



In picture: MISAAL community groups discussing aspirational improvement plans of their settlement with municipal officials of Ahmedabad.

M I S A A L
MOVING INDIA TOWARDS SANITATION FOR ALL

**A blueprint on Local Government and Community
Connect**

**Initiative by
Urban Management Centre**

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About the document

This document is developed as part of USAID supported Moving India towards Sanitation for All (MISAAL) program, which is being implemented under our effort to support cities to sustain open defecation free (ODF) status under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U). The document highlights the processes made towards bringing community and local governments together to work in collaboration for ODF-S, behaviour change and overall slum level improvements. The document is an earnest effort to codify learnings into a blueprint for establishing a connect between Local government and community for ODF-S in urban context.



The Urban Management Centre (UMC) is a women-promoted not for profit organization, that works towards professionalizing urban management in India and worldwide. UMC provides technical assistance and support to city governments and facilitates change through peer-to-peer learning processes. It enhances the capacity of city governments by providing expertise and ready access to innovations on good governance implemented in India and abroad. UMC extensively works in the areas of urban water and sanitation, heritage management, planning, urban health, municipal finance, urban management, urban transportation and institutional restructuring. UMC is a legacy organization of International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and hence is also known as ICMA-South Asia. For more information, visit our website: www.umcasia.org

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I. Background

Urban Local Bodies (ULB) in India are working towards sustaining their open defecation free (ODF) status under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM). While ULBS are building infrastructure, engaging with the community to use them and build community ownership around it remains a challenge. ULBs also struggle to undertake meaningful information-education-communication (IEC) and to change behaviour of citizens towards sustainable sanitation. Citizens on the other hand, especially urban poor communities face challenges in reaching out to the ULBs to address their civic concerns & put forward their development ideas and fail to participate in meaningfully in bringing improvements.

To address above challenges, the Urban Management Centre (UMC) under its USAID supported “Moving India towards Sanitation for All” or the MISAAL program develop a blueprint to sustain ODF status in the cities for creating meaningful partnerships between citizens and ULBs. It focuses on participatory community approach by:

1. Establishing MISAAL Settlement Committees (MSC) – RWA-equivalent institution of community groups in urban poor settlements
2. Strengthen capacities in ULB to collaborate with community institutions towards sustainable developments

This blueprint is based on the multi-stakeholder approach to create an eco-system focussed on addressing ODF sustenance challenges including:

- a) Last mile gaps in WASH services, especially in slums and slum-like settlements
- b) Absence of robust service delivery performance measurement and monitoring mechanisms
- c) Limited public awareness efforts towards sustainable WASH
- d) Sustained behaviour change communication through interpersonal means.

As of December 2020, a total of 208 MSCs were formed, trained, and mentored in 200+ urban poor communities across MISAAL’s intervention cities of Ahmedabad & Porbandar in Gujarat, Jodhpur in Rajasthan, and Sambalpur in Odisha. Through these MSCs, a total of 2,700 community leaders have been mobilized with 90% of them being women who have settlement improvement plans (SIP) – an aspirational micro-plan of their settlements. SIPs were being presented to respective ward officers and ULBs have initiated improvements and grievances redressal based on their interactions with the MSCs.

UMC has also developed enabling tools to equip MSC for planning a monitoring of civic services in their settlements which has helped them to work in collaboration with local governments and facilitated knowledge transfer from citizens to decision makers.

2. Approach on creating settlement level institution for citizen’s participation

UMC believes that sustaining ODF requires community centric approaches to trigger this change in behaviour. UMC initially tested this approach in various communities and it was realized that a holistic idea of “settlement improvement” along with communicating behaviour change was required. Thus, MISAAL’s approach on sustaining ODF is around enabling settlement improvement and behaviour change communication through community’s participation. To achieve this, a local level representation is required that functions like an RWA equivalent in urban poor settlements. This representation will unite people, enable them to discuss and deliberate over their concerns, become their voice and volunteer towards improving their own settlement.

