



Project Status Report

Date: 30 April 2004

Community Name: Mettupatti

Location: Tiruchirappalli District,
Tamil Nadu, India

Population: 397

Project Status: Construction completed; project evaluation in progress

Former Water Source: Before the start of this project, the 397 residents of the rural community of Mettupatti shared one handpump. The pump was supplied by an overhead tank, which was not cleaned or chlorinated properly and did not supply nearly enough water. Intermittent power failures caused water from the pump to be sporadic. Inadequate drainage surrounding the handpump caused grey water to stagnate on the streets, creating a breeding ground for disease-carrying mosquitoes. In order to meet their daily needs, women often walked long distances to fetch water from unprotected sources and community members used water from the irrigation canals to bathe and to wash their clothes. Open defecation was practiced regularly, and waterborne diseases such as cholera, dysentery, and typhoid were common.



Project Objectives:

The primary objectives of this project are to provide safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities for the families living in Mettupatti. The project places a strong emphasis on building the capacity of community-based organizations (CBOs) by having them play an active role in creating sustainable water and sanitation solutions through “people-centric” promotional activities in the community.

Specific Objectives

- Provide safe drinking water by drilling and installing India Mark II handpumps
- Construct low-cost household latrines in every home
- Train and support CBOs such as the Women’s Self Help Groups (WSHGs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and Village-level Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSC)
- Construct School Sanitary Blocks in the primary school

- Form School Health Clubs in the primary school
- Promote good hygiene behaviors

Activities Performed:

Participatory Rural Appraisal

During the first stage of this project, our Partner Organization (PO) performed a *Participatory Rural Appraisal* to help community members understand the benefits of a sanitation program and the importance of having 100% community participation. This unique approach to community organization has proven effective in maintaining community excitement and support for the project



Members of the Children's Self Help Group sing hygiene songs during their meetings. They can be heard singing these songs throughout the village even when they are not in their meetings.

by creating a sense of project ownership within the community. Because the residents see themselves as owning the decision to improve their village, they therefore own the all improvements. They are committed to seeing the project to its full completion and to maintaining the new system.

As part of the Participatory Rural Appraisal, our PO arranged a community meeting. This meeting was attended by our PO's director and key personnel and community members, such as important village leaders, schoolteachers, and the former president of the panchayat (village). Other attendees included members of the WSHGs, Children's Self Help Groups (CSHG), and interested community members. Each person, regardless of social standing, actively

participated in the meeting. This first meeting was crucial to the success of the project. It gave our PO the chance to focus the discussion on the current impact that unsanitary practices had on the community, the environment, the water sources, and families. The result was the community members had a clear picture of the current situation, the possible future situation, and a feeling that they were actively involved in the project process.

Community members take field trips to successful projects

Educational tours were arranged for members of the VWSC and SHGs in Mettupatti. During these tours, members visited successful projects in neighboring villages. Those who attended were then asked to compare the cleanliness of the neighboring villages to their own. Upon returning to Mettupatti, these residents acted as motivators for their neighbors, encouraging participation because the project would lead to outcomes of which they could be proud.



The Children’s Self Help Group maintains the new handpump and tends to the garden that serves as a soak pit for used water from the handpump.

Children’s Self Help Groups (CSHG’s)

The CSHG’s in Mettupatti have been especially successful in involving children in the project. As with the WSHG’s, the CSHG’s meet every week. Their meetings focus on saving money and making credit transactions. However, they also spend time talking about hygiene and sanitation; and our PO field staff teaches new hygiene lessons and songs. During one activity, the children compared observations about their homes and school. They also identified children and elders who still performed open defecation and other unsanitary practices. Once these residents were identified, the CSHG’s worked to motivate these people to construct and use sanitary facilities.

The CSHG’s also performed many tasks for the community. They built soak pits near the overhead tanks and public taps to ensure safe disposal of wastewater. They have continued to maintain clean surroundings at the school by cleaning the toilets, fetching water, and maintaining the garden near the water source.

Project Monitoring

WaterPartners’ Executive Director, Gary White, visited Mettupatti during this reporting period. While visiting, he had conversations with the schoolchildren, the SHG’s leaders, and the VWSC about their progress and impressions of the program. He also met with our PO to discuss the progress and preliminary evaluation of the project.

Meeting Objectives:

During this reporting period, Mettupatti achieved its goal of “Total Sanitation Coverage.” Each household in the village now has a latrine, public sanitation blocks have been installed, a ban was proclaimed on open defecation, and the community’s new water system was completed. For the health and sanitation component of the project, our PO held community education sessions on latrine use, latrine maintenance, basic sanitation principles, and hygiene education. Special trainings were also held for members of the VWSC to teach operation, maintenance, and repair procedures for the new handpumps, ensuring that



White visits one of the newly completed sanitation blocks with the Women’s Self Help Group

the community can fix problems as they arise.

Throughout the project, women in the community have developed a stronger voice and have



Members of the Women's Self Help Group show White one of the new handpumps.

become more confident and empowered to make decisions. In charge of the loan fund used to build new toilets, members of the WSHGs were given a new role as leaders in the community. They played an active role in funding the construction and project completion. The WSHGs along with the CSHGs proved very effective at improving hygiene behavior throughout Mettupatti. Members of the WSHGs and CSHGs became community educators and taught others residents about proper hygiene.

Since the start of the project, toilet use has increased, as has hand washing after toilet use and before eating. Usage of the new handpump has increased as community

members learn the benefits of clean water and the dangers of contaminated water.

There has been an increased awareness of illness during the project and community members understand that adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene habits are imperative to keeping a family healthy. Children now attend school more regularly due to reduced illness. Families can properly prepare oral rehydration solution and are more aware of additional treatments for dysentery.

Reasons for Success:

The most important reason for success was that the project was not started until each community member agreed with the project goals. Our PO took the community on village walks to explore the dangerous and contaminated areas, and field staff educated community members on the causes of common illnesses and that handpumps and sanitation systems, along with the community commitment, would reduce those diseases. Members were invested in ensuring that everyone would participate and worked to convince reluctant community members that the benefits would be worth the expense.

This dedication to the project carried over to the actual construction. Beneficiaries worked diligently to develop their water system and to



This project ensured a safe sanitation system for everyone in the village no matter what their house looked like or what their economic status was. This woman stands outside her new latrine.

build a latrine for every home. Community members helped their neighbors, especially the elders, to ensure the completion of toilets in a timely manner and a high-quality way. Now community members are encouraging one another to pay back the loan fund.

Another pivotal factor was the effective use of CSHGs. Children were in charge of maintaining the toilets and water supply in their school and teaching their peers and elders about appropriate hygiene methods. Including the children as “health ambassadors” offered repetition of field staff messages and encouraged children to invest in their community, which will ensure the sustainability of the project.

Problems Encountered:

None reported.

Upcoming Activities:

Our PO is currently completing its preliminary evaluation of the project, including a follow-up survey in Mettupatti to quantify water system and latrine use by beneficiaries and to assess the quality of the operation and maintenance performed by the VWSC.