



## **Behavior Change in WASH Programs From Barriers and Access to Application and Use**

USAID's Water Strategy Discussion, "Strate-Chat" Series  
FHI 360 Globe Theater – June 27, 2013

[USAID's Water and Development Strategy](#) emphasizes the promotion of behavior change in water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs. Investments in infrastructure are necessary, but insufficient to guarantee health benefits. Because behavior change requires communities and households to change mindsets and habits, it is one of the most difficult challenges in WASH programming. Together with World Vision and the USAID-funded WASHplus project, USAID hosted this discussion on the global lessons learned in behavior change efforts. [Watch the video.](#)

### **Panelists**

- Christian Holmes, Global Water Coordinator, [USAID](#)
- Merri Weinger, Environmental Health Team Lead, [USAID](#) –[View Presentation](#)
- Ron Clemmer, Senior Technical Advisor, [World Vision](#) –[View Presentation](#)
- Orlando Hernandez, Senior M&E Advisor, [WASHplus](#) –[View Presentation](#)

### **Key Messages from Event:**

#### **USAID's Water and Development Strategy: An Integrated Approach**

The [Water and Development Strategy](#) launched in May sets out two overarching objectives: improve global health and strengthen global food security through USAID-supported water programs. The Strategy also emphasizes the need for increased investments and expanded attention to sanitation to translate into broader health and economic benefits.

#### **Strategic Principles to Behavior Change**

The goal of behavior change is to move someone to a place where they think, feel, and then act differently in a sustainable manner. It works when there is a focus on interacting with the audience, not one-way communication. One cannot assume that incorrect behaviors persist because people do not know the correct behavior. There are other factors at work and knowledge is often not the controlling determinant. It is important to remember that gender matters in this type of programming and successful programs must have sustainability strategies. In Ethiopia, a WASH program led to a drop in open defecation from 69 to 44 percent between 2008 and 2010. Factors that contributed to the change were participation in community led total sanitation training, household visits from a community outreach worker to negotiate improvements in sanitation and hygiene conditions or practices, and regular follow up visits. It was noted latrine ownership came to be viewed positively as contributing to the communities health and development.



## Behavior Change Must be Affordable, Accessible and Aspirational

Behavior change programming must respond to the needs and aspirations of clients. It is more than sanitation and hygiene promotion and messaging. Enabling products are essential for behavior change as is building capacity for sanitation and hygiene. Change occurs in the area where affordability, accessibility and aspiration intersect. A sanitation-marketing program in Cambodia saw the sale of 17,424 latrines, an 8 percent coverage increase in 16 months, many in poorer households. This program, which was designed to respond to the wants and needs of users, provided 29 businesses with an average annual income increase of 259 percent.



### For more information, please visit the following:

- [USAID Water Office website](#)
- [World Vision](#)
- [WASHplus](#)

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