

Water For People  
**World Water Corps®**

India 2010 Monitoring Report

April 2010



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### Introduction

Water For People - India supports the development of water systems, sanitation facilities, and hygiene education programs in the state of West Bengal on India's north-eastern coast. Access to water, sanitation, and hygiene education varies across West Bengal with wide disparities between districts.

Water For People began working in India in 1996 with a small effort to help eliminate the threat of naturally occurring arsenic in the water supplies by partnering with a local university. In 2005, Water for People established a formal presence in India when it opened an office in Kolkata and hired a full-time country coordinator to facilitate work in West Bengal with the support of other full-time staff members. Water For People - India has committed to help meet the basic water, sanitation, and hygiene education needs of thousands of India's poorest rural inhabitants with the development of appropriate and sustainable solutions. To this end, they work in close partnerships with local communities, governments and NGOs, ensuring a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of the various programs by all involved stakeholders.

In 2006, Water For People – India began by managing nine projects in West Bengal, directly benefiting more than 33,600 people. By 2009, Water for People – India was managing approximately \_\_\_ projects, an increase of \_\_\_\_\_ over 2006 which benefited more than \_\_\_\_\_ people. The organization has developed plans to increase the sustainable coverage of safe water from 60% to 100% in 20 villages over the next five years. The objective for Water For People - India is to shift from project mode to program mode, where now adopting a region and ensuring 100 percent water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) coverage in the targeted area.

Sanitation is a top priority for this region and Water For People - India has committed to covering 90% of the estimated 8,620 toilets needed for these 20 villages by 2011. Water For People - India will also equip 34 schools with water and sanitation facilities, making it more acceptable for the 12,000 children in these villages to attend classes. Water For People – India will also strengthen hygiene education programs to promote measurable changes in hygiene practices that undermine household health.

#### Type and focus of the assignment

Water for People have funded water and sanitation programs within the 24 South Parganas area of West Bengal. These have been aimed at the implementation of latrines in households via a loan scheme and the rehabilitation of existing hand pumps to provide safe drinking water to communities. The India Monitoring project, 2010 was aimed at assessing the effectiveness of these programs and identifying areas of improvement by studying a statistically significant number of households and communities which have been the beneficiaries of these programs.

The monitoring project was a 2 part project with the first week consisting of an assessment of the sanitation loan program and the second week focused on the

rehabilitated water pumps program as well as the general sanitation and hygiene within the community.

The assessment of the latrines was conducted by a house-to-house survey and which looked at the following factors:

- The effectiveness of the loan scheme
- The appeal of the latrines
- The sanitation and hygiene levels

Additionally a note of the latrine type and structure was also made.

The survey of the hand pumps assessed the following factors :

- management of finances and maintenance of financial records
- the adequacy of water supply
- the current state of the water system and its maintenance history

A survey of homes benefitting from the improved water source was also conducted to gauge their satisfaction levels with the system and also to gauge the sanitation, hygiene education within the local community.

Regions visited (include map depicting the area)

The 24 South Parganas district of West Bengal is an alluvial coastal saline plain which lies in the lower Gangetic Plain region. The district consists of 30 blocks of which the India monitoring team surveyed 2, Pathar Pratima and Sagar Island.

Agriculture is the primary source of income but the lack of irrigation limits the growing season and restricts areas to being monocrop. The main crops observed in the Pathar Pratima block were rice, sunflower and chilies while Betel Nut was prevalent in Sagar island. The region suffers from gradually depleting ground water reserves and high salinity. Further, natural disasters such as cyclones have led to saline water seeping into the water table inhibiting agricultural growth. This problem has been exacerbated by a lack of rainfall.

Involved Parties

The World Water Corps monitoring assignment in the South 24 District of West Bengal took place between April 4<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The monitoring team consisted of six World Water Corps volunteers, the World Water Corps manager, Water for People – India staff, representatives from local partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and representatives of the community-based organizations (CBOs) from the communities that were visited.

The team of six volunteers from the World Water Corps included:

- Tiffany Martindale – Structural Engineer, Engineers Without Borders
- Pamela Majumdar – Civil Engineer, \_\_\_\_
- Pratchi Chatterjee – Chemical Engineer
- Steven Anderson – Civil Engineer, CH2MHill
- Matthew Coleman – Mechanical Engineer, Echologics

- Don D'Souza – Environmental Engineer, Stantec Consulting Ltd.

