

Taking Community Led Total Sanitation to Scale with Quality

Governments, Funding Agencies and CLTS

Introduction

This section concerns funding agencies (especially banks and donors)¹, and governments and also NGOs to whom they provide finance for rural sanitation at scale. The focus is mainly Africa where finance is still sometimes tied to rural household hardware subsidies either fully or partly. Often the subsidy component is provided by free supply of external hardware on prescribed technologies. There is, however, overwhelming and widely accepted evidence of the ineffectiveness and counterproductive effects of such policies. This is critically serious because CLTS is difficult or impossible wherever subsidies have been or are being provided. The challenge is for governments to change their policies to eliminate such subsidies and strict technology prescriptions, to persuade funding agencies likewise to change, and if necessary to refuse funds where agencies are unwilling to change. This has already happened in Africa. The opportunity is to create conditions in which CLTS can be taken to scale with quality and for banks and donors to provide resources in a form which enables this to be done. At the same time, we recognise the need for subsidy in certain situations such as large urban infrastructure projects and institutional contexts such as schools.

CLTS without household hardware subsidies is already supported and promoted by at least a dozen banks and donors and over 20 major international NGOs. 13 governments in Africa – those of Cameroon, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Togo, and one elsewhere – Indonesia, have adopted CLTS as national policy. Others are supporting and implementing CLTS but not yet as universal national policy, and more are moving in these directions. Several countries in Africa aim to become ODF (Open Defecation Free in all rural areas) in a few years in time scales that have never been achieved anywhere before. Madagascar has set 2018 as its target date for all rural communities to be ODF, Malawi 2016, Ethiopia, Mauritania and Zambia 2015, Kenya 2013, and Rwanda and the Northern Region of Ghana 2012.

Most of these countries listed above have made major changes to their national sanitation strategies in order to implement CLTS. Policy change and then implementation in many countries that have adopted or moved towards the adoption of CLTS have been facilitated and negotiated by national interagency coordination groups, such as the ICC (Inter-agency coordinating committee) in Kenya and its equivalents elsewhere. These involve all major stakeholders including relevant ministries, funding agencies and NGOs, and provide fora in which national policy can be discussed and joint agreements worked out.

¹ 'Banks' here includes International Financial Institutions which are mainly lenders, and 'donors' refers to multilateral agencies and bilaterals that mainly provide grants. Funding agencies refers to all banks, donors and also INGOs and others who provide funds for rural sanitation.

Experiences, Challenges and Ideas

1. Coordination between the ministries within a government

One of sanitation's perennial problems is that it falls under the umbrella of several different ministries. Different orientations of ministries in a country can present challenges. In many countries such as Chad, Ghana and Zambia, sanitation comes within the purview of the ministries of Local Government and Rural Development, Public Health Engineering or Water, many of which naturally have a history of building infrastructure rather than of collective behaviour change. For them spending money on infrastructure at household level in the form of subsidised toilets and counting the number of newly created structures gets priority.

In contrast, in other countries such as Ethiopia, Indonesia and Kenya, sanitation falls under the purview of ministries of Health or Public Health. Professionals in those ministries often value the CLTS approach because of its health impacts, for example with significant reductions of diarrhoea and cholera patients in hospitals and health centres. In some countries one ministry has advocated and pleaded for household hardware subsidy while another supports CLTS and opposes it. Unfortunately the former is historically liable to be preferred by donors and lenders who seek easy and familiar avenues to disburse big loans or grants. These can also be attractive to any politicians who are more interested in short term gain and political mileage rather than long term and sustained improvements².

Ideally, a participatory process of sanitation policy/strategy development that includes all relevant stakeholders (in water, health, local government, education, housing, etc) and that equally addresses the challenges of domestic and institutional, urban and rural coverage would be initiated. In Tanzania, for example, there are a series of 'Memorandums of Understanding' written between all relevant ministries to set out their roles and responsibilities with respect to sanitation – these MoUs form a strong part of the newly negotiated national sanitation policy.

Recommendations/ideas

For CLTS champions

- enable key policy-makers to experience CLTS for themselves in the field, visiting and listening to ODF communities, and being present at triggerings.

