Informal Settlements and Covid-19: Water and Sanitation as a Frontline Response

Sri Lanka
Total Cases = 2750 (0.013%)
Recovered = 2020
Active = 719

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Interventions in Urban Underserved Settlements (USS)

No Extreme poverty exists in the USS in Colombo
no squatters or shanties

- Land tenure and upgrading informal settlements in Colombo, Sri Lanka
- Promoting community solutions in upgrading urban settlements
- Colombo Urban regeneration policy and move families from underserved areas to high rise apartments
- Halved the population in USS to 66,000 families
- CMABC Community Mobilization and Behavior Change for WASH improvement
- Reaching the Unreached for improved WASH and Nutrition
Prior to WASH Interventions

Water/Toilets/Sewerage

- Overall 41% of settlements have to make do with common toilets
- 8% have no toilet facilities
- 33% of USS have no metered water connection
- 33% either use common facilities or rely on outside sources
- 5% of communities are in need of safe drinking water and levels of service are rated as a serious problem in 8% of USS
- 28% of settlements of USS have serious problems in respect of safe disposal of sewage; only 50% are connected to the city’s sewage network
Community Perception on what they are missing Compared to City

- Lack of sanitation and shared toilets
- Shared water points and bathing places
- Inadequate Toilet Facilities
- Poor maintenance of toilets
- Low water pressure during day time
- Outsiders use of common water and sanitation facilities
- Community Stand posts Water Supply for number of families
WASH Interventions to Raise Living Conditions

- Hygiene education as a communication strategy to improve water wise behavior change
- Household metered connections
- Community acquired knowledge in NRW, WASH and sustainable Water User Groups
- Active participation in O&M in NRW and pay for water usage
- Stakeholders gained sufficient knowledge about the NRW, WASH and activities of WUGs
- HH water contamination and measures for good hygiene and importance of hand hygiene in disease control
Urban and Plantation Sector Settlements

* WASH interventions prior to COVID-19 by two major projects and programmes
* Community Mobilization And Behavior Change in urban income settlement in Colombo
* Promoting community solutions in upgrading living standards and accessibility to services through Reaching the Unreached project for improved health and nutrition
* Distributed emergency items, PPE and for hygiene
* Importance of nutrition on immune response
Impact of Informal Settlements

- Sri Lanka being an island nation had to plug the influx of visitors, persons arriving were sent to quarantine and community spread was prevented

- Quarantine and prevention of disease ordinance of 1889 and Act No 12 of 1952

- Closed the only international airport, imposed 52 day lockdown style curfew (20th March 11th May), track down associates isolated and quarantined

- Pandemic law enforced 14,000 self quarantined

- Banned festivals, public and private gatherings

- The clusters were handles decisively to contain USS community spread at peripheries
Urban Settlements were Well Prepared

- WASH promotion to improve access to water and services in par with other areas
- Individual HH facilities with metered water connections and reduces Stand Post Supply (SPS)
- Schools Programme- filled gaps to implement post COVID 19 schools restart Guidelines – issued by the Ministry of Education
- Technical visits to major WT and WWT Plants
- Water and health conscious community
- HH water conservation and burden eased for users as well as public utility timely payment of bills and low NRW
- Personal protective gear distributed with WASH consumable (EU Grant to RTU project)
Only One Sanitation Worker was affected

% cases found in USS No 103, 107 and 137

One Bandaranayakepura was found and 29 contacts were send to quarantine center
COVID-19 cases were found in three districts Colombo, Gampaha, and Puttalam in Sri Lanka.

- Cases in Colombo were found only in 4 USS.
- Swift intervention to lockdown and quarantine and hygiene improvements prevented community spread.
- Contagion and all contacts were quarantined.
- Face masks are compulsory.
- All public places provided with foot operated Hand Washing facilities with hand sanitizers.
- USS are closed communities surrounded by city Streets and lockdown was effective.
Support for Schools Reopening

- Health Corner/sick room
- Hand washing units
- Sanitary/cleaning tools and materials
- Health Club - operation and monitoring the system in the school
- Training/awareness for teachers in the school before starting the school
- Awareness on hygiene practice for children
- Introduced additional hand washing facilities
- Model Nutrition Gardening in the school
- ICT/Learning Centre upgrading to create awareness.
Hygiene promotion in Plantation Communities

Leaving no one behind - Reaching the Unreached