

CLTS workable in small towns and peri-urban areas

A pilot in two communities in northern Ghana shows that the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach can work for people in small towns and peri-urban areas too. Implementers, however, have to be able to combine tact, innovation and efficient credit facility provision to make the approach sellable and useful for communities. This was a key conclusion reached by Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector stakeholders who participated in the 40th edition of the National Level Learning Alliance Platform (NLLAP).

NLLAP 40, which came off in Accra on Thursday January 16, 2014, was on the topic *Implementing CLTS in Small Towns: Looking back to inform our way forward*. The session was dedicated to sharing the outcomes of the Northern Region Small Towns Water and Sanitation Project (NORST) project. Ms Martha Tia-Adjei, CLTS Focal Person for Northern Region, supported by Steven Ntow of WASH Solutions, the main project consultant; Dr Andrew Livingston, Director of NORST Project; and Mr A.Y.O Modoc of the Afram Plains Development Organisation (APDO) were the presenters for the day while Naa Lenason Demedeme, Acting Director of EHSD of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) chaired the session. The Development Partners (DPs) Led, Canada presented a brief statement on behalf of the DPs. This reflections captured from NLLAP 40 for sharing with the wider WASH sector stakeholders.

The NORST pilot in focus

The Northern Region Small Towns Water and Sanitation Project (NORST) project is a pilot project carried out in the Northern Region of Ghana to test the viability of CLTS in small towns. It was planned and implemented by a collection of key government implementing agencies at the regional and district levels with support from local NGOs through established local government contracting procedures. The Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate (EHSD), UNICEF and Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) played key roles.

Two communities, Bincheratanga (Nanumba North District) and Karaga (Karaga District), were selected for the pilot project.

The pilot was carried out against the backdrop that the level of environmental sanitation in the Northern Region is among the lowest in the country, with reports suggesting that over 73% of the population in the Northern Region rural and urban practiced open defecation in 2006. When the Northern Region's performance in sanitation was disaggregated into district figures, the proportion of persons with access to sanitation was pegged at 6% in Nanumba North and 19% in Karaga District.

CLTS in small towns

Presenting on "*NORST Pilot Small Towns CLTS Project*," Ms Martha Tia-Adjei, highlighted the preparatory, implementation and innovative activities carried out under the trial as well as the lessons, challenges, opportunities, outputs/outcomes, and way forward strategies drawn from the project.

The early stages of the pilot saw the conduct of a formal community entry process and a systematic assessment of the sanitation situation in the two communities, resulting in the sufficient motivation of the leadership and representatives of the pilot project towns. Afterwards, there was demarcation of both towns into smaller neighbourhoods to be mobilized in phases. Bincheratanga, which had about 4,000 inhabitants, was divided into four sessions whereas Karaga, with about 12000 populations, was demarcated into 12.

The original CLTS process was complemented by three innovative social mobilization approaches. These were: the use of Health, Hygiene Education Through Play and Sports (HHETPS); a special emphasis on gender equality and social inclusion to increase the participation of women, children and otherwise marginalized segments of the populations; and the collection and use of geo-referencing of existing water and sanitation services for participatory planning and monitoring purposes.

Scaling up CLTS in Small Towns

Despite facing a myriad of challenges, the NORST pilot presents a host of opportunities for scaling up CLTS, according to the project officials.

Specifically, some of the **challenges** that the NORST implementers faced included a reduction in efforts by community members to self-provide for latrines because some politicians had promised latrines. Challenges also took the form of inadequate support from some District Assembly officials, conflict in community, little or no enforcement of CLTS

commitments and laws, difficult terrain (rocky and high water tables) and limited space for construction of latrines.

On the flipside, the NORST pilot presents a host of **opportunities** for scaling up CLTS. These opportunities are in the form of existence of trained CLTS facilitators, pool of success stories from other communities and districts, and existence of natural leaders as a great resource.

At the end of it all, Open Defecation Free (ODF) Basic statuses were attained in almost all sections in Karaga and half of Bincheratanga in addition to a generally clean environment in most ODF sections. Besides, a few household latrines were constructed and are in use. In terms of software, the NORST has been able to develop manuals on CLTS for Districts teams and for training of Natural Leaders, respectively.

Key learning points

The implementers learned that the role of Natural Leaders is key in CLTS interventions. They also discovered that inconsistent monitoring of triggered sections can lead to a relapse while demarcation of towns into smaller sections makes implementation easier.

Other important **lessons** were that:

- The active role of district assembly, political leadership and traditional leaders is imperative
- Local sanctions for deviants is a sustainability factor
- CLTS in small towns should be carried out in two or more years
- HHETPS opens several “doors” to promote sanitation/CLTS
- Sanitation marketing is important in small towns as this could have filled the technology support and marketing gaps.

On the issue of **Sanitation Marketing**, Mr A.Y.O Modoc of APDO shares the view that the concept has great potential for scaling up latrine provision because different latrine designs are currently available in communities as a result of CLTS intervention.

Presenting on “*Sanimart A Sustainability Factor in Sanitation*” Mr Modoc observed that communities' desire to own latrines was increasing, but, their

geographical location or soil terrain (rocky, loose soil, water logged, etc.) made it impossible in their own perspective to solve their problems.

This requires that the inadequate technical know-how in latrine and soakaway constructions should be addressed. One way to do this is to support local artisans upgrade skills to meet the current sanitation demands of communities.

Development Partners review

“Given the current status quo, it is obvious that expected improvements in sanitation would be difficult to attain. Sector DPs are therefore pleased that some agencies (including UNICEF, Plan Ghana, TREND and Canada) are piloting CLTS in small towns and selected peri-urban communities in collaboration with the government and local partner organizations,” said Dr. Cheryl Gopaul-Saikali, Counsellor for Development at Development Canada, who represented WASH sector DPs at NLLAP 40.

Way Forward:

Following presentations, group and plenary discussions, participants of NLLAP 40 made the following as a way forward.

- It is imperative to bring information from the field to the national level for inclusive discussions
- Documentation and sharing of lessons will prevent repeating mistakes made and accelerate learning at scale
- Government should demonstrate willingness to work in partnership with all stakeholders
- Creation of sanitation markets should be promoted
- The provision of micro credit should be considered integral for successful CLTS roll out
- The training of community based artisans should be prioritised in order to avoid contamination of the water table
- The use of the HHETPS concept should be considered to trigger school children community entering and resolution skills must be imparted into facilitators
- Multiple household shared facilities should be constructed where space is limited
- Use profits from micro-finance to support the poor and vulnerable

The NLLAP is a WASH sector multi stakeholder platform with the overall goal of improving sector learning and dialogue. It is hosted by the Ghana WASH Resource Centre Network (RCN). The platform offers learning and sharing opportunity for sector players as one of the practical approaches to improving sector engagements/sharing with the long term aim of achieving a knowledge driven WASH sector that delivers quality and sustainable services in Ghana. NLLAP meetings take place on the last Thursday of every month and opened to all interested parties. The discussions of each NLLAP meeting are summarized and shared with the wider WASH community. The topics of upcoming meetings are decided on by the RCN secretariat and a list of upcoming meetings can be found on the RCN website www.washghana.net.

If you are interested to propose a topic for a meeting please contact us on,
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