

washplus

Bangladesh

What We Did

The clean cooking stage was at a unique phase when WASHplus entered the scene in 2012. After decades of dedication to one unexceptional locally produced improved mud cookstove, a unique convergence of government and development partners joined forces to work to establish a cookstove market, strengthen the government's ability to enforce standards and regulate, and develop finance options and incentives to build sustainable supply chains and generate demand.

In this environment, WASHplus received field support from USAID/Bangladesh to work closely with the USAID/Catalyzing Clean Energy for Bangladesh (CCEB) program and the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves to conduct a comprehensive assessment to better understand consumer needs and preferences as they relate to increasing the uptake of improved cookstoves (ICS) in Bangladesh, including household trials of improved stoves, two different willingness to pay methods, stove use monitoring using temperature-sensing data loggers to track actual stove use, and kitchen performance testing to assess resulting changes in household fuel use, as well as indoor air pollution in a subset of homes. WASHplus shared consumer feedback with manufacturers of each of the study stoves, and gave them the opportunity to modify the stoves accordingly; most did so, and the revised versions were well-received. These revised versions were also tested for efficiency through controlled cooking tests conducted in-country. In addition, WASHplus supported the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves in developing a marketing and behavior change strategy for Bangladesh, including evidence-based approaches to increase the uptake of stoves. This drew on lessons learned in Bangladesh and other countries in the South Asia region in behavior change, demand creation, and marketing of WASH products and cookstoves.



Why It Matters



Given lack-luster interest in the stoves, and very low willingness to pay for them, researchers recommended that stove promotion activities in-country not focus on the kinds of higher-end imported stoves included in the study; the USAID CCEB program was able to avoid wasted programming costs and instead focus on improving locally produced ICS.



Greenway Appliances developed the JumboStove based on WASHplus consumer requests for a larger version of the SmartStove; the company hadn't previously considered developing a larger stove. Neha Juneja, CEO of Greenway, thanked WASHplus for the impetus to develop the JumboStove, which is selling very well in India and was well liked in a WASHplus Nepal study.



As in Nepal, in-country and global stakeholders learned the strategic lessons that flow from accompanying the process of mixed-method market research, and its critical role in developing a marketing strategy organized around the "4Ps" –product, price, place, promotion. Key stakeholders learned the fundamentals of the marketing mix and human-centered design: Based on consumer input, the product might need to be changed to fit people's needs and wants instead of finding ways to promote the "perfectly engineered" product to target consumers.



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