3. Process of creating settlement level institution- MISAAL Committees

UMC initiated engaging with community in their settlement to identify individuals and form a voluntary group. These groups under MISAAL are called MISAAL Settlement Committee (MSC) who will create community level ownership, conduct advocacy and collectivize & mobilize people to participate in this process of change. People from different religion, caste, gender, occupation, etc. who are likeminded and willing to work towards achieving collective aspirations of the community were identified for the formation of MSC. MSC constitutes of 10-12 members residing in the same settlement; spatially spread across and has minimum 50% representation from women. The people from youth organization, Anganwadi workers, healthcare workers and caregivers, teachers, people connected with any govt. institution, SHGs, etc. were targeted for the formation of MSCs. To establish a regular partnership with them, a 2-pronged approach was adopted:

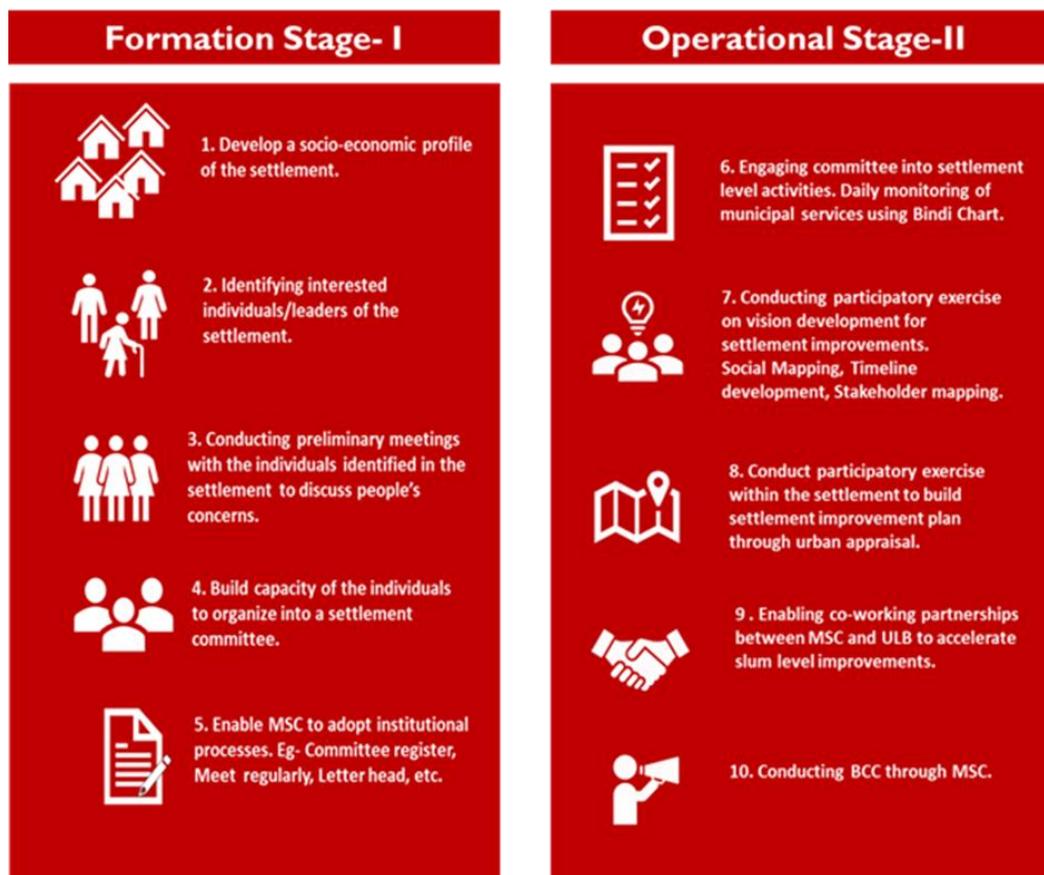
a). Leadership development in the MSCs

Enhancing civic awareness, mentoring and building capacity of the individuals to effectively resolving conflicts, debate, disagreement and make internal decisions were some of areas for leadership development during the formation of MSCs. This process enabled in developing strong representation at settlement level.

b). Enabling MSC with tools and mechanism for operationalizing them.

Once the committee is established, they were supported with tools to be able them to function, have dialogue with diverse stakeholders, to build consensus in the community, do advocacy and knowledge management. UMC has developed simpler tools to do the same and is supporting MSC in its adoption.