² India is a case where vast sums are spent with little effect on subsidies for individual household hardware, inhibiting and even preventing the spread of CLTS while some 6% of the country's GDP is lost due to poor sanitation.

For governments

- recognise problems between ministries. If appropriate, arrange visits to neighbouring countries which have found solutions. Where not already in place, form an interagency coordination group such as the Joint Interagency Coordinating Committee in Kenya or a national task force as in Ethiopia, involving all major stakeholders including relevant ministries. These can then provide a forum for national policy to be discussed and joint agreements be worked out.

For banks and donors

- do not provide funds for individual household subsidies, and insist that loans and grants are for software, capacity development and other CLTS implementation costs

2. Persisting commitments to hardware subsidies

Bank and donor support to rural household hardware subsidy in African countries still survives in three forms:

- a) Projects sanctioned earlier before Governments adopted CLTS as policy and which are being implemented in specific areas of a country
- b) Projects near completion where new projects are being prepared for extension and/or multiplication of the project
- c) Projects where the basic preparation stages are complete, with sanctioning in the pipeline

Recommendations/ideas

The recommendation is that Governments, banks, donors and other funding agencies should identify these situations and to be alert and decisive in intervening in as timely a fashion as possible to prevent or reverse any such commitments to household hardware subsidy, bearing in mind the difficulties of changing policies and practices once they are set and agreed. This dialogue could ideally be convened and facilitated between like-minded African governments which have adopted CLTS as policy.

The dialogue could further consider how to convert the budgets for hardware in such projects to staff-intensive software support such as large-scale training of facilitators and Government extension staff, building the capacity of Natural Leaders, and the implementation of CLTS programmes. Funding agencies could be presented with the examples such as the 'WSLIC2' project in Indonesia, which switched successfully in mid-implementation from a poorly performing revolving fund approach for hardware to CLTS without subsidy³.

³ See Nilanjana Mukherjee and Nina Shatfan 'The CLTS story in Indonesia: Empowering communities, transforming institutions, furthering decentralization' in Mehta and Movik eds *Shit Matters*, Practical Action Publishing 2011 pp 145-159

3. Preparation of investment plans

Where banks or donors finance the preparation of sanitation and hygiene investment plans, there should ideally be a portion of these explicitly for CLTS. Current financing of plans tends to be more general without being directly about CLTS. The ODF Malawi strategy, for instance, is detailed on CLTS. AfDB is financing the sanitation and hygiene investment plan and UNICEF is supporting the preparation of the ODF Malawi strategy.

Recommendation/idea:

- Investment plans to be clear about commitment to CLTS.
- Governments to be proactive in developing proposals to take to funding agencies.

4. Budgeting and sources for funding.

More and more banks and donors have been adopting policies supporting CLTS without household hardware subsidies. At the same time CLTS needs adequate financing. CLTS is staff-intensive and requires substantial funds for staff, software support, capacity building and implementation. In some African countries with plans to go to scale, financial resources are now a binding constraint. Major items can be training, support for facilitators and Natural Leaders, campaigns, follow-up after triggering, verifications, celebrations and sanitation marketing (after ODF). Costs can be estimated, and to date are calculated in the range of \$5-\$10 per person. Mauritania, as an example, is seeking funding for its itemised budget for the remaining 5550 rural villages to become ODF by 2015 for a total of \$11.1 million. Financing, either by Government, banks or donors, or a combination of these, is now needed. The big question is where the funds will come from. If they come from the Government's own budget, this indicates ownership and commitment. But bank or donor support can be needed to get going or for a breakthrough.

Recommendations/ideas

- Recognition that CLTS requires substantial funding, estimating multi-year requirements and working out how these can be met.
- Sensitive awareness on both Government and funding agency sides of the need for government ownership, using its own resources, and also where appropriate the need for funding agency support including to overcome binding constraints
- Financing for pro-poor market development, to facilitate research, learning, documentation, sharing and developing for innovative and low cost sanitation solutions so that communities will be able to access low-cost and safe sanitation and enhance sustainability after becoming ODF.

