



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

Activity Report 117

Sanitation in Small Towns

Summary Report on Sub-regional Workshops

**Environmental Health Project
Water and Sanitation Program
Pan American Health Organization**

**Cuzco, Peru, October 1–3, 2002
Tela, Honduras, November 19–21, 2002**

by

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February 2003

Prepared for the USAID Mission to Latin America and the Caribbean
under EHP Project 26568/ OTHER.LACSAN.FOLLOWUP

Environmental Health Project
Contract HRN-I-00-99-00011-00
is sponsored by the
Office of Health, Infectious Diseases and Nutrition
Bureau for Global Health
U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523

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Acronyms

EHP	Environmental Health Project
ENACAL	Empresa Nicaraguense de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (National Water Supply and Sanitation Company), Nicaragua
ERSSAN	Regulatory Agency in Peru
FIS	Fondo de Inversion Social (Social Investment Fund)
IDB	Interamerican Development Bank
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
INAA	Instituto Nicaraguense de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (Nicaraguan Institute for Water Supply and Sanitation)
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
O&M	Operations and maintenance
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PVO	Private voluntary organization
SANAA	Servicio Autonomo Nacional de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (National Water Supply and Sewerage Company, Honduras)
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WS&S	Water supply and sanitation
WSP	Water and Sanitation Program
WSSCC	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council

Section 1—Introduction

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present the outcomes of two workshops recently held on the topic of improving sanitation services in small towns in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and to discuss the key issues that need to be addressed to make progress in this often neglected area. The workshops provided a unique opportunity to discuss the issue of small town sanitation with participants from 12 countries, representing national and local governmental and non-governmental institutions, and the donor community. This report captures the insights gained in the course of conducting the two workshops. Before discussing the actual workshops, some background is presented in Section 1 on the challenges of providing sustainable sanitation services to small towns.

Background

Improved access to adequate quality and quantity of drinking water effectively reduces diarrheal diseases, but the impact is maximized when access to drinking water is implemented in conjunction with good sanitation and hygiene practices. Access to adequate sanitation, however, has lagged behind access to safe drinking water, especially in rural areas. The *Global Water Supply and Sanitation Assessment 2000 Report* (World Health Organization [WHO] and UN Children’s Fund [UNICEF], 2000) estimates that in LAC 87% and 49% of urban and rural populations, respectively, have access to adequate sanitation facilities, compared with 93% and 61%, respectively, with access to water supply services. Moreover, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) estimates that only 10–15% of all domestic wastewater that is collected receives any sort of treatment before being discharged (PAHO, 1997). The results of inadequate sanitation are not unexpected— heavily contaminated receiving waters, unhealthy living and working conditions, and high levels of morbidity and mortality from waterborne disease, especially among children.

In LAC, and especially in Central America, responsibility for the provision of urban services, including water supply and sanitation (WS&S), is increasingly devolving to municipalities and communities. However, these municipalities typically are not in a position financially, technically, institutionally or socially to provide adequate services. Often as part of broader municipal strengthening activities, a number of donors, including the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), are providing assistance and resources to improve the capacity of small municipalities to provide WS&S services. Efforts to date, have focused primarily on drinking water supply.

From 1997 to 1999, the USAID Environmental Health Project (EHP) carried out a series of activities related to the decentralization of WS&S services. These included country-specific activities in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Paraguay, as well as activities of a regional nature. One of these regional activities was an analysis of the status of decentralization of WS&S management in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua¹. This analysis showed that every country except Guatemala, which had always been decentralized, was either engaged in the reform of the WS&S sector or, in the case of Nicaragua, had recently done so. In 2000, EHP developed six case studies on decentralization of which three focused on management models for small towns².

In the course of implementing the EHP activities, it became evident that very little attention had been given specifically to sanitation in small towns in the LAC region. Small towns are generally defined as populations from 5,000–25,000. Among the small towns studied by Fragano et al. (2001), sanitation was being addressed directly in only one: Marinilla, Colombia. In the other two towns studied—Itagua, Paraguay and San Julian, El Salvador—the focus had been on improving water supply services. Further literature review and discussions with WS&S sector colleagues showed that among the less developed countries in the LAC region, there had been little progress in improving sanitation services in small towns. This is attributable to multiple factors, including the lack of access to financing, little demand for improved sanitation, an inadequate policy framework, and limited institutional capacity to manage the sanitation systems. Sanitation projects have tended to focus on technical solutions, especially on developing lower-cost technologies for wastewater collection and treatment, rather than on the sustainability of those investments or on the maximization of health benefits. One of the principal reasons for the increased interest in small towns is the sheer number of municipalities that fall within this category. In 19 countries in Latin America, there are 14,028 municipalities, and 74% of them have populations under 20,000.

