



India



Dignified Sanitation Solutions

LEAF Society  

LEAF Society targets women and children as change agents to break down taboos surrounding sanitation practices. They equip communities with dignified WASH assets such as quality toilets.

Launched in 2004, Not-for-profit , Sanitation , Women's Empowerment , South Asia: India

Partners: LEAF Society has partnerships with different funding agencies, government institutions, research organizations, technical institutions, urban local bodies, elected bodies and community based organizations.





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Problem Addressed

LEAF Society aims to reduce the practices of open defecation among poor and vulnerable communities thus reducing the economic, social & health burden of vulnerable families due to poor WASH practices. LEAF Society also aims to influence policies of the government to include WASH curriculum in schools, sanitation under priority sector lending, inclusive WASH policy of school sanitation and to provide equitable Personal & Menstrual Hygiene Management for children, women and adolescents. The other large area that LEAF Society addresses includes the issues of poor fecal sludge management & septic tank governance in urban local bodies, small towns and municipalities.

They work aggressively to create dignified WASH assets for poor children enrolled in government schools. They believe children at risk need to be provided with adequate WASH infrastructures such as toilets, urinals, menstrual hygiene facilities and adequate WASH training, in schools. They are constructing school toilets and are trying to fine-tune the policies of government towards the same.

Innovative Approach

LEAF's innovative "four square approach" targets women, children and communities, and links them to microcredit for sanitation. LEAF believes that hygiene should be used to create demand for improved sanitation services.

LEAF also focuses on the root cause of the problem – the mindset and taboos that surround resistance to adoption of improved sanitation practices. LEAF believes that if children are taught basic hygiene practices (using a scorecard that they fill in each night) and follow these for four months, they will follow them for life. These approaches are all focused on creating demand for sanitation practices. LEAF has developed training and modules in behavior change and sanitation education.

LEAF also pursues an inclusive approach to WASH in schools – which includes outreach to children, menstrual hygiene, and provisions for physically challenged children. They are working with the education system to drive the inclusion of hygiene practices in the curriculum.

Program Solution

LEAF Society is a registered not for profit organization working in water & sanitation, child protection, rural empowerment, social accountability and joyful education sectors in Tamil Nadu, India. LEAF Society has three offices in Namakkal district for different projects. They have been supported by organizations such as ARGHYAM Foundation, Bangalore, NABARD Bank of India and Water Aid India.

By creating demand, providing technological options and monitoring usage, they aim to create open defecation free families. Their innovative “four square approach” uses children as change agents and helps create Water & Sanitation Societies (WSS) and sensitizes communities through highly innovative behavior change communication & inter-personal communication tools and techniques. They also link the families to either credit or grant support. They have constructed & put in use 3000 toilets, with 1000 more units under construction. LEAF Society has mobilized more than Rs. 95 million for construction of toilets and are also in the process of constructing 10,000 toilets for vulnerable communities. They also conduct various studies, including government schools, public toilets and solid waste management in small towns and municipalities to assist their endeavors and are also a part of the Fecal Sludge Management study for small towns in Tamil Nadu.

LEAF Society has been sanctioned by the State Planning Commission of Tamil Nadu, where they aim to construct 15,000 individual toilets. Their CSR projects are mostly on School WASH in which they seek to create dignified WASH assets for children.

More information on other project areas such as promotion of Right to Information (RTI) Awareness can be found [here](#).