WASH SYSTEMS SYMPOSIUM

ALL SYSTEMS GO!

Strengthening the sanitation market system: WaterSHED's *Hands-Off* experience

Geoff Revell
Co-Founder & Advisor, WaterSHED

50 years of IRC.
WASH systems that transform lives.

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WaterSHED's systems approach to market-based sanitation

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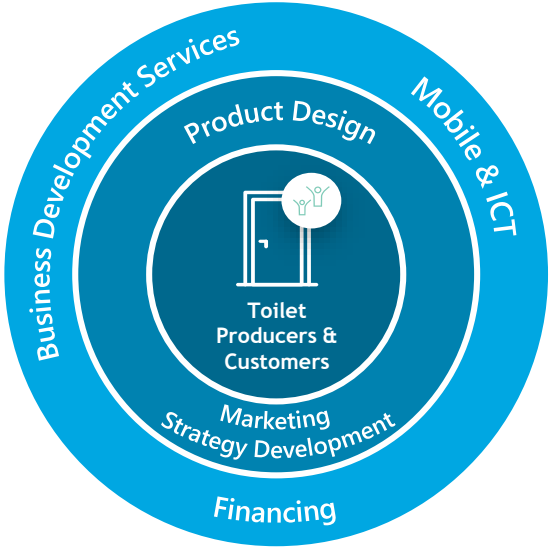
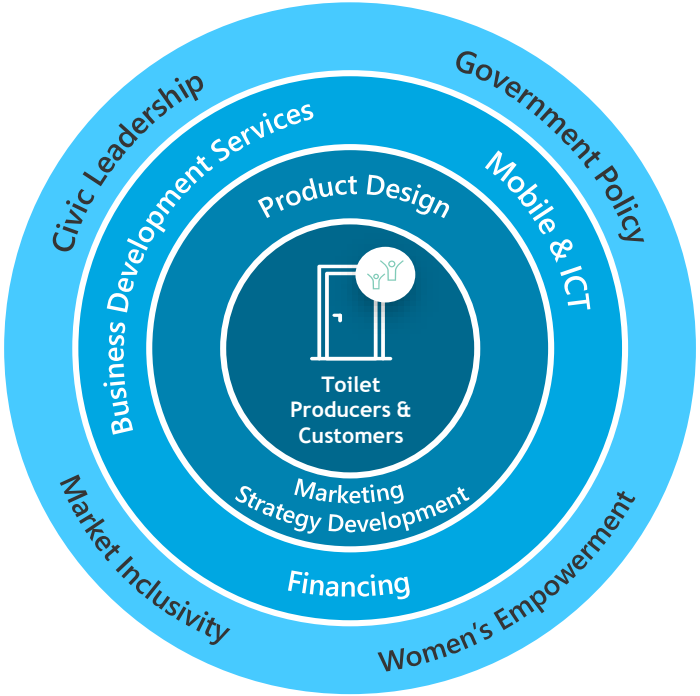


WaterSHED's systems approach to market-based sanitation



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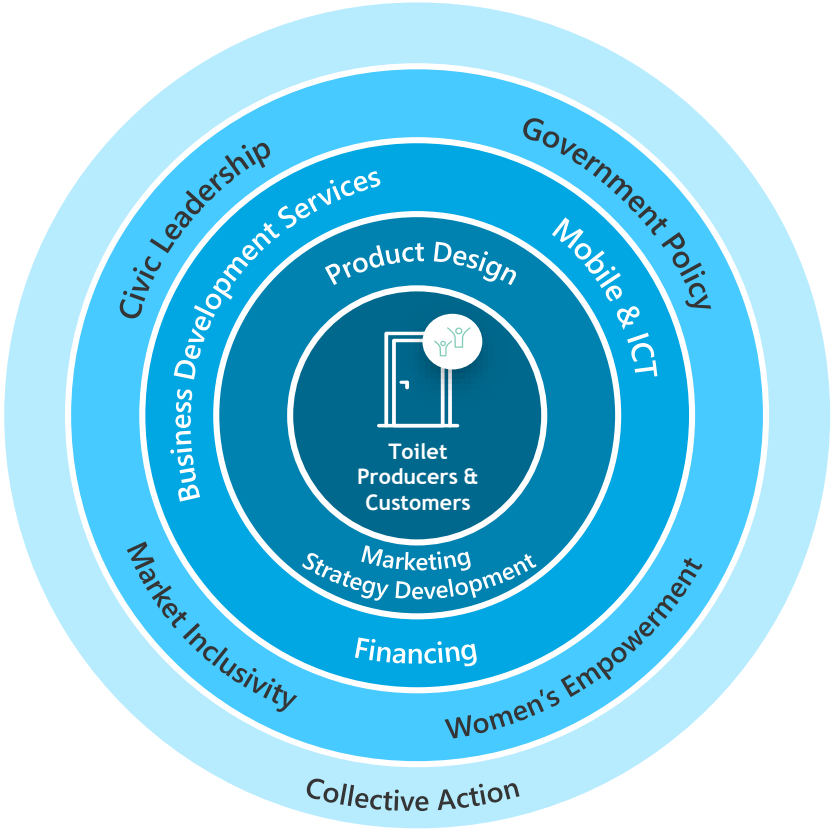