In 2001, recognizing that sanitation in small towns had not received the same attention as the larger cities, EHP embarked on an applied research activity to better understand what constraints were specific to sanitation in small towns and to develop a strategy for overcoming those constraints—including the development of key principles for improving sanitation in small towns. EHP subsequently developed a practical tool with a ten step methodology for designing a sustainable sanitation plan for small towns.

In 2002, after completing the publication of the methodology and field testing it in three countries, EHP—in partnership with PAHO and the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP)—organized two subregional workshops to disseminate the principles and methodology with practitioners and policy makers throughout Latin America. The first was held in October 2002 in Cuzco, Peru, for the Andean region countries,

¹ Walker and Velásquez, EHP Activity Report 65, 1999

² Fragano et al., 2001

and the second was held in November 2002 in Tela, Honduras, for the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic.

Summary of the Methodology for Designing a Plan for Improving Sanitation in Small Towns

The methodology for designing a sustainable sanitation plan for small towns comprises ten sequential steps that take into account the current state-of-the-art in sanitation as well as the constraints specific to small towns. The starting point for the strategy is the small town itself and what would be necessary to develop a strategy for that specific town. Some small towns have existing collection and (rarely) treatment systems but have not maintained them. Some towns have a partial collection system covering a small percentage of the population, allowing the rest of the public to take care of their own needs on an individual basis, while some towns have no formal sanitation systems at all. These varied starting points will have to be taken into account when implementing the strategy.

The key principles for improving sanitation in small towns that are embodied in the methodology include:

- **Focus on town-wide solutions that expand coverage to as many residents as possible.** Plan to improve sanitation services for the entire town and especially the poor—rather than a small scale pilot project approach that will only benefit a few.
- **Ensure that any plan to improve sanitation is financially sustainable.** It is pointless to plan a community or town-wide sanitation system for which there is no capacity or willingness to pay the costs for operating and maintaining the system.
- **Consult households to understand what sanitation solutions are in use and what expectations people have.** Do not assume that the engineers have all the knowledge and answers.
- **Use a public consultation process with stakeholders to discuss the options.** A transparent and clear consultation process with the public is critical for the creation of effective demand.
- **Include a specific health component to maximize health benefits.** A hygiene promotion component should be an explicit part of any sanitation plan.
- **Select an appropriate model for managing the provision of sanitation services to ensure sustainability.** The model should be consistent with small town realities and must be accountable to the local population.

- **Identify the key policy issues that must be addressed.** Replication and scaling up of successful sanitation programs to other small towns may require sanitation policy reform at the national level.

Based on the above principles, a methodology was developed that walks a technical team through a practical and systematic process to design a sanitation plan that will be sustainable.

The ten steps are:

1. Determination of local officials' interest
2. Organization of an introductory public meeting
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. Specific analysis of selected technical options
7. Public consultation to discuss detailed options
8. Option selection by the municipality
9. Development of a sustainable sanitation plan
10. Development of an action plan.

A fuller description of the methodology is provided in Annex C of this report .³

Partnership with PAHO and WSP

As mentioned above, the workshops were carried out in close partnership with PAHO and the WSP. This partnership was critical to the success of the workshop objectives of raising awareness about the problems and reaching consensus on key sanitation principles and approaches to designing good plans. Partnering with other external support agencies contributed greatly to a sense of broad sector consensus on the approaches and will undoubtedly assist in the follow-up activities. WSP and PAHO identified and supported a number of high quality and high level participants, supported the development of excellent case studies from Bolivia and Columbia, made key presentations, and provided sound advice throughout the workshops. The workshops were clearly better as a result of the collaboration.

³ *EHP Strategic Report 3: Improving Sanitation in Small Towns in Latin America and the Caribbean: Practical Methodology for Designing a Sustainable Sanitation Plan*, (EHP, 2002)

Section 2—The Workshops

Purpose and Objectives

The overall purpose of the workshops was to improve sanitation services in small towns in a way that is sustainable, equitable, environmentally sound, and health focused.