The six World Water Corps volunteers were split into three groups of two and accompanied by one Water for People – India staff and at least one representative of the partner NGOs and CBOs during each site visit.

Water for People – India staff were present in the field to assist with community interviews and to liaise with the various NGOs and CBOs. Staff from Water for People – India that accompanied the World Water Corps volunteers in the field included:

- Jyotirmoy Chakraborty – Program Director
- Isita Roy Chakraborti - Hygiene Coordinator
- Satya Narayan Ghosh – District Coordinator for South 24 Parganas
- Dipa Biswas – School Program Coordinator
- Swagato Mitra – Coordinator – Buisness Development
- Payel Biswas – Documentation and Communication Assistant.

During the portion of the assignment in the Pathar Pratima block of South 24 Parganas, representatives from the NGOs Sabuj Sangha and SSDC accompanied the teams while representatives of the NGO Rural Aid accompanied the teams during the visit to Sagar Island.

## Overview

Community visits were broken down each day into three different teams. Each team had two surveyors, one translator, CBO representatives, and an NGO representative. Visits were conducted from the hours of 8:30 am to 12:30 pm, and in the block of Sagar Island from 4 pm to 6 pm. In Pathar Pratima the surveys were focused on questions of sanitation practices at the household level and the loan system which allowed the purchase of the latrines. On Sagar Island the teams visited community water points and five nearby households at each water point. The community questions were focused on management of the water point and household questions related to water use and general sanitation. The communities, blocks and dates visited are listed below.

<b>Block</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Date Visited</b>
Pathar Pratima	Keora Khali	4/6/2010
	Piprakhali	4/6/2010
	Dakshin Roypur	4/6/2010
	Dakshin Durga Pur	4/7/2010
	Paschim Sridharpur	4/7/2010
	Ramnagar Abad	4/7/2010
	Rakshashkhal	4/8/2010
	Khetramohanpur	4/9/2010
	South	4/10/2010

	Mahendrapur	
	Ramganga	4/10/2010
Sagar Island	Manashadwip	4/12/2010
	Kamalpur	4/12/2010
	Rudranagar	4/13/2010
	Koylapara	4/13/2010
	Sumatinagar	4/13/2010
	Daspara	4/13/2010
	Kamalpur	4/13/2010
	Manaswadip	4/13/2010
	Radhakrishnapur	4/13/2010
	Mahendragang	4/13/2010
	Krishnagar	4/13/2010
	Nagendragang	4/14/2010
	Gobindapur	4/14/2010
	Devi Maturapur	4/14/2010

The data collected in the surveys was based on questions and observations. After surveys were completed each day, teams entered data into a combined spreadsheet for data review.

In Pathar Pratima, each team had the resources to only visit one village per day. Survey teams approached members of each household and obtained permission to conduct the interview. Household members were asked about their use of the latrine, general hygiene knowledge, and loan structure and status of the latrine. Concurrently, survey team members observed the latrine, superstructure, and surrounding area to determine if the latrine is in use as designed. Photo documentation was obtained of the latrine, superstructure, and loan card. Once all the survey documentation was obtained, the survey team moved on to the next house as directed by the CBO representative. Survey teams generally conducted ten to fifteen surveys per day, with 185 surveys conducted by the three teams over the five days.

In Sagar Island, there were two surveys conducted. Each team first met with a representative of the water committee at the community water point. Water committee members were asked about the community's use of the water point, how revenue is obtained, and how maintenance is managed. The water committee's income and expenditure records were reviewed to assess the committee's understanding of record keeping. Concurrently, survey team members observed the community water point and surrounding area to determine any existing infrastructure or habitual problems with the water point. In addition to the water point survey, five random houses were surveyed with respect to their use of the water point and sanitation practices. These household surveys did not include the loan structure and payment, but focused primarily on water use relative to the water point and sanitation knowledge. Photo documentation was obtained of the water point and one nearby household latrine. On Sagar Island, twenty-seven water points and 135 households were surveyed by the collective teams.

Initially the assignment for the Pathar Patrima block had a target of approximately 370 household sanitation surveys. However, the Water For People India staff that due to extreme heat and proximity that the goal was not feasible to complete in the time allotted. In total, 185 household sanitation surveys were conducted in the Pathar Patrima block. The households were selected by the CBO partners. In order to minimize travel time and maximize data collected, CBO representatives lead survey teams to the highest density of households with latrines in each village.