The stepwise process adopted for formation of MSC to operationalize them is described below:



Suggestive guidelines for the formation of settlement committee

1. One committee must be constituted in every intervention slum/settlement for every 100 households approximately.
2. Each committee must comprise 10 to 12 members with at least 50 percent representation from women. All members of the committee must be above 18 years old at the time of formation of the committee and must be residing in the settlement. It may be only women committee as case may be. Members from existing groups like SHG/ Mahila Arogya Samiti (MAS)/ ASHA may be considered part or entirely called as MISAAL committee.
3. More than one committee may be constituted in a settlement only if:
 - a. The settlement is larger than 200 households, in which case, committees may be constituted after dividing the settlement geographically and as suitable to the context, location and community
 - b. The settlement partially sits on untenable land including railways, forest, defence, airports, ports, and other similar situations. Separate committee(s) may be formed for such portions of the settlement.
 - c. The settlement comprises heterogeneous communities based on caste, occupation, religion, region/ state of origin, living in geographically segregated area(s) of the settlement, and where the program team feels that one community would not voice their opinion on a common platform.
Efforts to bring them together should be made. However, if needed separate committee(s) may be constituted for such community/ies, provided they live in geographically distinct part(s) of the settlement.
4. Sub-committee(s) may be formed under a committee to address specific issues of the settlement or to represent sub-group(s) within the community which is/are not segregated geographically. For example, a women's sub-committee, water sub-committee, *garba/ yuva/ Ganpati/ puja mandal*, etc. Each sub-committee may comprise 4-6 members. At least one member of each sub-committee must be a part of the settlement level committee.
5. An existing SHG may be termed (and trained) as a committee under MISAAL, provided:
 - a. The SHG is willing voice the settlement's civic matters, especially sanitation and undertake responsibility to address them, just as residents' welfare association/ society in a formal settlement would.
 - b. The community consensus is sought by the program team through consultation and focus group discussions (FGD) in the settlement. During the consultations/ FGDs, the engagement partner must highlight the fact that the SHG members cannot be replaced by other citizens, unless otherwise allowed by the DAY-NULM.
6. A committee may register if eligible, as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 upon internal consensus. Alternatively, the committee may register as CBO/ SHG/AOP or other forms of incorporation.

Collectivization and Mobilization

UMC initiated sanitation mapping where in household level surveys, open defecation vulnerability (OD) vulnerability mapping, community and public toilet audit was conducted to understand WASH profile of the settlement in the initial program phase. This gave an opportunity to interact with the people of the community and helped us to understand their WASH perspective. This activity marked an entry point for the team to engage with community and the social fabric of the settlement.

Figure 1 Focussed group discussion with people in settlements



Through regular meetings and group discussions with the community members over many weeks, women from the communities were identified who took active part in the discussions with the team regarding WASH. In each of the intervention settlements, groups comprising of 10-15 of these women members were set up. The members were collectivised and focussed discussions were conducted with them on civic services and its awareness.

The members were educated on the importance of awareness generation through not only being vocal but using effective IEC and BCC strategies to educate the citizens as well as the civic authorities. Further, to give the members, a sense of identity, they were guided to function like an institution through maintaining registers to record all activities, meetings, discussions, etc. and conducting regular meetings and involving people in deliberation for addressing slum level concerns.

Figure 2 Orientation of active members



Training & Leadership development

To strengthen the overall capacity of groups and to transform them into a committee, various training modules and activities were deployed by UMC and community engagement partner. With this constant handholding support, a transformation was seen in the group where they were able to discuss, debate, have opinion and communicate the same with people of the settlement. These led to the formation of MSC gradually in a span of 6-8 months.

The training focused on importance of using safe sanitation, hand washing habits, menstrual hygiene, waste management. Along with this they were informed about the municipal services they receive, its functioning and how it impacts one's health. They were trained about the municipal functioning and means to interface and establish communication with ULB.