The specific workshop objectives were the following:

- Examine the unique challenges and opportunities of small town sanitation.
- Discuss practices at the national and local levels that contribute to the problem and what can be done to address these constraints.
- Present methodologies for improving small town sanitation including one developed by EHP and field-tested in three countries.
- Identify country-specific follow-on actions to improve sanitation in small towns.

Participants

The workshop organizers agreed that each workshop should have a limit of 50 participants. A larger number would have made holding participatory workshops more difficult. The organizers also agreed to have a mix of participants from central government agencies, implementing organizations such as NGOs and USAID project staff, municipalities, and other donors. The identification of participants was a joint effort that involved USAID missions, WSP regional staff, and PAHO headquarters and country staff. Rather than advertise the workshop widely, the participants were carefully identified and personally invited. The primary selection criteria included direct responsibility for sanitation and direct involvement in small towns as opposed to larger cities or rural areas. In both the Peru and Honduras workshops, only a handful of invitees declined to participate and in most cases suggested a replacement from their individual organizations. EHP and WSP funded the majority of participants, although PAHO supported several in both workshops. Approximately 15 per workshop were funded by their own organizations.

In Peru, the workshop participants were from five South American countries: Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, and Paraguay. Sixty-one people, including organizers and presenters, attended. The national government officials and participants from implementing organizations were evenly divided with approximately 17 participants in each group. In general, the participants were highly experienced in developing national level programs and in designing and implementing field activities. A number of very high level government officials participated, including the Vice-Minister from the Ministry of Housing and Basic Services from Bolivia; the Sub-secretary for

Environmental Sanitation in the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing from Ecuador; the Directors of Urban and Rural Water Supply and Sanitation in the Ministry of Housing, Construction, and Sanitation in Peru; and the President of ERSSAN, the regulatory agency in Paraguay. In effect, the most senior sector officials from four countries participated. The participation of governmental officials and those from NGOs and donor-funded projects working directly in the field resulted in very rich discussions.

In Honduras, the workshop participants were from six Central American countries: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Costa Rica. The Dominican Republic also participated. Sixty-three people, including organizers and presenters, attended. More government personnel attended the Honduras workshop than did the one in Peru. There were 30 government staff and 15 from implementing organizations. However, in Peru, the government officials who attended were primarily from agencies responsible for water supply and sanitation. In Honduras, government participants were from a wider range of national agencies including national water and sewer agencies, ministries of health and ministries of environment.

A list of workshop participants is provided in Annex A of this report.

Approach

The workshops were designed to be highly participatory. The agenda included a mix of presentations, case studies, small group discussions, panels, and plenary discussions. At least half of the workshop was devoted to small group discussions where participants were able to share experiences and insights. The duration was two and a half days. To ensure the participatory nature of the workshops, EHP engaged the services of a very experienced facilitator to run them.

While EHP had focused specifically on the topic of sanitation in small towns over the previous 18 months, they realized that the workshops needed to be broader than a presentation of EHP's own work. The partnership with PAHO and WSP resulted in the identification of other perspectives and experiences in the region, which were included in the workshop. In the Peru workshop, WSP identified a case study from Bolivia, and PAHO identified one from Colombia.

Agenda

While the agendas for both were very similar, several adjustments were made after the Peru workshop. The following is a brief description of the agenda, which is pertinent to both workshops.

Keynote Presentations

The workshop included two keynote presentations in Honduras. Gerardo Galvis from PAHO provided a context for addressing sanitation in small towns and the challenges

that must be addressed. He discussed the goals of Vision 21 and the Millenium Goals as well as the dimensions of the problem. Oscar Castillo from WSP then delivered a second keynote on the context of the current reform of the WS&S sector in the region, especially the current movement towards increased decentralization and the role of municipalities. He also discussed the constraints to improving sanitation services in small towns. In Peru, Gerardo Galvis gave the only keynote, but the presentation covered the same materials as both keynotes in Honduras. Following the presentations, the participants met in small groups to discuss and respond to the presentations.

Defining the Problem

The participants then met in small groups to discuss why sanitation in small towns is such a challenge. They identified practices at the national and local levels that contribute to the problem. At the national level, participants cited the lack of coordination among key institutions, lack of national policies explicitly focused on sanitation, lack of focus on water supply, lack of political will, and lack of financial resources. At the local level participants cited the authoritarian nature of local government, lack of information, poverty, lack of capacity at the local level, limited willingness to pay for sanitation, and inappropriate technology.

