National Coordinators at WSSCC’s Global Forum on Sanitation and Hygiene in Mumbai India, 2011.
25th Anniversary Message from the Executive Director, Chris Williams

2015 marks not only the year of transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but also the 25th anniversary of WSSCC, an organization I am extremely proud to be leading. As we move to the future it is important to reflect on the past, noting the evolution of the organization and its ability to enable people to drive the process by which they gain access to basic services.

When the founding mothers and fathers established the Council in 1990, they were driven by a conviction to make a difference in lives of millions of people by creating opportunities for them to attain water supply, sanitation and hygiene. They began by facilitating a space for practitioners, donors and policy makers from Africa, Asia and Latin America, from within government and among activists and NGO professionals. WSSCC offered them a home to have discussions not possible within their respective institutional settings in order to advance collectively a nascent water and sanitation agenda.

WSSCC assumed a greater advocacy role following the adoption of the Millennium Declaration that did not mention sanitation and hygiene. In 2002, the Council forged alliances among disparate partner networks to spearhead a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) campaign for the inclusion of sanitation among the targets of the MDGs. WSSCC built upon the global momentum by fostering at national level the establishment of WASH Coalitions comprised of government, activists and NGO professionals committed to improving water, sanitation and hygiene. WSSCC appointed National Coordinators to serve as the ‘eyes and ears’ of the sector, ensuring voice and agency of local actors, including the excluded and marginalized.

In 2008, the Council widened its focus to include financing and innovative programming through the establishment of the Global Sanitation Fund (GSF). This was a conscious decision. Earlier advocacy efforts that resulted in the inclusion of sanitation among the targets of the MDGs had not translated into public investment in the sanitation sub-sector. Rather than build up country offices to implement projects, WSSCC worked with its knowledge and advocacy networks and partner governments to design national sanitation and hygiene improvement programmes. The Council then identified executing agencies and implementing partners. Now applying GSF funds to 13 national programmes through 300 implementing partners in Africa and Asia, WSSCC has so far empowered over 10 million people to end the practice of open defecation and 8 million to gain access to improved sanitation.

In parallel, WSSCC hosted the 7th Global Forum on Sanitation and Hygiene in Mumbai, India in 2011, providing a space for rights holders to articulate to duty bearers their vision of basic services that meet the needs of youth, adolescent girls, the disabled, and the elderly. The Forum gave rise to creative efforts on equality and non-discrimination to apply the concept of a ‘life cycle’ approach to basic service delivery.

As we look to the future, the Council will assist Member States to implement the SDGs. This will involve enabling countries to attain not only WASH targets of Goal 6, but also to use the process of attaining WASH targets as a means to achieve targets on poverty eradication, education, health, women’s empowerment, inequality, and institutions as well as a means of implementation.

The aim of this brochure is to share reflections on what WSSCC means to a cross section of our community. In addition to our members, and many partner organizations, the WSSCC community includes National Coordinators, Global Sanitation Fund programme managers, a democratically elected Steering Committee, and bi-lateral donor partners. Through their testimonials, you will discover what is at the core of WSSCC and feel the spirit of our global movement to improve sanitation and hygiene for everyone.
From the beginning, the founders wanted the new Council to be different from its predecessor organization (mostly a donor group), but several meetings had ended in deadlock trying to agree on a format which would escape the rigidities of an international organization structure.

I was asked to Chair this new and still undefined organization, and took over the gavel of a meeting which had already begun (my plane was late), and had no fixed agenda because there was no real plan of action.

So – we just got going. We didn’t set up any regional groups, or formal organizational structures at the first meeting, we just got on with about four or five tasks that everyone agreed were urgent. Different folks agreed to take on the coordination of each task.

Ranjit Wirasinha had been named to run the organization – and he did; fundraising, galvanizing and organizing meetings on the tasks which everyone agreed were important. Ranjit and his wife Malkanti entertained us and our conviviality nearly got them evicted from their Geneva apartment.

And off we went.

We went on like that for several years, and the structures sort of emerged and became solid. It was a rather unconventional way to set up an organization – BUT – it’s endured, and strengthened, attracted a great membership, contributed and continued for 25 years. Happy Birthday to all of us!