5. Timeliness

When banks or donors do provide funding, the timeliness of its delivery is vital. CLTS triggering is often seasonal, to take advantage of times of the year such as after harvest when labour and cash are relatively available. Delays in donor funds reaching the users in the field have serious adverse effects on programmes and staff morale, and make planning difficult. As reported from Malawi 'Chronic planning failure is a systemic issue. There are few incentives to plan because resource disbursement from donors is difficult to predict. This means that plans may fall through even if they are created...'⁴. Such undermining of CLTS is easily unseen by those involved in the delays who work in capital cities.

Recommendation/idea

- Banks, donors and governments to be sensitive to field realities and the need to assure and seek feedback on the timely arrival of funds at the local level. Research and other feedback can have a positive impact by pinpointing examples of damage to morale and planning resulting from unpredictable and late arrival of authorisations to incur expenditure in the field.

6. Conflicts of policy

A crucial area for taking CLTS to scale is where a Government is committed to CLTS as its policy, and funding agencies still finance or wish to finance programmes or projects involving household hardware subsidies or other approaches or conditions incompatible with CLTS. There are now more and more examples of Governments successfully declining such conditions and persuading banks and donors to change. Governments have found that they can say 'This is our road map' and that banks and donors will come to accept this through their commitment to following Government policy.

There are strong and inspiring precedents:

- In Ghana, the World Bank had sanctioned a project which included provision of subsidised sanplats, but after three months of Government resistance gave way and complied with the Government policy of no subsidy.
- States in Nigeria have been similarly successful. The AfDB negotiated with two states regarding support for rural sanitation, including subsidies for household latrine construction. Based on national adoption of CLTS in the scaling up strategy for rural sanitation in Nigeria, the states indicated that CLTS approach should be used instead. The AfDB representatives asked for official government documents stipulating the adoption of CLTS for rural sanitation. Presented with that evidence, it was agreed not to use the hardware subsidy approach.
- In Chad a similar situation occurred with the European Union in 2010. After the receipt of a letter from the Minister of Water, stressing the importance of community driven demand-led approaches, the EU agreed to adjust its funding to support the CLTS initiative.

⁴ Maulit, J.A and M.Kang 'Effects of program and institutional design on district-level CLTS management in Malawi, paper to 35th WEDC International Conference, Loughborough UK, July 2011, page 2

A lesson from Nigeria is that this was possible because of evidence already generated and the potential shown by CLTS for achieving the scaling up of sanitation in the country. There had been constant sensitization of all relevant stakeholders on CLTS leading to general agreement amongst them on the non-subsidy CLTS approach.

Recommendations/ideas

- Governments in Africa can encourage the adjustment of funding agency proposals for household hardware subsidy, insisting that banks and donors comply with national policy.
- Evidence of the cost-effectiveness of CLTS compared with traditional hardware subsidies can be brought to the notice of all funding agencies, and further research carried out. In case of scepticism, agencies can be invited to conduct their own research.
- Governments can arm themselves with policies, evidence and champions to defend their strategies to banks and donors and help them in turn to change their policies and practices.

7. *Sharing experience*

The rate of transformation in an increasing number of African countries is without precedent. The territory ahead is largely uncharted and unexplored. The intended speed of implementation flies against the earlier received wisdom about the need to proceed more gradually and steadily build up momentum. The challenge of going to scale with quality at the planned speed is daunting. It raises a new imperative: for rapid and realistic learning and sharing on the run. This means honest and transparent recognition of what does not work – ‘failing forwards’ and what does - good ideas and practices. There are many of these already. For this peer sharing, special initiatives are needed. Who could organise these, and how, is for discussion. It may be most feasible for initiatives to be taken quickly and lightly with international convening and support.

Recommendations/ideas

- Urgent discussions about cost-effective ways of peer sharing and learning between governments. A first quick step could be to identify how much this already happens, and through which channels. A second could be to seek multiple channels and key people in governments (or international agencies, donors or NGOs, or free-lance consultants) who could be agents to actively link, learn and share.
- Exchange learning visits where there are identified promising practices
- One or more workshops at appropriate levels for mutual learning, brainstorming, documenting, and identifying priorities for moving forward.

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