EHP Methodology for Developing a Plan for Improving Sanitation in Small Towns

Eduardo Perez from EHP presented the methodology for developing a sanitation plan in small towns. This methodology is summarized in Annex C of this report. This presentation was followed by small group discussions to identify points that the participants wanted to clarify, determine the main obstacles in using the EHP methodology, and discuss what might be done to overcome the obstacles.

Case Studies

EHP consultant, Scott Tobias, presented the results of the three field tests of the methodology in Ecuador, Jamaica, and Panama. This was followed by a detailed presentation of the Panama field test by Ima Avila, the lead GEMAS consultant hired by EHP to conduct the field test. In Honduras, Mariela Garcia from CINARA presented the methodology that it has developed along with a specific application in La Voragine, Colombia. Ines Restrepo from CINARA made the same presentation in Peru. In the Peru workshop, Juan Guzman from the NGO HACER presented a case study from Cliza, Bolivia, on a sanitation project that has been implemented there.

Resources Available to Assist

In each workshop, representatives of external agencies discussed what resources were available to assist participants in the area of sanitation in small towns, and this information was intended to be used by the groups to develop action plans. PAHO

discussed its role as well as that of CEPIS, a regional office in Lima, while PAHO spoke about its role in providing information and in planning and bringing together stakeholders. WSP explained the activities of its Andean office in Lima and mentioned the new office that is being opened in Tegucigalpa. EHP spoke about the resources available to follow up on the workshop, and PROARCA, a USAID regional environmental project in Central America, told the participants about its support of wastewater management in small towns.

Action Planning

Each country met as a group to identify specific actions over the next six to 12 months to follow up on the workshop. The emphasis in this session was on what the participants themselves could do to continue the discussion in their respective countries. A summary of the key actions is provided in Chapter 3.

The full workshop agenda is included in Annex B of this report.

Section 3—Workshop Results

This chapter summarizes the discussions and outcomes of the workshops.

Definition of the Problem

The following summarizes what the participants identified as the key practices at the national and local levels that contribute to the problem of small town sanitation. It is worth noting that participants were very sensitive to both the national and local aspects of the problem, and all understood that addressing the problem of small town sanitation on any scale required a supportive enabling environment at the national level.

National Level

- Sanitation is always secondary to water supply in importance.
- Countries lack national policies that are explicitly focused on sanitation.
- Institutions involved in sanitation do not coordinate effectively with each other.
- Sanitary works do not have the same political impact as water supply.
- Financial resources for sanitation in small towns do not exist.
- Governments lack the political will to address sanitation.
- Inappropriate and costly technologies are used.
- Not enough is done to inform and educate citizens about the importance of sanitation.

To overcome these problems, participants suggested a range of actions including:

- Increased information and education
- Strengthening of national level institutions
- Clearer definition of roles and responsibilities
- Better coordination among key institutions
- The definition of national sanitation policies
- Provision of financial resources for sanitation

- Training of local governments.

Local Level

- Local governments lack the management and technical capacity to improve sanitation services in small towns.
- There is a lack of management models appropriate to small towns.
- Residents are not willing to pay for sanitation services.
- Local politicians do not demand sanitation improvements, nor do the citizens.
- Residents are not informed about the health and environmental consequences of not addressing sanitation.
- Communities are not adequately consulted and involved in setting priorities.

To overcome these problems, participants suggested:

- Increased information and awareness campaigns at the local levels
- Strengthening of capacity of local governments to address this issue, increased citizen participation
- Use of affordable technologies
- Increased efforts to generate demand for sanitation.

Summary of Key Action Items

The representatives from each participating country identified steps that could be taken in their respective countries over the next six to 12 months to follow up on the workshop. It is important to note that the participants were not part of any official delegation and that the follow-up actions did not represent firm commitments. Nevertheless, the great enthusiasm generated by the workshop increased the prospects for follow up. Examples of follow-up actions included the following:

Central America

- Identify small towns that can begin using the methodology (Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica)
- Develop a database for small towns (Honduras)
- Organize a national workshop similar to the one in Honduras (Honduras, Panama)

- Disseminate information about the topic to key interagency groups, such as the Water and Sanitation Network in El Salvador and the Collaborative Group in Honduras (Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador)
- Develop a pool of local consultants that can use the EHP methodology (Nicaragua)
- Adapt the EHP methodology to the specific country or programmatic context (Nicaragua, Guatemala).

Each country also identified the agency that would take the lead in following up. In the Peru workshop, countries were not asked to identify a lead agency.