Margaret Catley-Carlson, First Regular Chair, 1990-1996
“WSSCC was originally established to maintain the momentum of the Water and Sanitation Decade (1981-90). From the outset, ‘collaboration’ was the keyword and continues to be so through its membership; my involvement in the early 1990s in a number of working groups who brought together professionals and donors in a unique way; and our membership remains central to providing authenticity to the Council’s voice. Whilst the organization has adapted and changed appropriately in response to global circumstances and conditions, WSSCC was an early champion of the importance of hygiene and addressing equality in both global advocacy and national programming. I am delighted that this has remained central to WSSCC, including through the unique work and achievements of the Global Sanitation Fund.

Andrew Cotton, Acting Chair, 2015-present

“The World is changing. The population is growing and issues such as climate change will strongly impact the WASH and health sectors. The situation today is very different from 1990 when WSSCC was created. The Council will need to be responsive and innovative to address those challenges. This may involve the Council’s mandate to change, even expand, although the focus would still be access to water, sanitation and hygiene services for the marginalized and the unserved. Collaboration is, and should stay at, the core of its mandate. None of today’s challenges will be addressed without solid collaboration between countries, agencies and organizations. I wish for WSSCC to play a pivotal role in bringing everyone together.

Ranjith Wirasinha, Executive Director, 1991-2000
As a National Coordinator for WSSCC in Nepal, I feel like I am acting as a WASH ambassador, which comes with great responsibility for helping people in need. I am proud of being part of WSSCC!

Guna Raj Shrestha,
National Coordinator
There is much to celebrate as WSSCC marks its 25th anniversary, but it is the organization’s commitment to the once orphaned sector of sanitation that stands out. From the retro-active inclusion of sanitation under the MDGs, to the International Year of Sanitation, to the inaugural AfricaSan conference, WSSCC has consistently championed the cause of sanitation for all, working with civil society and national governments, to deliver high-level political will and tangible changes in global and national policy.

Oliver Cumming, Lecturer In Environmental Health at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Pour moi, le WSSCC c’est la locomotive d’un mouvement mondial qui s’engage à redonner aux peuples leur dignité en toute équité, et cela en fédérant l’énergie de ses membres, et celle de partenaires de bonne volonté, autour de causes nobles et naturelles, mais souvent négligées, telles que l’hygiène menstruelle ou mettre fin à la défécation à l’air libre.

Achille Lokossou, Coordinateur National, Togo

On the occasion of the WSSCC’s 25th anniversary, I would like to offer my sincerest congratulations to the Council. Through its work at local and global levels, WSSCC has changed the lives of millions of people without access to water, sanitation and hygiene services. Everyone associated with the Council, whether in Geneva or in the field, deserves to be very proud. The Council’s continuing leadership in the global effort to achieve access to safe sanitation and hygiene for all by 2030 is an inspiration to us all.

Roberto Lenton, Chair, 2005-2011
It is always a pleasure to collaborate with WSSCC. The commitment and passion for human rights, and especially for destigmatizing menstrual hygiene management and advocating for the protection of women’s human rights, has fueled significant momentum around these issues in national and international discourses. I am confident that the next 25 years hold even more achievements for the organization and look forward to continuing our alliance.

Lucinda O’Hanlon, Adviser on Women’s Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

"Speaking from intense personal experiences, I have to say that WSSCC has been a great partner and a great source of learning. The Global Forum on Sanitation and Hygiene in Mumbai was brilliantly planned and facilitated and seminal in shifting and expanding the agenda in the sector. Since then, I have particularly enjoyed collaborating with WSSCC’s National Coordinators, for example in India, where I co-convened and facilitated workshops, which have brought practitioners and innovators together, and has opened doors and helped to pave the way for the Rapid Action Learning Unit in India, vital for fast progress. For the future I hope WSSCC, with support from its donors, will exploit the flexibility of its niche to encourage creative diversity of practices and participatory learning more widely, drawing on the pioneering work from the GSF programme in Cambodia. The sector badly needs the innovation, sharing of lessons and inspiration to which WSSCC is uniquely well placed to contribute.

Robert Chambers, Research Associate, Institute of Development Studies"
“Only one thing matters: that everybody in the world has adequate water and sanitation. The WASH development community only exists to serve those people who do not. For 25 years WSSCC has played a valuable role within that community. Its unusual structure as a membership organization hosted within the UN system gives it the flexibility to innovate combined with the status to influence. I am confident that it will continue to play an important role in the future.