Figure 3 Training modules used for training community groups



Imparting Institutional ethics

To help them organize better and function like an institution, groups were encouraged to maintain a committee register along with a letter head which could be used by them for formal communication with diverse stakeholders. Once formed, the committee was encouraged to meet regularly as mutually decided by all the members. They were encouraged to meet once a month with at least 50% quorum. For the initial period, the meetings were called with varied agenda to keep a committee's active wherein they initiated solving smaller concerns of the settlement. All the activities being conducted by MSC were recorded in the committee register along with meetings conducted by them followed by the signature of the committee members that remained present.

4. Participatory tools to operationalise settlement level institutions/committees

Once the committees were formed, they were engaged to participate in settlement level improvements. To do this, UMC enabled them with tools to assess settlement level issues, identify root causes of the same, assess its impact on the people and to draw local solutions so as to derive local solution through people's participation in a collaborative framework. To do this, UMC developed following participatory tools like that were implemented in MISAAL:

- a. Daily tracking tool or *Bindi* Chart for assessing municipal services
- b. Settlement Improvement Plan (SIP)
- c. Enabling community led BCC/IEC activities
- d. Enabling interface/working partnership between MSC and ULB

4.1 Daily tracking tool/ Bindi chart

Quality of municipal services reaching in the urban poor settlements vary on daily basis and this is the reason for people's distress. A daily monitoring tool to assess quality of service was introduced to MSCs which would help them capture this information where ULBs and MSC can jointly work to strengthen the delivery of municipal services through this local knowledge/information.

This tool¹ enlists municipal services that are being provided in the settlement such as sanitation and waste management, water supply, FSSM related services, etc. It helped people monitor services using a colour code or a *bindi* (a dot) based on their level of satisfaction. The committee is trained to mark a dot or *bindi*; Red for poor, Orange for moderate & Green for good, for each service. The emerging colour pattern helps one understand the trend in the quality of service received over a period in the settlement.

The tool was widely accepted by the MISAAL committees as it was simple to use and less time consuming. People gather daily to discuss about the services and maintained the daily chart. This helped them gather daily information based on which they could discuss with municipal service provider so much so that ward officers found it useful to monitor their private waste collection service agency.

¹ The tracking tool was adapted from Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR)'s tracking tool for use under MISAAL program.

4.2 Settlement improvement plan (SIP)

Settlement Improvement Plan (SIP) is a vision development exercise which is done through participatory appraisal. The plan is an identified set of actions or initiative/s that people of the settlement would like to pursue based on the issues identified by them. This plan helps identify actions, assign responsibilities within MSCs, setting a timeline to achieve the same, etc. The SIP preparation involved the following steps:

1. Development of a social map of the settlement (shows existing infrastructure, landmarks and problem areas)
2. Drawing a timeline to capture major events that happened in the settlement (captures key events, developments in the settlement)
3. Identifying issues and solutions through problem tree analysis (shortlisting of problems and backtracking to root cause)
4. Stakeholder mapping and roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder
5. Prioritizing improvement action

4.2.1 Developing Social Map

This exercise enables the community to gather and develop a map of their settlement through consultations which helps everyone understand the spatial spread of the settlement, locate the challenges in the settlement and ponder on the root causes of the emerging issues. It gives people a sense about number of houses in the settlement, existing services and infrastructure like roads, schools, primary health centre, water supply and sewerage network, streetlights, waste collection routes, etc. This was done by people by either drawing on the smooth surface like a *Rangoli*, while some drew on chart papers. This helped in ice-breaking where people narrate their stories of development, events that have happened and gives a layer of social understanding to the map.