Country	Lead Agency
Honduras	Collaborative Group for Water and Sanitation
Guatemala	Inter-institutional Commission of INFOM, MISPAS, EMPAGUA, FIS, MARN, ANAM, and NGO representatives
Panama	MINSA
Costa Rica	AyA and Ministry of Health
Dominican Republic	Lead planning agency for WS&S
El Salvador	Commission of ANDA, CARE, and COMURES
Nicaragua	INAA and ENACAL with support from FISE, MINSA, and INFOM

South America

- Organize a national workshop similar to the one in Cuzco (Colombia, Ecuador)
- Examine the national experiences for improving sanitation in small towns to determine lessons learned (Ecuador, Paraguay)
- Initiate projects already in the pipeline—such as the one planned in Peru—with assistance from the Water and Sanitation Program
- Look for opportunities for pilot projects that can serve as a starting point to address the problem (Colombia, Bolivia)
- Assess national policies that are needed to provide a supportive context for small town sanitation (Ecuador)
- Adapt the EHP methodology to the specific country or programmatic context. (Ecuador, Colombia).

Outcomes

The principal outcomes of both workshops can be summarized as follows:

- The workshops resulted in increased awareness and interest in the topic of sanitation in small towns. While most participants came to the workshops with some appreciation for the importance of the problem, the opportunity to focus on this issue resulted in a better understanding of the problem and increased motivation to address it. In particular, participants understood the magnitude of the problem of sanitation in small towns and the fact that the issue had largely been neglected.
- The workshops provided an opportunity for five countries in South America and seven in Central America and the Caribbean to share experiences and learn from one another. This sharing took the form of case study presentations, workshop discussions, and informal discussions. As a result, participants learned that every country has struggled with this issue.
- Participants identified a range of national level issues that must be resolved in order to address the problem of sanitation in small towns. These included inadequate national sanitation policies, the importance of creating demand for improved sanitation, the lack of coordination among institutions, poorly defined institutional roles and responsibilities, inadequate capital financing, poorly designed subsidy policies, and inadequate and unaffordable technical solutions.
- Participants identified a number of issues at the municipal level that contribute to the problem. These included a lack of demand for sanitation, insufficient access to information, lack of capacity and technical know-how, insufficient local sources of revenue, and inadequate tariffs. In Honduras participants also talked about the paternalism of local governments—an issue that did not come up in the Peru workshop.
- The participants learned about a specific methodology for developing a plan for providing sustainable sanitation services. EHP has developed this methodology in the past two years and field tested it in three countries. During the workshop, the methodology was presented and discussed in some detail. It is a concrete tool that can be used for working in small towns. One of the areas of discussion during the workshop was the context for using the methodology. Participants identified a number of critical contextual issues such as having appropriate norms and standards, access to capital financing, and the degree of decentralization. Participants also understood that the EHP methodology is flexible and should be adapted to different contexts.
- One of the themes of the workshop was the importance of community involvement in addressing the problem of sanitation in small towns. Participants clearly understood the need for participation at all stages of the process. At times, this focus on the community was seen as being inconsistent with the role of the municipality as decision-maker. Instead, the community was seen as the principal decision-maker with the municipality being a stakeholder. The theme of the community as decision-maker was much stronger in Peru than in Honduras. In

Honduras, participants developed a clear understanding of the importance of community involvement in small towns.

Section 4—Moving Forward

The process of developing the small town sanitation programming guide and the two regional workshops have helped to identify new areas of interest and concern for the sanitation sector. To move forward in fully addressing the challenges of small town sanitation, the following areas merit further attention.