On Sagar Island, twenty-seven water points and 135 households were assigned to be surveyed, and all water points and households were completed. All water points were pre-determined by the Water For People India staff. Selection of the households surveyed was conducted separately by each survey team. In some cases, distance from the water point was a factor where two households were surveyed far from the water point, two close to the water point, and one in between. In other cases, the water point committee interviewee lead the survey team to households based on convenience.

## Recommendations

### GENERAL

- As the survey questions were written in English only, there was inconsistency in the conveyed message to community members from one interpreter to the next. It is recommended that Water For People India develop a local language translation of the surveys in order to minimize multiple interpretations and ambiguity of the questions. The translation should also facilitate clear communication of the specific information that Water For People needs from the surveys.
- It was found that some of the community member interviewees and other involved party members may have not understood the intention of the monitoring interviews, and therefore may have slanted their responses to questions in order to avoid displeasing the NGO and representatives. It is recommended that the community members and CBO officials be advised that results of monitoring shall have no bearing on future funding decisions.

### SANITATION

- It is recommended that when the consent forms are distributed (as suggested above), the interviewee should not be informed when the monitoring visit will take place, and should simply be made aware of the intent of the visit. It should be properly communicated to community members that the intent of the monitoring is to make sure that the sanitation projects are meeting their needs, and that the visits will have no bearing on the funding of the community projects. They should in no way feel that they have to go out of their way to present a false picture of their sanitation habits, or that Water For People is there to pass judgment on their lifestyles. During the monitoring visits, it was perceived by World Water Corps team members that many of the community members had taken special measures to clean their latrines and have a new bar of soap in plain view. These

types of preparatory measures have a negative effect on the purpose of the surveys, and this should be explained to community members.

- During some of the monitoring visits, there were up to 6 or 7 persons present during the survey interviews, which potentially place pressure and discomfort on the interviewee. It is recommended that the group present at the visit consist of few people as possible (one interviewer, one interpreter, and one CBO member). In addition, it is recommended that CBO members not be allowed in the room during the interview, but should remain on the premises of the surveyed household until the completion of the interview. It was found that the presence of the CBO potentially prevented full and honest disclosure by the interviewees, specifically for question #54 “*How satisfied are you with your relationship with the loan organization?*” In addition, during some interviews it was perceived that CBO members were walking ahead to the next household to give instructions to interviewees.
- In the case of Bengal community members, soap bars are often placed at the site of the water source, or the irrigation pond, and not always nearby the sanitation unit. When determining whether a cleaning agent is used and more importantly, if it’s readily available for use, enumerators should take into consideration soap may be in the vicinity and easily accessible. Enumerators should ask the interviewee where
- In many cases, community members’ loan cards had been destroyed during Cyclone Aila and all repayment documentation as well. Community members entered into default without a frame of time when the loans needed to be repaid. The overall sentiment with the families and households most affected by the natural disaster perceived the destruction as a way to cease payments on their sanitation loans. However, the grantor still believed in collecting the rest of the payments and had devised a fair repayment structure for those affected worst. It is our recommendation for the granting organizations to increase education around the new repayment structure so there are no false expectations about repayment in the future.
- During the site visit to Khetramohanpur on April 9<sup>th</sup>, it was perceived by World Water Corps volunteer members and NGO members that loan accounting procedures were neither accurate nor consistent (e.g. loan cards not being filled out at all, names on receipts not matching names on loan cards, dates on receipts not matching dates on loan cards, loan amounts being unusually lower than in other regions, etc). It is recommended that the CBO for this specific location be further examined to ensure that it is operating properly.

### WATER MONITORING

- The current bookkeeping for monthly income in the communities was very diligent and straight forward. These practices should be expanded to include monthly expenses and monthly account balances, as the note-taking for these details was inconsistent and sometimes disorganized.
- In the surveyed areas, there were no defined policies for people who fail to pay the user fee. This should be remedied in the water committees objectives, even if

- only to say that there are no consequences for those who fail to pay for usage of the water points. In some areas it was common to have local businesses utilizing the water point. Any policy should also include these businesses and other peoples who commonly use the water point without financially contributing.
- Similar to the problem found while surveying the sanitation points, quite frequently the water points were found to be groomed prior to the volunteers arriving, rendering all observations of the site misleading. This type of reception for the NGO members is culturally significant and unavoidable; returning to the site at a later time to make any observations required should be considered.