Jon Lane, Executive Director, 2007-2012
Healthy people leading dignified lives, that’s the goal the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) shares with WSSCC. We have been a partner of WSSCC since its inception 25 years ago. With its relatively nimble organizational structure it has made a massive contribution to achieving the DGIS sanitation target. What makes WSSCC unique is the combination of an implementation mechanism, the Global Sanitation Fund, which can reach scale, and its advocacy and normative work, which helps to influence policy at national and global level. The new partnership with the Global Poverty Project is exciting and will surely put sanitation more firmly on the map, as it should. We look forward to our continued collaboration with WSSCC and its network of members in the SDG era.

Pim van der Male, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

It gladdens my heart to see the growing importance WSSCC has attached to Africa. From the period spanning 1995 to 1998 I was the Coordinator for the Working Group on Water Supply and Sanitation Development in Africa; in 2015 there are now 11 Coordinators!!! Congrats WSSCC! Congrats Africa!

Ebele Okeke, long-time member and WASH Ambassador for Nigeria
25 years of WSSCC. 25 years of taking pride in being different, of pioneering new directions in the WASH field – of popularizing WASH itself! And above all, 25 years of amazing passion and commitment!

Having been here for over half of its existence, when I think of WSSCC, I think about its people. Working in development takes passion and commitment, but in my experience working in sanitation takes an even stronger (slightly quirky?) kind of passion, and the Council epitomizes this. From the Philippines to Jamaica, from Zimbabwe to Bulgaria and everywhere in between, for two and a half decades, amazing people around the globe have dedicated themselves to the WASH cause. Most often voluntarily offering up huge amounts of their time and energy, they’ve been our National and Regional Coordinators and led national WASH Coalitions; have coordinated thematic and regional working groups and networks; strengthened civil society and grassroots capacity and voice; worked jointly with governments to develop and strengthen policies, programmes and strategies and, through their membership of WSSCC, have openly, sometimes heatedly but always constructively, debated and discussed how to achieve the goal of water supply, sanitation and hygiene for all.

These people, widespread and far away as they may be, are what makes me want to come to work every day, where I’m then greeted by an equally driven and passionate and steadily growing group of like-minded colleagues.

WSSCC now has a strong and growing Global Sanitation Fund demonstrating the huge potential of behaviour change-driven programming and mobilizing huge numbers of people for the cause. The Council has always been about building platforms, bringing people together and starting movements. With the now firmly established focus on sanitation and hygiene, our traditional focus on working for and with the most vulnerable people, strong country-level and sector-wide networks and the Global Sanitation Fund, the Council is extremely well-positioned to build a movement even stronger and greater than before.

Country-level collaboration to design and implement roadmaps and strategies towards nation-wide coverage is as essential now as it has been at any time in WSSCC’s past, and our experience and momentum gained, position us to continue to make an even larger difference in the next 25 years.

Carolien van der Voorden, Learning and Documentation, Global Sanitation Fund, WSSCC
“WSSCC – My Learning Institution: I joined WSSCC in 1997, seven years after it was formed. My first assignment was to conduct a listening and visioning exercise in Myanmar, which then led to Vision 21, a comprehensive vision for water, sanitation and health in the 21st century. During my time as a National Coordinator in Myanmar, I was grateful for the support and capacity building received from the team at WSSCC. Particularly, I remember the bottle of champagne I won for the ‘elevator pitch’ exercise during a media training session. I became a Steering Committee member in 2012 for the South Eastern/East Asia region. Now in my second term, I like to contribute and think out of the box regarding some of the future challenges for the organization, such as the Global Sanitation Fund and Menstrual Hygiene Management.

Khin Maung Lwin, previous National Coordinator, Myanmar and Steering Committee member

WSSCC has been ahead of the global development curve. By establishing the Global Sanitation Fund, not only did WSSCC directly address the MDGs’ flawed focus on water over sanitation and hygiene, it also countered the donor tendency to prescribe established approaches rather than enabling community-led approaches that inspire innovation but are harder to explain and measure. Now that the SDGs reflect the imperative for an urgent focus on sanitation and hygiene, no doubt donors will follow WSSCC’s lead.