- 1. National sanitation policies are needed to effectively address sanitation at the small town level.** The workshop participants recognized and concurred that sanitation is as important as water supply, but recognized that as a policy issue at both the national government level and with international donors, sanitation still lags far behind. In the future, it will be important for government and donors alike to review and assess their WS&S policies and develop explicit policies targeting sanitation in small towns.
- 2. Donor led integrated water resource management efforts will need to take a close look at small town sanitation as a significant source of contamination.** Increasingly, there is awareness that the failure of small towns to manage their wastewater is a significant and growing contributor to the contamination of water resources in the basins where the small towns are located. Yet, it is also true that no examples where a small town could afford to build, operate and maintain a wastewater treatment system were found in Latin America. The current paradigm calls for subsidizing the capital costs of the infrastructure with the expectation that the users will pay for 100% of the recurrent costs to operate and maintain any sanitation systems. Given the very limited number of examples of small towns operating and maintaining sanitation systems, there is very little data to support this paradigm in small towns. This issue will likely lead to taking a hard look at whether or not there is a need for regional or national subsidies for the O&M of wastewater treatment systems to address the environmental protection of water resources. Of course, this is contrary to conventional wisdom that many including EHP have promoted for years.
- 3. Financing capital costs remains a problem.** In most countries, financing remains inadequate for small towns despite many attempts to provide capital financing to local governments for municipal priorities such as water supply and sanitation. The successes have mostly been in larger cities that have access to capital. Small towns will remain predominantly dependent on grant financing for the foreseeable future.
- 4. The cost of providing water in small towns should include the cost of sanitation.** While developing the methodology, the search for good case examples and discussions with workshop participants revealed that many donor-funded so-called “WS&S” projects in small towns really only funded water supply that increased water coming in to households, and in the process, this created a significant wastewater, environmental and public health problems. In

almost all cases, available financial resources were used to maximize the level of water supply services being provided to the households without addressing the cost or the methods of getting the wastewater out of the household and community. This scenario often creates larger financial challenges in providing sustainable sanitation at levels of service that are consistent with and complementary to the level of water service provided. In the future, it is suggested that donors and design teams recognize from the beginning of the process that available financial resources (including donor subsidies for capital and user willingness and ability to pay for recurrent costs) must be used strategically in a manner that packages both WS&S and, if needed, adjusts the level of service accordingly. This will not be an easy task as it is likely that in almost all cases, this approach will result in a lower level of household water supply service than users would prefer. A related issue is the need to take a hard look at the existing approach in many countries, which consists of creating “water committees” in small towns that in effect create a small scale community-owned private water utility. This approach has been successful in many small towns in improving water supply services, but in the process it has left the sanitation challenge to the local government as the water committees are not willing to take on the expense of providing the sanitation services because it will affect their ability to remain solvent.

- 5. In a decentralized environment, institutional support mechanisms at the regional or national levels must be created or strengthened to support small towns.** For the most part, small towns lack the capacity to design, build, operate and maintain sustainable town-wide sanitation systems. Municipalities need technical assistance, training and monitoring. Yet, very few countries in Latin America currently have any institutional support structure to help the smaller municipalities. In many cases, responsibility for the towns WS&S services have been delegated to the small towns whether they are capable of assuming that responsibility or not. Particularly in the context of decentralization, many countries have set up systems to support the rural WS&S and the urban WS&S sector but nothing for the small towns that address their special needs. A related issue is the need to develop a cadre of interdisciplinary technical expertise within each country that can work with the small municipalities to design sustainable sanitation systems as it is clear that the use of international consultants to design sanitation plans for small towns is not affordable or appropriate on any scale.
- 6. Before any country can begin to replicate and scale up sustainable sanitation programs for small towns, at least *one* good example must exist in each country.** In preparation for the workshops, it was startling to see how difficult, and in most cases impossible, it was to find examples of good sustainable town-wide sanitation programs in small towns. Next steps in many countries will require the design and implementation of a well thought out sanitation plan and then monitoring it to learn lessons, integrate them into national policies and replicate them throughout the country. Having one or two good examples to learn from and refer to is an excellent starting point. ..

Taken together these six points begin to outline a potential program of assistance to small towns. They address the policy issues that must be considered, the capacity-building needs of small towns, and issues with financing. The last point suggests that even if resources are limited, starting in one small town to create an example would be an important contribution.

The two workshops described in this report have generated substantial interest in the topic of small town sanitation. This is a relatively new area that has largely been ignored. These workshops should be seen as the beginning of a process to address the challenges facing the sector, and maintaining momentum in the next several years will be the key in determining the long-term success of the workshops.

Annex A

List of Participants—Honduras

Participante	Organizacion	Titulo/ Cargo	Pais	Telefono	Fax	Correo Electronico
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Annex B

Workshop Agenda

There were some variations in the agenda for the two workshops.

DAY ONE

9:00 **Workshop Opening**

- Welcome – Presenter TBD
- Opening Activity – Dan Edwards, Workshop Facilitator
- Review of Workshop Objectives and Agenda – Dan Edwards

10:00 **Keynote Presentations**

- Challenges to Improving Sanitation in Small Towns in Latin America (Gerardo Galvis, PAHO)
- Context for Small Town Sanitation: Sectoral Reform and Constraints (Oscar Castillo, Water and Sanitation Program) (presented in Honduras only)

11:15 **Break**

11:30 **Table Groups** (Dan Edwards)

- Reactions to the presentations
- Issues that you would like to discuss further.