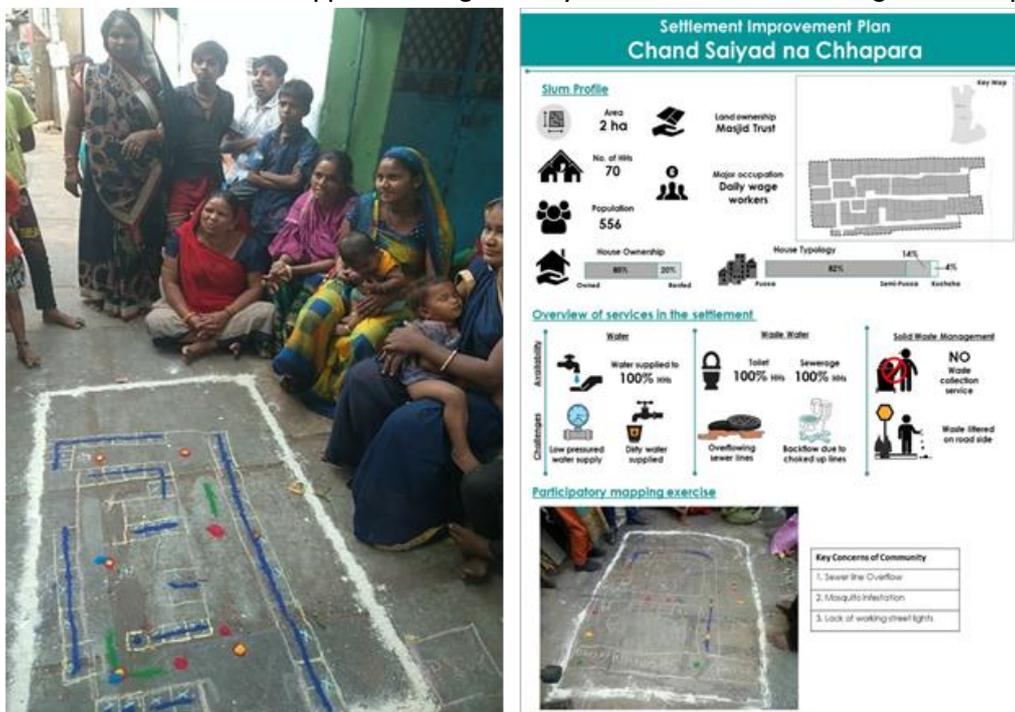
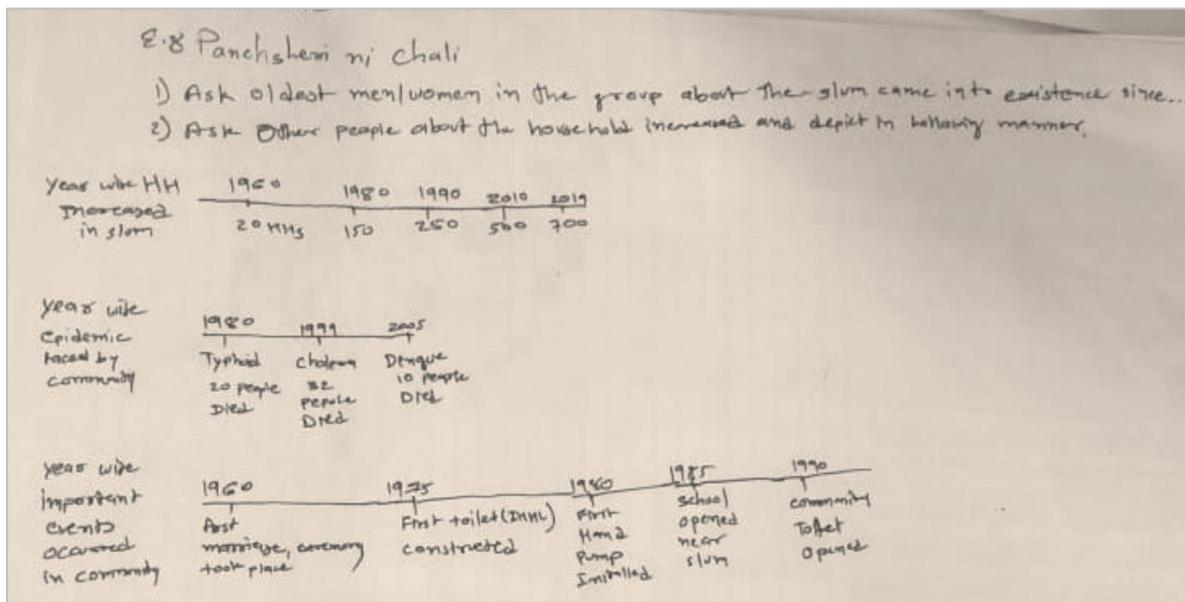


Figure 8: SIP preparation through participatory approach (Left); Sample SIP prepared (Right)

4.2.2 Developing Settlement timeline

Once the social map is developed, next is to develop settlement timeline. The community is then engaged into the discussion about the events that have happened over a period of time in the settlement. During this exercise the community narrates about historic development that has happened in the settlement such as laying of water lines, sewerage network, streetlights, construction of toilets and events like outbreak of the disease. Piece by piece with series of events, a timeline of the settlement develops which helps steer discussion on the lines of settlement improvement. This exercise helps the community understand long, medium and short-term timelines for various infrastructure and services to be built, and that the solutions proposed by the community may require time, coordination between MSC & ULB and people's support.