Tim Kellow, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Concern Universal (GSF Executing Agency in Nigeria)
In 2003, when working with WaterAid, I heard about a WASH Coalition supported by WSSCC. I signed up as a member and through the coalition I was able to engage with many WASH professionals. Those opportunities deepened my understanding of the sector. WSSCC has been instrumental in bringing people together and in providing opportunities for learning and sharing. HAPPY 25th ANNIVERSARY WSSCC.

Wilhelmina Malima, National Coordinator, Tanzania

WSSCC is a platform that globally advocates for the basic human right to sanitation and hygiene, striving to reach the unreached and put people at the centre of development. WSSCC accomplishes this by building the capacity of partners and actively engaging diverse sector actors to achieve ‘sanitation for all and all for sanitation’.

Sudha Shrestha, GSF Programme Manager, UN-Habitat, Nepal
Reflections on her 25th birthday

(In recognition of the men and women in her life: Richard, Ranjith, Ghouri, Roberto, Jon, Chris, Maggie and Anna)

She was always a loud baby: even at birth

She was the post-Decade voice, building her worth

Pre-adolescent at the World Summit in 2002

She called for sanitation to be an MDG, too

Adolescence spelt trouble: no money, tough decisions on the boat

Loyal staff made hard sacrifices to keep her afloat

The dedication paid off, we were all stunned

A new star appeared with a multimillion dollar sanitation fund

Now 25, showing maturity beyond her age

She moved from advocacy to action, she turned another page

She inspires learning, thought and action

For her, networking is a breeze

Keep at this pace

We’ll meet the SDGs

With ease.

Piers Cross, long-time member of WSSCC, former Global Manager of the Water and Sanitation Program and sometimes poet!
As a unique member of the UN family, WSSCC is working collaboratively on equity, inclusion, knowledge dissemination, advocacy and communication. WSSCC has made seminal contributions to the global efforts for providing people access to improved water, sanitation and hygiene services, particularly to the poor and marginalized in least developed countries across Asia and Africa. Lives of millions of people have changed for the better due to WSSCC-supported initiatives across the globe over the last 25 years.

**Vinod Mishra, former National Coordinator, India**

““ It has been a pleasure and privilege to collaborate with WSSCC for almost a decade. WSSCC is celebrating its 25th anniversary at a most auspicious moment: the end of the Millennium Development Goals, and the beginning of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). If the SDGs are to be successful in eliminating poverty, and in providing sanitation, water, and hygiene to everyone on the planet by 2030 (if not before), WSSCC’s work in Geneva, the efforts of its Global Sanitation Fund, and the in-country work of its National Coordinators in developing countries, must continue to grow. WSSCC has an important opportunity to strengthen collaboration with its many partners, including the Sanitation and Water for All partnership, to both encourage the world to take the SDGs seriously and to point the way there by strengthening national and sub-national efforts – both programming and advocacy – to get more sanitation, more sustainably, to more people in tighter timeframes. I wish WSSCC continued and growing success in its life-saving and game-changing efforts and I trust that the international donor community will continue to support those efforts.

**John Oldfield, CEO, WASH Advocates**
WSSCC’s amazing journey over the last 25 years hasn’t been easy, but the conceptual framework it was founded on and the determination of its founders and supporters have made the organization resilient to all challenges. Now, WSSCC is the only prominent global body that facilitates alliance and collaboration among all water and sanitation actors. The strength of WSSCC is in its ability to be the ‘council of the people’, driven by its pro-poor, people-centred approach, as well as its Global Sanitation Fund.

Amsalu Negussie, GSF Programme Manager and former WSSCC Steering Committee member, Plan International, Malawi

I have known WSSCC since 2007 and I have always been inspired by the Council, constantly increasing my knowledge about sanitation and hygiene through diverse country perspectives published on its website. The Global Sanitation Fund is a unique programme that addresses sanitation in a unique way and it has given sanitation and hygiene the priority it deserves. It has shown the world that sanitation is everyone’s business and together we can make the world a better place to live in, now and in the future.