12:15 **Reports from Table Groups**

12:45 **Lunch**

2:00 **Working Groups**

- Practices that contribute to the problem of sanitation in small towns
- What can be done to overcome these obstacles at both the national and local levels?

3: 30 **Break**

3:45 **Reports from Working Groups**

4:30 Introduction to the Methodology for Developing a Plan for Improving Sanitation in Small Towns

- Presentation (Eddy Perez,EHP)

5:30 Close

7:00 Reception

DAY TWO

9:00 Opening

9:15 Methodology for Developing a Plan for Improving Sanitation in Small Towns

- Presentation (Eddy Perez, EHP)

10:30 Break

10:45 Field Tests of the EHP Methodology

- Overview of the three field tests (Scott Tobias, EHP consultant)
- La Cabima, Panama (Ima Avila, GEMAS)

11:45 Working Groups—Discussion of Presentations

12:45 Lunch

2:00 Reports from Working Groups

3:00 Case study

- La Voragine, Colombia (Mariela Garcia, CINARA)
- Cliza, Bolivia (Juan Guzman, HACER) (presented in Peru only)

4:00 Break

4:15 Working Groups—Discussions of Lessons Learned

5:15 Reports from Working Groups

5:45 Close

DAY THREE

8:30 What Resources are Available to Assist?

- Panel Presentation by External Support Agencies (USAID, PAHO, WSP— and IDB and PROARCA in Honduras)
 - Ongoing initiatives that might provide assistance
 - Available resources for technical assistance and how to access them

9:15 Action Planning

- Country working groups (Dan Edwards)

10:30 Country Reports

11:00 Workshop Summary

- Review of objectives and agenda
- Summary of key conclusions

11:45 Closing

- Appreciations
- Logistics

12:00 End

Annex C

Summary of Ten-Step Methodology for Designing Sanitation

Plans for Small Towns

- 1. *Determination of local officials' interest.*** The first step is the interest of local officials in improving sanitation services in their town. The strategy seeks to improve services on a town-wide basis in a financially sustainable manner, so the municipality must be a willing partner. Ensuring that the mayor and the local council are fully supportive is a critical first step. To make an informed decision whether to participate in the development of a plan, local officials must understand the key issues requiring consideration as well as the process in which they are about to engage. This understanding must include a realistic picture of the time it will take, the commitment of time that they must make, and a recognition that there are no easy solutions. They must also be committed to addressing the financial issues and accepting the health and environmental goals of improving sanitation services.
- 2. *Organization of an introductory public meeting.*** Once the local officials have formally agreed to participate in the activity, the next step is to develop and implement a strategy to introduce the process to the municipality in general. The purpose of this step is to inform the public, gain public support for the activity, and send the message that the plan will be developed in a way that takes everyone's perspective into account. The basic principles underlying the activity should be explained with a special focus on the importance of financial sustainability and residents' willingness to pay for services. It should be made clear to the public that this meeting is a first step and that they will be consulted at other critical points along the way. The strategy should involve both a representative group of consumers and representatives from institutional stakeholders, such as schools, commercial enterprises, hospitals and government buildings. The strategy for introducing the activity to consumers should draw heavily on the techniques used for citizen participation in local government strengthening programs. These approaches include public meetings at the town and neighborhood levels and information campaigns. The larger the town, the more reliance there will be on information campaigns rather than face-to-face approaches.
- 3. *Preliminary data collection.*** Many sanitation projects fail because the project designers take shortcuts and apply standard approaches and technologies without first taking into consideration the specific conditions of a given small town and household preferences. It is not uncommon for engineers to decide on the technology for a project even before visiting the site. Designing an effective and

sustainable sanitation project for a small town requires a good understanding of the town's existing water supply systems as well as sanitation practices and systems and a preliminary determination of the demand for sanitation services. Information to be collected includes current sanitation systems, physical setting and technical, financial, health, social and environmental conditions. This will provide project designers, the municipality officials, community members and other stakeholders with insights to guide their initial thinking and decisions regarding the range of sanitation technologies and approaches that would be appropriate and sustainable for the town. This step should include a focused effort to consult a representative sample of households about the current technologies in use, what they like or do not like about their current sanitary solutions, ideas for improving their sanitation solutions, their receptivity to on-site solutions, their understanding of the connection between sanitation and health, hygiene practices such as whether their children use the bathroom, and how much they are currently paying for sanitation services.

