distribution points (500 CHPs and over 230 hardware stores that comprise the USHA network), joint national promotional campaigns which increased product awareness and penetration, as well as training of masons who readily do the installation for purchasing households.



³ An installed SATO product in a household on average serves 5 people.

Lessons Learned

- CHP activity was tied to sanitation promotion and marketing skills. Training in basic marketing skills, national promotional campaigns, the introduction of the CHP incentives, as well as collaboration with local leadership, helped increase CHP participation.
- Counterfeit products of inferior quality and lower cost in local markets affected SATO sales, but was countered by promotional campaigns, branding SATO sales outlets, and branded CHP identification.
- Inconsistent product quality including varying color shades, missing parts (especially noise-reducing pins), as well as defective products was addressed through regular meetings and interaction with NHOP and Lixil, as well as a policy to return and replace defective products. Moreover, more robust inspection and quality control have reduced defects and product quality variations.
- The onset of Covid-19 and resultant lockdowns limited movement and product sales. BRAC countered this using commercial transport motorcycles which remained operational, to deliver products to the CHPs. CHPs were also able to move house to house within their operational areas.
- As SATO was a new product, it required consistent and persistent experiential marketing approaches such as person to person marketing to allow customers to interact with and experience the product. Household visits by the CHPs registered more SATO sales due to regular interactions. However, regular support for CHPs requires greater investment and was heavily subsidized. With the subsidy ending at the close of the collaboration in April 2022, sales through this model drastically declined.
- Training of masons and attaching them to the BRAC CHPs increased product uptake and installation. Trained masons made the decision to invest and install toilets much easier for households.
- The SATO market remains largely undeveloped outside of the USHA districts. Building on previous campaigns and promotion there are opportunities for market growth and expanding the SATO product line beyond the current product penetration and coverage.
- SATO is a new sanitation technology in the market and best driven and delivered using private sector approaches for sustainability. There are opportunities for government and development partners to channel resources to support private sector actors to bring products and services closer to households. Specifically, community-based organizations engaged in WASH promotion can collaborate with masons, pit diggers, hardware stores, brick and sand sellers to bring sanitation related products and services closer to households, at more affordable prices. Moreover, government, especially at the local level, can provide an enabling environment and render support in promotion.

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