Nyanzobe Malimi, Programme Director, UMATA Programme, Plan International, Tanzania (GSF Executing Agency)
Two memories of WSSCC in action stand out in my mind: firstly, the Dakar Global WASH Forum: a very lively event, with Gourisankar Ghosh at his best! I recall waiting with all participants in the plenary hall for the President of Senegal to arrive and then Gouri making the introduction in French! Secondly, the UNICEF-WSSCC ‘engagement’ event, in the Labouisse Hall in UNICEF New York Headquarters. That was a memorable meeting, with Vanessa Tobin and Gourisankar Ghosh, both ‘movers-and-shakers’, strong-headed but also very different personalities, trying to bring the two organizations together. The marriage did not happen. And WSSCC moved into one of the most turbulent times of its existence.

Hendrik van Norden, Regional Adviser Sanitation & Hygiene, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
Twenty-five years WSSCC. A milestone of a quarter century on the crowded water and sanitation stage. What is the secret of its success? Adaptability is one. The Council has been able to reinvent itself several times in response to change and new needs. Results orientation is another. The Council has been determined to translate global strategies into local outcomes. And unconventional partnerships is a third. Identifying new partners and giving them a clear profile has been high on the Council’s agenda. WSSCC’s staff and leadership can take pride in their achievements in applying these principles over 25 years.

Fataou Salami, Spécialiste WASH, UNICEF Togo (Agence d’Exécution du GSF)

Robert Bos, Former Coordinator Water, Sanitation and Health, World Health Organization
For its first 25 years WSSCC has been, in turn, convener, networker, knowledge generator, advocate, mentor and catalyst for the sector. Just imagine what it will do in the next 15...

Darren Saywell, Senior Director Plan International, WSSCC Programme Manager, 2000-2004, and Steering Committee Member, 2007-2010

WSSCC is a courageous organization and has worked on issues that have been hitherto neglected in the sector. It has championed the cause of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) – a taboo – systematically assessing the challenges and needs of adolescent girls and women regarding MHM and devising practical strategies to address them. WSSCC has systematically addressed the issue of equity in access and benefits and has worked successfully with vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, the disabled, people living with HIV/AIDS, and so forth. It has reached people who reside in geographically hard to access areas and areas where it is difficult to construct basic toilets and practice safe and hygienic practices. WSSCC articulates the voice of the poor and marginalized and promotes sustainable solutions that are nested in local cultures and can be managed by local communities. WSSCC interventions have a transformative impact. Through the Global Sanitation Fund, much has been achieved with the unlocking of major bottlenecks to progress for sustainable sanitation in implementing countries. Lives have been saved and lives have been changed for the better.

Anand Shekhar, GSF Programme Manager, NRMC India Private Ltd.
It has been a pleasure, at both the corporate and individual level, to work together with WSSCC since 2013 on the topic of partnerships for menstrual hygiene management (MHM). The talented and committed team at WSSCC bring innovation and a unrelenting focus on a rights-based approach to sanitation and hygiene. They also bring an infectious enthusiasm and a collaborative spirit, which are key to add momentum to the movement needed to achieve change. Accenture is proud to be a part of one of WSSCC’s recent collaborations with the private sector and we look forward to continuing to partner together to improve sanitation for the most vulnerable, particularly for women and girls.

Mary Woodgate, Accenture Development Partnerships, Global Programmes, UK Lead

“Congratulations to WSSCC for its 25th anniversary! For this occasion and on behalf of the WASH sector in Cambodia, I would like to commend WSSCC for its support to developing countries in improving sanitation and hygiene. Through its Global Sanitation Fund, it reaches out to the poorest families in rural communities, encouraging them to change behaviours to live in clean, open defecation free, environments. Under the leadership of WSSCC, I do believe that we will contribute to the new Global Goals and its Targets which involve water, sanitation and hygiene.

Chea Samnang, National Coordinator, Cambodia
With the approval of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the word ‘collaborative’ in the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council’s name has become even more central. Only if the Council really values and constructively builds on collaborative efforts will the SDGs be reached. Switzerland has supported WSSCC from its beginning and has been instrumental in creating the Global Sanitation Fund. We are convinced that the focus on improving sanitation and hygiene is crucial for reaching many SDGs, be it on health, food security and nutrition, women’s empowerment and education.

Johan Gély, Head Global Programme Water Initiatives, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

“Pour moi, le WSSCC est un puissant réseau de plaidoyer et de mobilisation inclusive, se souciant en priorité des plus pauvres et vulnérables.