- 4. *Identification and costing of the range of feasible technical options.*** This step builds directly on the information collected in Step 3. The purpose of Step 4 is to identify the range of sanitation-related technologies that may be feasible and acceptable in order to present them to the community in Step 5. Each option should include an estimate of the capital and recurrent costs as well as the possible sources of financing and how this information translates into tariffs. Conditions may vary greatly. In some towns, for example, on-site sanitation may not be feasible because of the density of population. If household connections for water supply are provided, collection and disposal of wastewater must be addressed. The assessment of options should include household-centered approaches as well as more conventional wastewater collection and treatment. The examination of these options should be at the pre-feasibility level, which implies a preliminary analysis that will provide enough information to narrow the range of options for more detailed consideration. This step is critical in designing a sanitation project in that it provides information to the stakeholders so that they can participate in an informed manner in expressing their sanitation needs and priorities. Options to be presented to the stakeholders should be confined to those that are likely to be cost effective in reaching the maximum number of households in the town, provide the type and level of benefits that households expressed an interest, and are financially sustainable.
- 5. *Discussion of feasible technical options with municipal stakeholders and households.*** The purpose of this step is to present to the municipality the full range of feasible technical options developed in Step 4. These options should be shared with stakeholders so that an informed decision can be made before proceeding with the development of detailed plans. This presentation should include the technical options, level of service, cost implications, location of facilities and health and environmental issues. As in Step 2, stakeholders consulted should include representatives of institutions, such as schools, businesses and clinics, as well as households. The strategy for presenting the options should be adapted to the size of the town and the number of stakeholders

- to be consulted. The result of this step should be the selection of one or two options that will be developed in much greater detail by the consultant team. The selection should be based not only on broad equity terms in reaching the highest number of households, but also on the community's financial capacity, willingness to pay and health and environmental concerns.
6. ***Specific analysis of selected technical options.*** In this step, the consultant team, in conjunction with the municipality, develops one or two options selected by the community and households in more detail. In addition to expanding the details of the technical and financial analysis that began in Step 4, this analysis should include a specific proposal for managing the services, a specific plan for incorporating hygiene behavior change, identification of the policy issues that must be addressed to move forward, and a preliminary assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposed plan.
 7. ***Public consultation to discuss detailed options.*** After one or two options have been thoroughly developed, they should be presented to the stakeholders for their reaction. As in the preceding steps that included consultation with the community, these discussions should include both stakeholders from the municipality in general and from other institutions. The specific strategy for holding these discussions will vary, depending on the number of stakeholders involved and the complexity of their interests. The purpose of this meeting is to elicit stakeholder reactions and to use that information in making a final decision.
 8. ***Option selection by the municipality.*** The final decision is the municipality's, using its normal decision-making mechanism. In many countries, the mayor and local council, in some combination, decide. One of the benefits of placing the decision in the hands of local elected officials is that it reinforces the role of local government in general. Local government must consider the expressed wishes of the community when making decisions, and the approach suggested in this strategic paper allows for this consideration. Ultimately, however, the decision about sanitation should be made by those who have been elected for that purpose, with some assistance from the consultant team in order to consider fully the technical, financial, social, institutional, health and environmental issues. This step also includes the communication of the decision to the public. Adaptations may be needed if the methodology is used in a town that is not a formal municipality with elected local officials or where government is still centralized. A representative body of the community will still be required, however, and additional consultations will be needed with those who retain formal responsibility for investment decisions in sanitation.
 9. ***Development of a sustainable sanitation plan.*** Once the local government has made the decision, the plan should be written. The consultant team may decide to write a draft of the plan prior to the decision-making process. If that is the case, the plan will have to be modified after the decision is made. Because the plan may serve as a document to obtain funding, the consultant team may want to take into account the requirements for accessing a given funding mechanism.

10. Development of an action plan. Since the outcome of the methodology is a plan, it is especially important to ensure that there is a specific follow-up plan. If the plan is developed within the context of a larger financing program, then the next steps will generally be clear. If, however, the plan was not developed without reasonably assured financing, then a follow-up plan is critical. Any follow-up plan should clearly identify the next steps, the persons responsible and the timing. A timeframe of six months to one year is realistic. Generally speaking, follow-up should be the responsibility of the municipality itself, possibly with some external assistance.