

# BIOCON FOUNDATION'S SANITATION INITIATIVE

- **Background**

Around the world, 2.6 billion people do not have access to clean and safe sanitation. In India, over 80% of the rural population and more than 50% of urban households have no access to basic sanitation facilities. Responding to these alarming figures, the United Nations declared 2008 the International Year of Sanitation.

Biocon Foundation's sanitation initiative began in 2007 with an aim to offering poor rural communities access to safe and sustainable sanitation facilities. The initiative endeavours to improve the health status of underprivileged village communities, decrease the environmental impact of inadequate sanitation practices and ultimately, generate economic benefits by increasing the number of workdays.

- **Location, Date**

Karnataka, 2011

- **Areas**

Rural

- **Stage/Scale**

Ongoing

- **Objective of the assignment**

The aim is to ensure every household in the villages has its own private toilet and to encourage the use of household toilets by making community members understand the link between illness and unsanitary behaviour.

- **What was done**

- **Huskur Pilot Program:** With technical help from the Karnataka Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency, the Bangalore Urban Zilla Panchayat, the Huskur Gram Panchayat and building contractors chosen from the community itself, Biocon Foundation is implementing a comprehensive sanitation and hygiene program in Huskur.
  - It includes a community toilet block in Huskur, Anekal, for the village community and outside visitors. This toilet block comprises of separate sections for men and women; each section has 6 toilets and two bathing cubicles.
  - As part of their household sanitation initiative 900 household toilets were built in partnership with the community, the Embassy of Ireland and the Government of Karnataka.
  - While the local contractor identified by the company was responsible for building the superstructure, laying the floor pan, the plumbing, lining the soak pit and covering it with a concrete cover; to create a sense of ownership of the project and the program, each beneficiary household had to contribute Rs. 1000 towards the construction and also was responsible for digging the pit.

- Biocon Foundation (BF) and the Karnataka Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (KRWSSA), conducted a number of awareness and educational workshops with the community cover all the 1123 households in Huskur.
- These awareness generation activities included short movies, charts and focus group discussions which covered the connection between good health and proper sanitation.
- This was followed by demo sessions by vendors of toilet pans. These sessions, facilitated by the KRWSSA, demonstrated different models of floor pans, explained the benefits and costs of each. The sessions were attended by the Huskur Gram Panchayat committee members, who decided what model of toilet would be best for the houses in the covered areas.



### ● **Challenges and Issues**

The Foundation intends to proceed with caution – and ensure active community participation in the project. Communities need to take ownership of these projects, and they must be able to access government funds that are available for these projects.

### ● **Innovation**

Six teams consisting of two ladies each visited every house in the seven villages under the intervention. These teams spoke to the head of the household about the sanitation project, if that house did not have a toilet; the ladies convinced them to build one and collected their contribution (Rs. 1000) for the cost of the toilet.

### ● **Lessons learnt**

The Foundation has worked in close collaboration with Zilla Panchayat, the Gram Panchayat and the KRWSSA offices. These government bodies have developed numerous Information Education & Communication tools, which were used to generate awareness and motivate people to build and use their toilets.

### ● **Financials**

The spending is part of the CSR budget of the company.

### ● **Economic sustainability/Revenue Model**

The Foundation is also trying to implement end to end solid and liquid waste management solutions, in an attempt to provide villagers with a sustainable easy-to-manage solution which will ensure sustained use of toilets.

- **Implementer Contact Persons**

- **Biocon Foundation**  
[info.bioconfoundation@biocon.com](mailto:info.bioconfoundation@biocon.com)

- **Sources and References**

- Company Website
- Corporate sector involvement in Sanitation by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), 2013