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To get people to build toilets, turn to subsidies

Research published in Science Magazine last week shows that providing subsidies for the construction of latrines in northwest Bangladesh was more effective than information and motivation programs. Putting the two together produced even better results.

Use of hygienic latrines increased by 22 percent among people who received both subsidies and motivation programs, found Raymond Guiteras of University of Maryland and James Levinsohn and Mushfiq Mobarak of Yale University. The findings address some concerns that providing subsidies for products can erode motivation to use them.

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