Hands-off philosophy

Build a market that functions independent of traditional aid

- by practicing discipline to not create dependencies
- and always asking: *who is going to do what, how and with what resources once our program has ended?*

Results

The discipline is paying off. Since 2011:

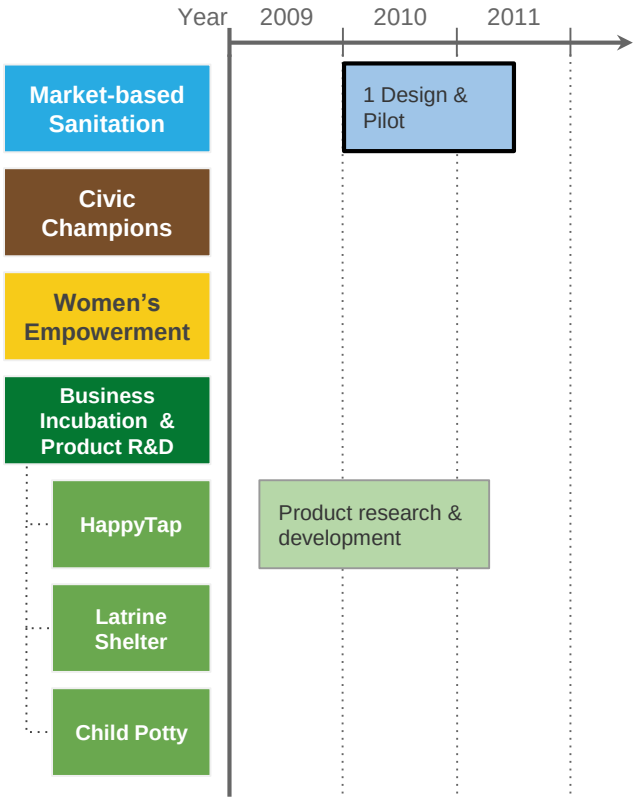
- more than **200,000 pour-flush toilets** have been purchased by rural customers
- generating **USD 10M+** in revenue for **300 business partners**
- These businesses serve 40% of Cambodia by population

Part of a stronger local system

- **1,000+** elected local officials have developed new leadership skills to drive sustained sanitation for all
- **40%** of them are women (despite only 20% of local officials women making up less than 20% in local government)