Figure 9 Settlement development timeline



4.2.3 Issue Identification through problem tree analysis, Stakeholder mapping & Priority Setting

Once the social mapping and timeline is prepared, the next step is developing the action plan for the SIP. During this exercise, the community identifies their collective concerns, its root causes and probable solutions which then leads into identifying actions for MSC members to act upon. Based on the community consultation, the issues are prioritized, and action plan is developed. Prioritization provides a realistic action plan with a timeline to it. During this process, identifying stakeholders is also important stage which helps in establishing expectations from each stakeholder. Based on this, roles are assigned to MSCs (or individual members) which further gives a headway for implementing actions identified in the SIP.

Figure 10 Participatory slum improvement planning



Figure 11 Stakeholder mapping for settlement improvement

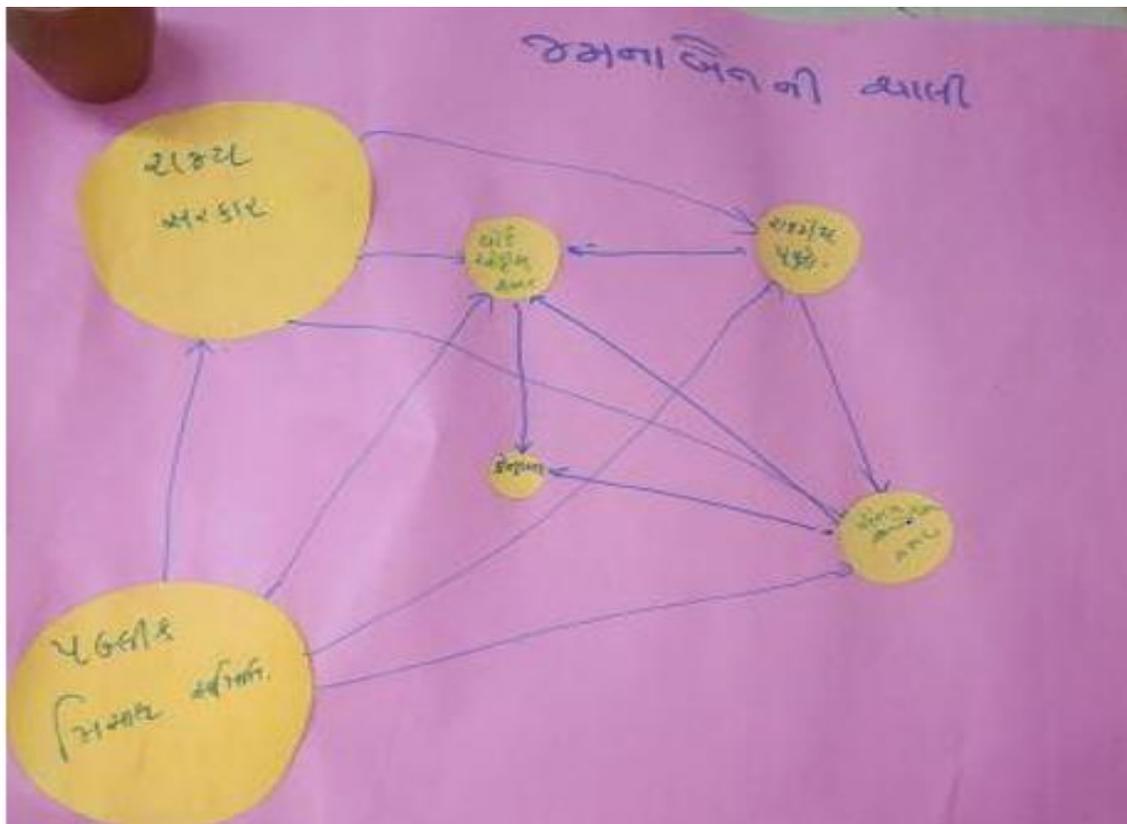
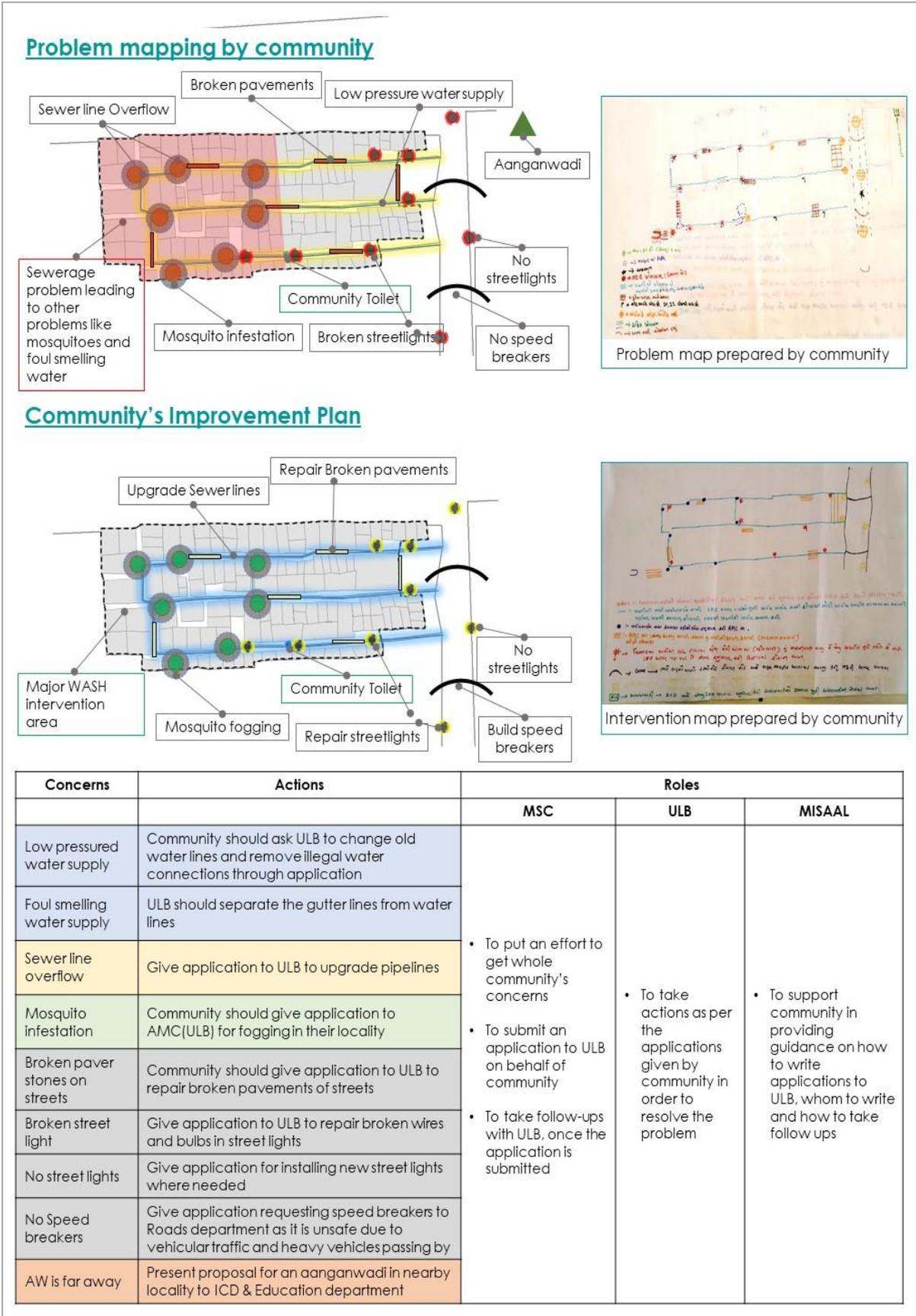


