



# Using formative research on disability to influence WASH approaches in Bhutan

Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All (SSH4A)

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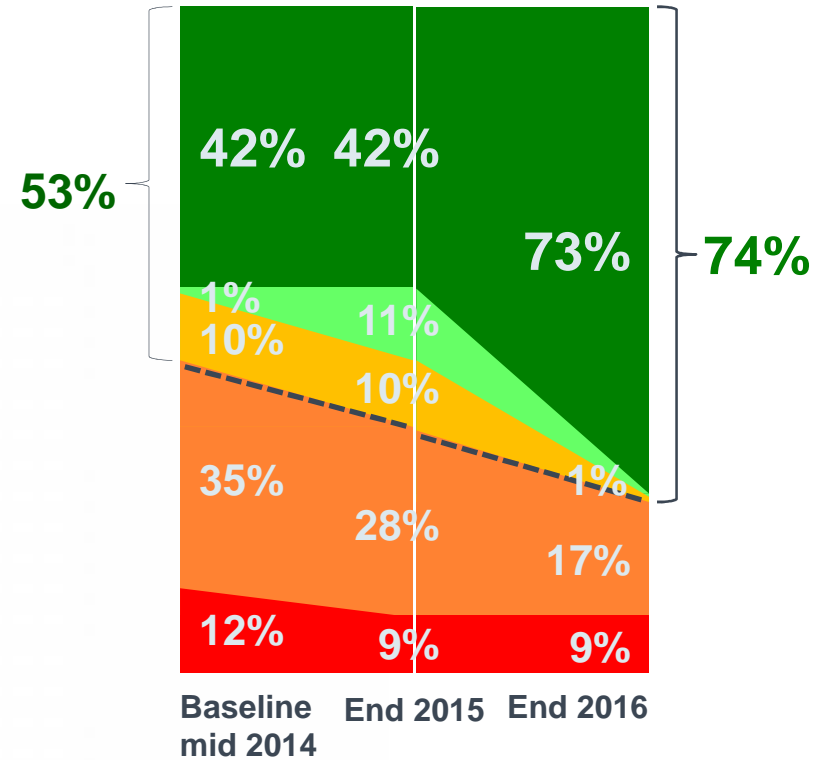
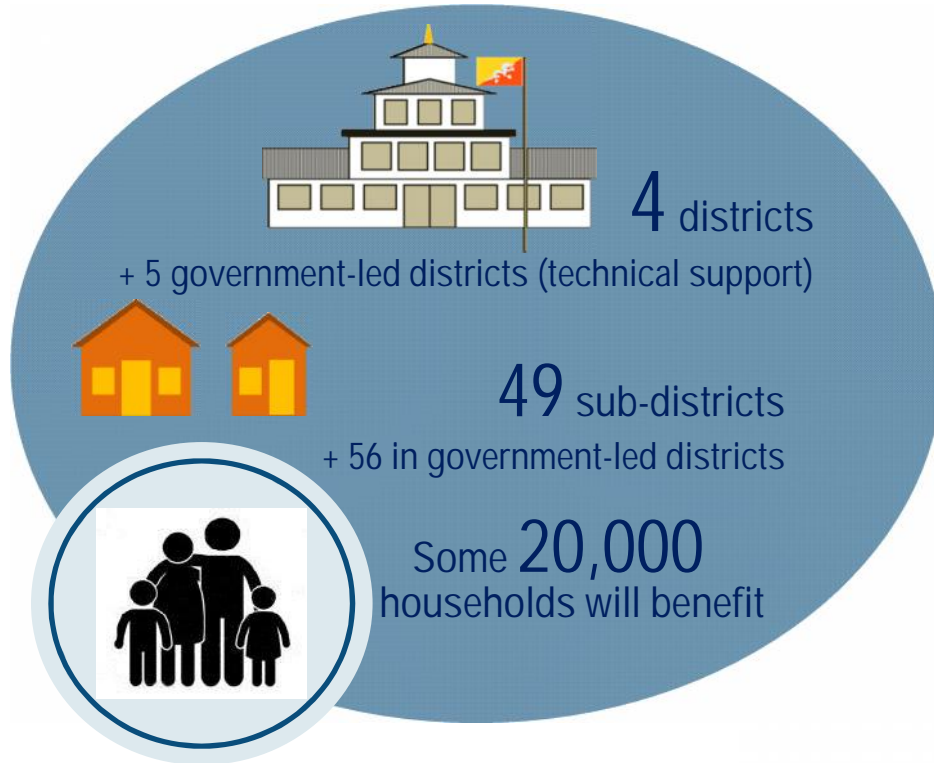
The CS WASH Fund is supported by the Australian Government and managed by Palladium International Pty Ltd.