Joséa Ratsirarson, Directeur Pays, ‘Medical Care Development International’ (Agence d’Exécution du GSF), Madagascar
“Despite long-standing evidence that water, sanitation and hygiene are fundamental to health, many governments and related institutions have become distanced from water and sanitation particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia, worsening the sanitation and hygiene crisis. WSSCC through its collaborative approaches has progressively grown to be a strong membership organization and as a movement has given voice to the most vulnerable and marginalized people in society, thus becoming an advocate. To me, I must say that I am humbled, honoured, and at the same time excited to be associated with the many gallant men and women who have made this a reality.

Daniel Kurao, GSF Programme Manager, Kenya Sanitation and Hygiene Improvement Programme, Amref Health Africa in Kenya

“As a long-time member of WSSCC and a former National Coordinator of Sri Lanka, I particularly appreciated the way the organization maintained links with its members. It did this by bringing together developing countries and external support agencies, not only during the important global forums but also in between, where events were organized on a regular basis, through mechanisms such as international working groups on selected issues, networks for continuous exchange and sub-regional workshops.

I am really proud to state that my country made great achievements when Sri Lanka hosted SACOSAN IV in 2011. The current standards of school sanitation are the result of decisions taken at the SACOSAN IV. Those were strongly influenced by WSSCC advocating to the H.E. the President of the Sri Lankan Government and key ministries such as the Ministry of Health, Education and Water Supply.

The way WSSCC created links and supported its family is very significant. We in Sri Lanka wish to remain in the WSSCC family and deepen our association.

It is my great privilege to share my thoughts in this booklet at the occasion of WSSCC’s 25th anniversary celebration.

Lal Premanath, long-time member and former National Coordinator, Sri Lanka
Through my engagement with WSSCC, I learned that its raison d’être is providing WASH for the poor on this globe. This should remain its focus for the near and distant future.

I still remember how instrumental WSSCC was in bringing the first ever regional sanitation conference to Bangladesh. It brought duty bearers and rights holders together and it is encouraging to observe that the participation of grassroots has become an important part of the South Asia regional sanitation movement and conferences.

Dibalok Singa, former National Coordinator, Bangladesh

It was really challenging to convince politicians and decision makers to prioritize WASH in the development agenda. Drinking water was submerged in a broader water agenda and sanitation and hygiene were far from being realized. With the continuous hard work from WSSCC members at local, national and global level, I am glad to see the attention and priority that WASH has gained today, resulting in a sanitation and hygiene movement across the globe. This could not have been possible without WSSCC, with its focused agenda on sanitation and hygiene. I feel very proud to have been involved in laying the foundations and adding some brick works to this global achievement as a member, National Coordinator for Nepal and a steering committee member. I wish WSSCC a happy 25th anniversary and all the best in continuing to realize WASH for all.

Umesh Pandey, former National Coordinator, Nepal and former Steering Committee member
For me, WSSCC is a unique organization in many ways: It gives a voice to the marginalized people, it engages in multi-stakeholder policy and advocacy work and it generates and facilitates knowledge for the sector. To carry out WSSCC’s vision and mission, its global engagement and leadership will continue to be of critical importance.

Shah Md Anowar Kamal, National Coordinator, Bangladesh

More than half of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency’s (Sida) overall support to water and sanitation goes to provision of clean water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as management of sewage and waste disposal.

Sida’s perspective is that the cooperation with WSSCC works highly efficiently and has been extremely relevant, as WSSCC’s focus is on the poorest, the most marginalized and disadvantaged in terms of hygienic and sanitary services in the chosen partner countries.

A global funding mechanism like the Global Sanitation Fund has shown that it can contribute to the existing funding gap for sanitation, by investments in awareness, capacity building and behaviour change for sustainable sanitation.

WSSCC’s work on menstrual hygiene management can also be highlighted as a highly important area that has been significantly lifted by the organization, a gender issue, which is stigmatizing innumerable women and especially girls, resulting in drop out from schools due to lack of proper school sanitation.

Sida looks forward to a continued collaboration and to seeing an increased focus on ecological sanitation in the Community-Led Total Sanitation approach.