Figure 12 Community Made-Settlement Improvement Plan



4.3 Implementing Settlement Improvement Plan

During the development of SIPs, MSC and community members were encouraged to identify activities which require change in behaviour. Behaviour gaps were jointly identified during consultation and this has helped committees in advancing the implementation of SIP. The idea was to reinforce consistent and high frequency inter-personal communication on behaviour change through peers than mere IEC which local governments implement. Since committees take charge of behaviour change, it helps in achieving good ownership and participation at the settlement level. The material and communication capacity required by the community leaders was provided by UMC. They were later capacitated in developing and customizing communication needs and delivery.

This enabled MSCs to conduct awareness campaigns on waste management, menstrual hygiene, hand washing, and consistent use of toilet and conduct cleanliness drives demonstrating great ownership and participation in change making. Many MSCs roped in their children, youth and elderly to maximize its outreach towards sustained behaviour change.

During Covid lockdown and also in the recent past, these committees have sown great strength and have stood with communities for relief measures, communication Covid appropriate behaviour and conducting vaccine communication to limit hesitancy around the same.

Figure 13 Community led no-cost/low cost BCC/IEC campaign



Figure 14 Community led cleaning drives displaying ownership towards their community



4.4 Enabling interface/working partnership between MSC and ULB

To enhance community participation, there is a need for facilitating local government and communities to talk, deliberate and consensually derive solutions. The local government-community interface that was planned under MISAAL, helped strengthen the roles of the MSCs and instil confidence in their interaction and dealings with the ULB. Such interface helped transfer of local knowledge and solutions creating a win-win situation for both.

The interface meeting conducting between MSC and local government witnessed discussion around the Bindi Charts and SIPs. Together both parties used the platform to come up with solutions to be taken to resolve the concerns that were highlighted. Such interface meetings are gaining wide acceptance from local governments and communities to delivery and enhance municipal services.

Figure 15: Interface meetings between MSCs and ULBs



5. Impact of Local government & Community Connect

These actions have strengthened the 'community connect' (constructive ULB-MSc interactions) and wider acceptance of urban grievance redressal mechanism deployed by the cities. During the baseline survey, UMC found that only 7% people used to formally report grievance. Now this rate has increased to 60% with resolution rate around 80% in the poor communities, justifying informed communities make better habitats.

The interface meetings have helped ULBs take timely action and bring settlement level improvements- infrastructure building and improved services. It was noted that 80% of MISAAL intervention settlements have witnessed development in one or more ways.



Emerging Community Leaders

MSC member Kunti Devada from Choti Bhil Basti in Jodhpur was recently elected as ward councillor. She has attributed the receipt of the position to the knowledge gained and awareness generated for the need to create a change on ground through being a part of the MSC. Since taking charge, she has led the timely resolution of complaints pertaining to re-laying of roads, fixing of sewer lines and ensuring daily D2D collection of waste from the settlements. She serves as a role model to the other women of the area and is leading improvements in her ward.



Figure 16: MSC member Kunti (left) elected as ward councillor in Jodhpur

An effort towards bringing financial independence for MISAAL committees

A natural progression in the MISAAL committees it was realised the need for sustaining these efforts. In the later stage of the program, women from the committees raised a need around establishing financial independence for themselves so that they are empowered and continue to function the way they are doing currently.

This opened the opportunity to discuss skill requirement, learning requirement and livelihood enhancement for women in the committees. To do this, UMC has initiated supporting committees on skill mapping, enhancing financial literacy, entrepreneurship development and options to formally register the community groups into a formal entity. With these efforts, committees are now becoming savings groups, self-help groups to avail livelihood opportunities. Some of the committees that could be converted into SHGs under the program have been contracted by municipal bodies to deliver municipal services like operation and maintenance of community toilet, waste processing units, community centres, etc. UMC is supporting its MISAAL committees in one or more ways to attain better sustainability and livelihoods as they continue to do civic participation.



Figure 17: Members of newly created SHG in Jodhpur (Left); SHG members with awarded contract copy for O&M of PTCTs in Sambalpur (Right)