



Improving Small Town Sanitation in Jamaica— A Success Story

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Sanitation in small towns is a growing and important problem. Very few small towns in Latin America have managed to provide sustainable sanitation services. This can be attributed to multiple factors including a lack of demand for sanitation, an inadequate policy framework, and limited institutional capacity to effectively manage sanitation systems. Sanitation services in small towns require formal management arrangements, a legal basis for ownership and the ability to expand to meet growing demand.

With support from USAID's Latin America and the Caribbean Bureau, EHP developed a methodology to be used in the development of sanitation plans for small towns in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The methodology included:

1. Determination of local officials' interest
2. Introductory public meetings
3. Preliminary data collection
4. Identification and costing of the range of feasible technical options
5. Discussion of feasible technical options with municipal stakeholders and households
6. Detailed analysis of selected technical options
7. Public consultation to discuss detailed options
8. Decision by the municipality on which option to select
9. Writing of the sustainable sanitation plan
10. Follow-up

Field Testing the Methodology

The EHP methodology was field tested¹ in Jamaica with funding from USAID/Water Team. In Jamaica, EHP contracted a local NGO, Construction Resource and Development Center (CRDS), to develop a community sanitation plan using the methodology.



White Horses—a small town in Jamaica (population: 2,500)—was identified by the Jamaican Ministry of Water and Housing (MOWH) and USAID/Jamaica for the field testing. White Horses was already slated to receive water under the IADB funded Rural Water Project (RWP), but it was believed that an improved water supply system without the inclusion of proper sewer and sanitation systems would result in “wastewater running through the community” and was not likely to bring about maximum health and sanitation benefits. In addition, from the perspective of the MOWH and USAID, the development of the sanitation plan would strengthen the existing implementation framework of the rural water project.

¹ In addition to Jamaica, the EHP methodology was also field tested in Ecuador and Panama.



Developing the White Horses Sanitation Plan

The CRDS team's findings on topography, geology, potential for financing proposed options, the community's ability to pay and preferences ruled out large collection systems. A Sanitation Plan was developed based on largely traditional, on-plot, sanitation solutions— i.e., improved



latrines with vent pipes that would not require water, flush systems using septic tanks, etc. Additionally, based on a community

organization very determined to manage and monitor their own sanitation solutions, operations/maintenance of the sanitation options, for the most part, was identified as the responsibility of each household and the community organization under the plan.

Core principles for the Sanitation Plan development included:

- Equitable, town-wide solutions that expand coverage to as many residents as possible
- Financially sustainable services with recurrent costs paid by user fees
- Local sanitation service provision
- Community consultation to ensure that communities support the plan— i.e., households should demonstrate willingness to pay for the recurrent costs involved in operating and maintaining a sanitation system
- Health and environmental concerns addressed explicitly in order to maximize the benefits of sanitation systems

Next Steps

Through a series of dissemination workshops, the Plan served as a basis to seek further funding needed for implementation, construction of the identified sanitation systems and training of the White Horses community to operate and maintain the sanitation systems.

Overall, three community workshops were implemented. Additionally, two mini-forums—one aimed at donors, stakeholders and technical specialists and another targeting Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) promoters were organized. WASH promoters are community members who volunteered to spearhead action plans and public education sessions highlighting the importance of sanitation and hygiene in the context of the Rural Water Project. Lastly, a final all stakeholders workshop brought together all the partners, and a framework for implementation of the Sanitation Plan was established.

Outcome

USAID/LAC, USAID/Water Team, and USAID/Jamaica pooled together resources to invest in the development and field testing of EHP's methodology for developing small-town sanitation plans. USAID/Jamaica additionally succeeded in leveraging more funds from other donors—the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica and the UN Environment Program—in addition to in-kind labor from a committed community. White Horses Sanitation Plan is an example of a success story initiated by USAID investment in an innovative methodology for small-town sanitation that influenced other donor investment and community interest and commitment.

Reference: *EHP Strategic Report 3. Improving Sanitation in Small Towns in Latin America and the Caribbean: Practical Methodology for Designing a Sustainable Sanitation Plan*. The report can be downloaded from <http://www.ehproject.org>.

To request a hard copy of the report, please email info@ehproject.org.