Ana Gren, Senior Policy Specialist Water Resources Management and Sanitation, and Johan Sundberg, Senior Programme Specialist Water and Sanitation, Sida
In Memoriam

By Manas Paul

MY FATHER’S QUEST FOR HAPPINESS

*Milon Bikash Paul | 30 June 1948 – 19 August 2014
National Coordinator, Bangladesh

For my father, his arduous journey started from a small middle-class family in a remote village in Chittagong without access to even basic services and facilities. Inspired by my grandfather who was a schoolteacher, my father chose to be a college teacher for his first profession and then moved to BRAC, the largest non-governmental development organization in the world and based in Bangladesh. Later he joined the Population Services & Training Center (PSTC) where he stayed until he retired. “Switching to PSTC was the biggest move in my career,” he used to say.

Under my father’s helm, PSTC not only became one of the most successful NGOs in Bangladesh, but also increased in size – from 5 to 18 development partners, and from 6 to 33 multifaceted projects under 9 programme areas covering Health Services Delivery, Environmental Health (water and sanitation), Child and Adolescent Development, Government and Rights, HIV/AIDS Prevention and Economic Development. Although he was a comprehensive development agent, water and sanitation always received special attention.

My father was a natural leader with his own unique humble, yet charismatic and assertive leadership capabilities that have been accredited and acknowledged through numerous awards such as the prestigious Triple A Award 2011-12, Dhaka City Corporation’s GAVI Award 2008 and Sanitation for All Award 2010 by the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative. As a result, when my father’s long-time development sector acquaintance and friend, Mr Dibalok Singha, was completing his tenure with WSSCC as the National Coordinator of Bangladesh, the unanimous choice as the successor was my father. When approached with the offer, my father accepted the opportunity with arms wide open and took it as an opportunity to serve the socially disadvantaged community not only within the bounds of Bangladesh but beyond.

As the National Coordinator of WSSCC in Bangladesh, my father formulated a two-year action plan emphasizing the empowerment of community-based organizations as a catalytic factor in accelerating action for sanitation, hygiene, and safe water at the grassroots level. He was trying to contribute but unfortunately within a few months of being entrusted with the responsibility, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Even when he was undergoing treatment, until his last day, he urged and craved to contribute to WSSCC in whatever capacity possible. His dedication to the cause still remains inspiring for many. I was privileged during this time to have worked as his associate – helping him draft his correspondences and other documentation.

Commitment to the community was the core mantra that my father adhered to and preached throughout his life. On receiving the Triple A Award in Manila, Philippines he was quoted as saying, “I dedicate this award to the disadvantaged people of Bangladesh for whom my colleagues and I have been working for... And will continue to work for the upliftment of the poor and the socially disadvantaged community.” I can surely say, my father not only dedicated the award but his entire life towards the development of the disadvantaged communities.

To my father’s colleagues and friends at WSSCC and at other development organizations, I would urge everyone to continue your quest of accelerating upliftment of the socially disadvantaged. With every smile we instil, my father will find eternal bliss.
In Memoriam

By Nelson Musabaya

A TRIBUTE TO MY MOTHER

Nomathemba Neseni /  
24 October 1963 – 30 August 2012

National Coordinator, former Steering Committee member, Zimbabwe

The journey of life is unpredictable and each day's outcome is inevitable. When my mother, the late Nomathemba Neseni was there, she would give guidance and advice, which she had acquired through her experiences in life. She was an inspiration to many in her profession, but she was also the greatest inspiration to our family. As a mother of three children, she made efforts to give everyone her attention. Though I hope to pursue her profession in the water sector, I always knew that I could never acquire her traits and qualities. She loved, and cared and was considerate for all, regardless of position; this is what made her stand out. She found joy and comfort in seeing others smile. Though we miss her, we try to follow her footsteps so that her memory lives on and the scent of her love can spread to those who are in need of a comforting hand.

About WSSCC

WSSCC is at the heart of the global movement to improve sanitation and hygiene, so that all people can enjoy healthy and productive lives. Established in 1990, WSSCC is the only United Nations body devoted solely to the sanitation needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized people. In collaboration with our members in 150 countries, WSSCC advocates for the billions of people worldwide who lack access to good sanitation, shares solutions that empower communities, and operates the GSF, which since 2008 has committed close to US$ 109 million to transform lives in developing countries.

Learn more at www.wsscc.org

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