# Context

- The Royal Government of Bhutan is currently scaling up a national Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Programme based on SNV's SSH4A approach.
- Basic sanitation coverage is high, the focus is not on ODF but on improved, safely managed and universal access
- National targets of >85% improved access by 2018
- Programme has reached 9 of 20 districts.
- Households are remote and scattered, often mountainous terrain with limited access and challenging supply chains.



# Snapshot 2014-2016



- L4 = Environmentally safe toilet
- L3 = Improved toilet + fly management
- L2 = Improved toilet
- = Benchmark
- L1 = Sharing / Unimproved toilet
- L0 = No toilet (Open Defecation)

## But what about ... for ALL?

- Disability is an emerging subject of national interest in Bhutan, and one about which much is still unknown.
- SNV/PHED conducted the first study to explore the hygiene and sanitation experiences of people with disabilities in rural Bhutan.
- It was also the first inclusive study to include people with disabilities (PWDs) as part of the study team in Bhutan.
- The study was designed to generate in-depth data that can be used to ensure the programme is accessible to and inclusive of people with disabilities. This outcome aims to contribute to achieving the programme goal of *increasing the use of improved and **equitable** sanitation services in Bhutan.*

# Methodology

**“Nothing about us without us.”**

**Participatory discussions held:**

20 Focus group discussions (FGD)

23 In-depth interviews

Accessibility and Safety Audits of toilets  
(at 14 rural households, 6 basic health units  
and 6 schools and monastic institutions)

57 Key informant interviews (KII) with officials and leaders at districts

**Fieldwork: October 25 – November 9 2015**



# Key findings

## 1) Environmental Barriers:

“I have to crawl to the toilet by myself.”

## 2) Institutional Barriers:

- lack of resource allocation
- lack of reliable data collection on disability.
- “We do not collect data on disability.”

## 3) Attitudinal Barriers:

*“Tshey Hey Mey Ley”*

*(meaning disability is a curse from the past life’s sin)*

“we don’t know enough about disability”

## OVERALL FINDING:

There are multiple systemic factors plus deep-rooted discrimination towards people with disabilities preventing their access to adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities in rural Bhutan.

*Urgent action is needed to start promoting their inclusion.*

## *Key recommendations of the research*

- Mainstreaming of disability inclusion in the RSAHP together with targeted interventions:
  - Disability-awareness training in all stakeholder groups.
  - Empowerment work is needed with people with disabilities.
  - Disseminate accessible toilet and hand-washing designs to all key stakeholders
  - Consultation meetings should be held in locations accessible to people with disabilities.
  - Systematic data and monitoring on disability
  - Resources must be allocated

# Outcomes of the formative research?

- **Strategic Partnerships** with local DPO (Disability Persons' Organisation) such as Ability Bhutan Society to influence the creation of an enabling environment for inclusion in WASH.
- **Continuous sensitization and awareness raising** for the WASH stakeholders (during important decision making forums such as the WASH Cluster meetings, sensitization meetings, inception meetings, etc).





# How well is your approach working?

- Strategic Partnerships with local DPO and the continuous sensitization of the WASH decision makers is working well.
- DPO is now part of the WASH decision-making forum and also involved in the National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy Development process (as a task force member); involved in the RSAHP Strategy document development (resulting in a specific disability objective).
- At the 2<sup>nd</sup> National WASH Cluster Meeting 2017 stakeholders have adopted a focus on working towards an inclusive WASH theme “*Enhanced Social Inclusion in WASH*” with a particular focus on disability.
- This is a direct result of the formative research and sensitization efforts but much more needs to be done.