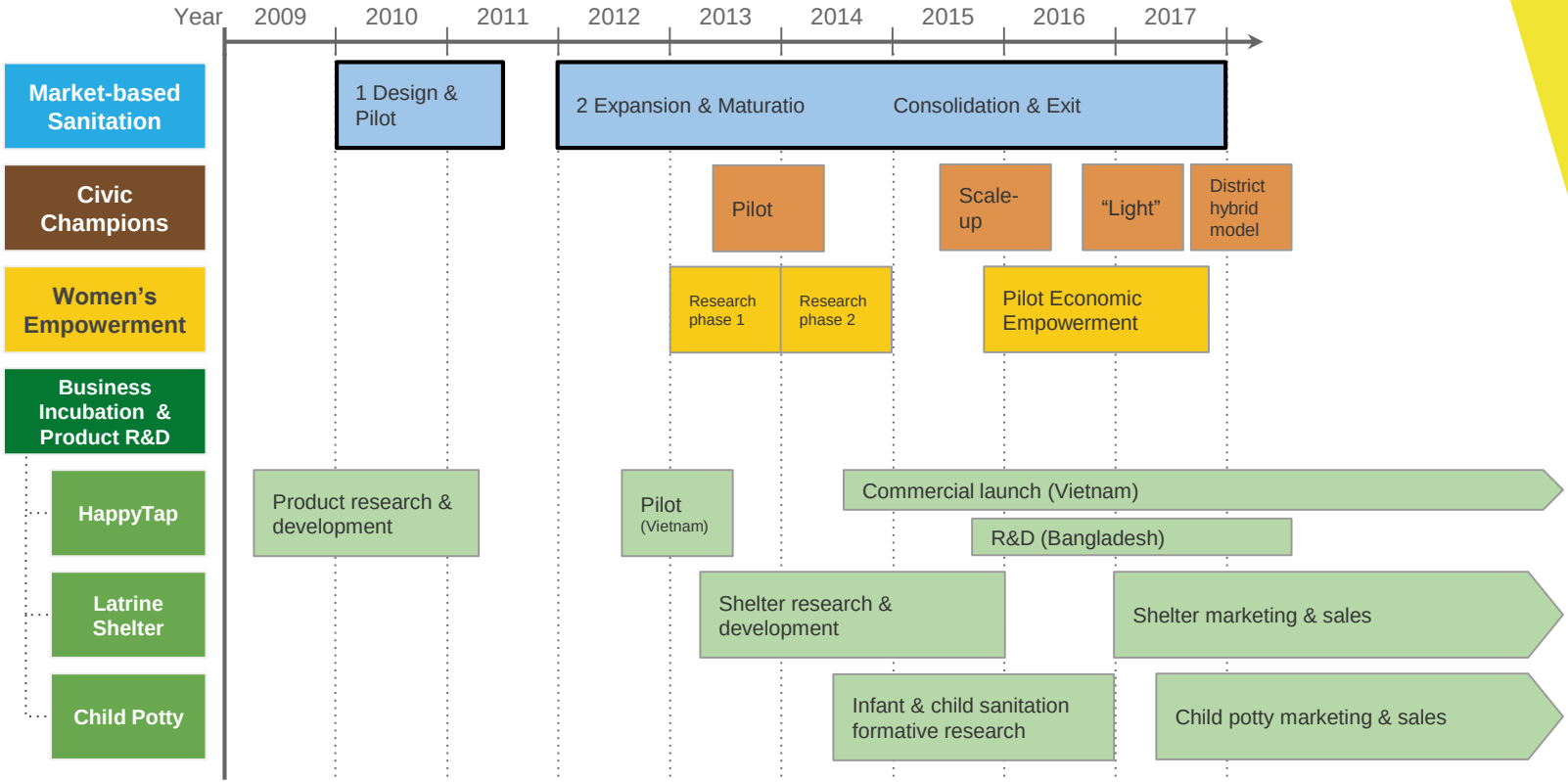
How did WaterSHED get here?

Phase 1: Startup, Design & Piloting (2009-2011)



