



BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY HYGIENE CLUBS IN RWANDA



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PROPOSED CENTRAL QUESTION/TOPIC: STATING THE QUESTION OR HYPOTHESIS

What are the most effective methods to support the Rwandan government's Vision 2020 policy that calls for all households to "have mastered and be practicing hygiene and waste disposal" to reduce related communicable diseases?

BRIEF RATIONALE OR REVIEW OF RELEVANT INFORMATION

In 2010 President Kagame launched the Hygiene and Sanitation Presidential Initiative, which included a multi-sectoral hygiene task force chaired by the Ministry of Health (MoH). This task force created the Community-Based Environmental Health Promotion Program (CBEHPP) and accompanying CBEHPP Roadmap. In addition to creating district-level hygiene committees, the CBEHPP established Community Hygiene Clubs (CHCs), composed of 50-100 village members who meet monthly to discuss hygiene issues, prioritize problems, and implement solutions.

The USAID-funded Rwanda Family Health Project (RFHP) supports the ministry as it implements the CBEHPP in all 818 villages, training CHCs to operate as autonomous and sustainable local entities that will be able to identify and address their own environmental health problems

METHODS



NATIONAL-LEVEL TRAINING

- » One-day workshop based on the Roadmap
- » Enabled participants to advocate for CBEHPP and the CHCs within their sphere of influence
- » Included district mayors, the MoH Environmental Health Desk team, and Environmental Health Technical Working Group



DISTRICT-LEVEL TRAINING

- » Five days of lectures and interactive sessions
- » Taught district hygiene committees how to plan, start, monitor, and support their district CHCs
- » Included vice mayor of social affairs, district director of health, environmental health officers, and social affairs district representatives



CELL-LEVEL TRAINING

- » Used training-of-trainers (ToT) method and a printed kit of topics
- » Gave participants skills needed to effectively facilitate the 20 topics that make up the CHC weekly training sessions
- » Included CHWs, environmental health officers, and CHC executive committees



CHC TRAINING

- » 20 weekly sessions each covering a defined health topic, spanning 6-9 months in all
- » Toolkits of printed cards, training manuals, CHC membership cards, and registers used
- » Taught CHC members about day-to-day duties, management practices, funding processes



FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

- » MoH/RFHP teams visited the CHCs during and after the training period
- » Sector environmental health officers checked on progress, collected reports during monthly CHC visits, and presented aggregated reports at district-level coordination meetings
- » District meetings provided forum for sector supervisors to distill best practices and discuss supporting CHCs
- » If problems arose, MoH/RFHP teams engaged with CHCs via coaching and problem solving



AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

- » 1-month campaign to increase grassroots knowledge of CHCs, demonstrate community benefits, and boost interest in membership
- » Variety of tools used
- » Local radio spots in Kicukiro district delivered 90 times
- » Live radio talk shows involving community members, MoH officials, and RFHP experts
- » Comic radio series made of five episodes of three minutes each, delivered four times
- » Community events talks in each village
- » House-to-house visits made by CHWs
- » Competition for the largest and most active CHCs (prizes of bags, shirts, and money)

RESULTS



54,387 CHC members received training



All **818** villages created CHCs that are functional.



5,058 new pit latrines, **4,440** new bath shelters, **14,917** new hand-washing facilities, **16,005** new kitchen gardens, **32,493** compost pits for biodegradable waste were constructed by CHCs

CONCLUSION

The pilot program shows that the CBEHPP model works in Rwanda: With the right skills and knowledge, communities can lead change based on local needs. This model has been adopted in the Rwanda Health Promotion Policy and Strategy (2014), and the MoH plans to expand this project, aiming for full coverage in all districts.