



India



Community and School Ecological Sanitation

Wherever the Need India Services (WTNIS)  

In partnership with communities, Wherever the Need promotes ecological sanitation in communities, households, and schools, including the re-use of waste for agricultural purposes.

Launched in 2008, Not-for-profit , Menstrual Hygiene Management , Sanitation , Waste Management & Disposal / Re-use , Cross-sector , Cross-sector: Agriculture / Nutrition , Women's Empowerment , South Asia: India

Partners: District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Cuddalore (Government of Tamil Nadu) – subsidy for all family toilets; District Education Department – school sanitation and hygiene projects; Centre Sustainable Development (CSD), Cuddalore – local implementation; Anbalayam, Pondicherry – local implementation; Annamalai University, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu – research associate; Wash Institute, Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu – Network partnership; Pondicherry University, Pondicherry – research associate.

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Problem Addressed

In 2006, Mr. S. Paramasivan, the founder of WTNIS, carried out a ground water quality study in 18 selected villages in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu to understand the impact of leach pit toilets on groundwater quality. The study found that all water sources in 16 of the 18 villages were contaminated with coli-form bacteria. The presence of coli-form in water is an indication of the use of improper technology for toilet construction in areas where ground water is shallow, such as coastal areas. To avoid such leaching and the contamination of water sources, WTNIS decided to introduce waterless compost toilets to impoverished communities in both urban and rural contexts.

Innovative Approach

WTNIS firstly promotes sustainable sanitation through the development of EcoSan toilets, and secondly utilizes processed fecal compost and human urine in agriculture as an effective alternative to chemical fertilizers.

Program Solution

Wherever the Need India Services (WTNIS) engages urban and rural households and schools on sanitation and hygiene related issues. Prior to the development of infrastructure, it engages these groups through household visits, focus group discussions and classroom-based training.

Following the development of initial 'hygiene seeking behavior', it works to develop eco-san facilities in these communities and schools, and monitors the usage of these facilities. The facilities divert urine and fecal matter separately into storage containers; the organization accordingly collects this matter following their detoxification, and provides the same to farmers. Preliminary results indicate that the use of this compost positively impacts agricultural yields. The organization is also exploring the use of these fertilizers to cultivate spirulina, in order to provide effective nutritive

supplementation for malnourished children who live in slums.

Within the urban context, the organization has developed a portable eco-toilet, that can be installed in slum communities. Portability is essential due to the fact that land tenure for slum dwellers is uncertain, while in the rural context and in schools, WTNIS develops permanent structures.

WTNIS also focuses on developing awareness on effective menstrual hygiene management, and develops incinerators in girls' schools to foster the safe disposal of sanitary napkins.