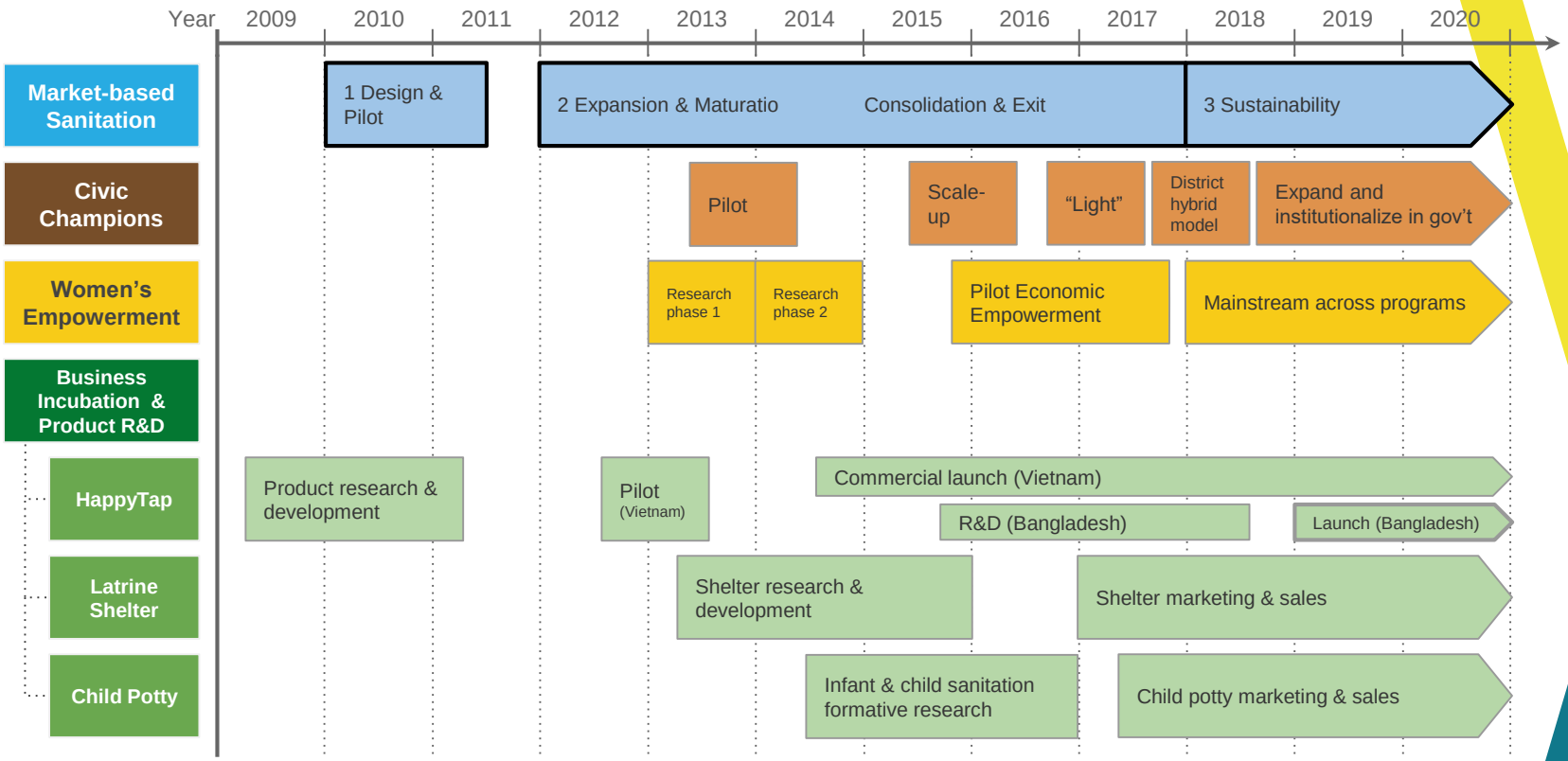
How did WaterSHED get here? (Cont.)

Phase 2: Expansion, Maturation & Consolidation (2012-2017)



How did WaterSHED get here? (Cont.)

Phase 3: Sustainability (2018-2020)



Phase 1: Startup, Design & Piloting (2009-2011) Learnings

- Encourage competition / keep barriers to entry low for new suppliers
- Work with existing best-fit businesses where possible
- Identify exit strategies for the market facilitator (in this case, WaterSHED) before implementation

Phase 2: Expansion, Consolidation, and Exit (2012-2017) Learning

Building for sustainability means recognizing that there is a local system and figuring out how to strengthen and use it - rather than creating a substitute / dependency.

Phase 3: Sustainability (2018-2020) Tentative Learnings

Recognition is a powerful motivator; mechanisms to recognize achievement can be built into the system and thereby ensure sustained engagement of local actors.

‘Can it be institutionalized?’ as part of the system is a more nuanced question than ‘can it be scaled or replicated?’

Reflections

1. Focus on obsolescence - building systems rather than delivering services
2. Leadership development for local government holds immense potential
3. Decision-making that is both research-driven and cost-conscious