# Social Inclusion in WASH =

Travelling together: leave no-one behind



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BAQWE



SNV

unicef  
for every child



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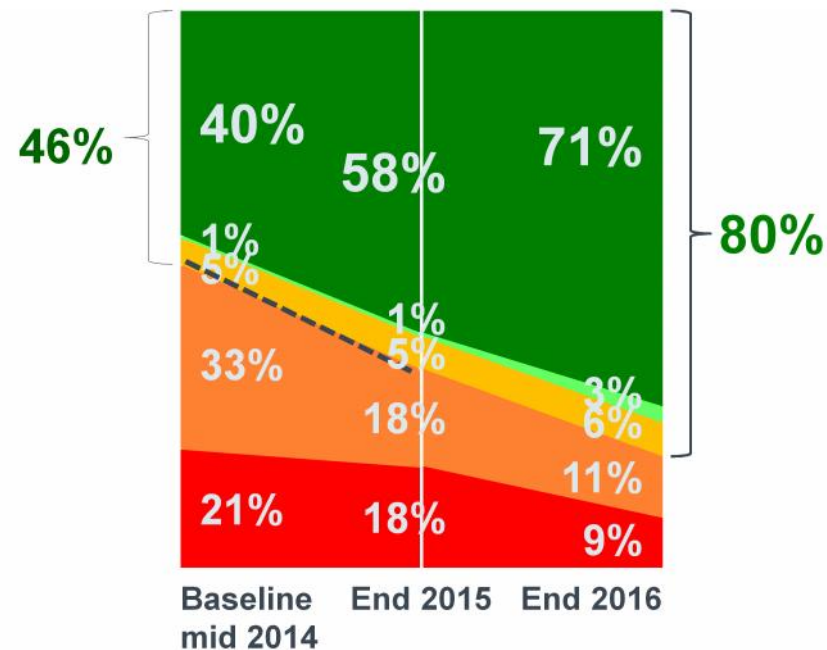
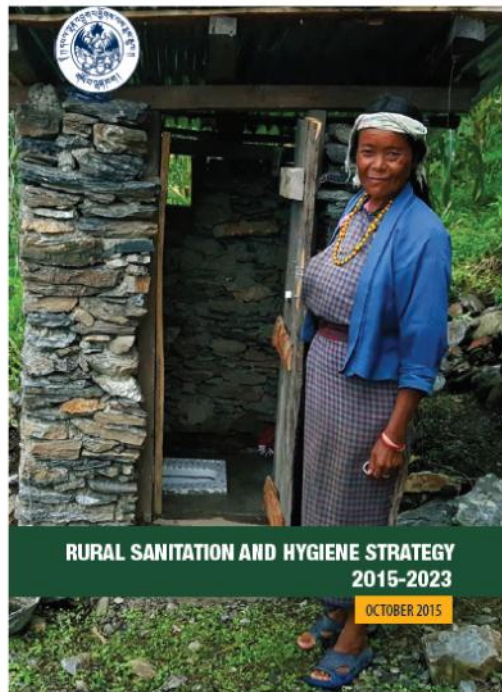
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# What evidence do you have that your approach is working?

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 10: GENDER, EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION:** Ensure the sanitation and hygiene needs of women, girls, nuns and persons living with disabilities (including the elderly and sick) and their meaningful participation in WASH.



34% increase in the total number of toilets that are used by all including accessibility factors.

## What advice would you give to others?

- Never give up. Leave no-one behind, thus, continuous sensitization and talking about it.
- Form key strategic partnerships with the government partner on board.
- Be inclusive from the start, in this case in the research process itself.
- Recognise the importance of inclusive and dedicated implementing staff at all levels.
- Incorporate Buddhist and happiness principles that are locally important in the programme's inclusion efforts.



## Resource recommendations

- Research Report – Understanding the impacts of disability on access and use of sanitation and hygiene services in rural Bhutan. SNV, 2016.
- Research Brief – Travelling Together: Inclusive Disability Research from Bhutan. SNV, 2016.
- Progress Brief 2014-2016: Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All in Bhutan and Nepal. 2016 (SNV)
- DFAT Accessibility Design Guide:  
<http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/accessibility-design-guide-universal-design-principles-for-australia-s-aid-program.aspx>
- SNV Social Inclusion and Accountability Proofing Tool
- Inclusive WASH Resource Library:  
<http://www.inclusivewash.org.au/resource-library-inclusive-wash-training-materials>