

# CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY-LED TOTAL SANITATION (CLTS)

## A CASE STUDY OF OBOYAMBO COMMUNITY IN CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA.

*By Daniel Sarpong*

---

### 1.0 Introduction

The Oboyambo community is in the Agona East District of the Central Region of Ghana and has a population of 512 including children. The community is made up three different ethnic groups mainly; Fantes, Ewes and Northerners. The community has 67 households and out of this 3 had latrines prior to CLTS activities in 2008.

CLTS implementation in the community has partly contributed to the construction of a school building which started with 30 pupils. Now the school population stands at 150.

### 2.0 Pre-School Project

The self help spirit encouraged by CLTS has helped the people of Oboyambo to embark on a school building project for their preschoolers. The community had earlier on put up a structure with bamboo and straw as a classroom for the pre-scholars. The facility however collapsed after a short while. After some months, they mobilized resources to build a mud and wattle structure for the school children and employed teachers to teach the children.



The community contributed in terms of labour, sand, stones and water. The Masons and carpenters were drawn from the community to put up the two class room built with bricks.

The most interesting part of the project was the involvement of children and women during the construction of the school building. They were tasked to fetch water from the stream to the building site.

### 3.0 Children active involvement in CLTS

Generally, children participated actively during the baseline data collection, particularly on the community mapping, refuse sites, recreational centers and water points. During the time of tracing the route of transmission of diseases, children realized that their excreta were washed directly into the stream. They therefore resolved to stop swimming and drinking from the stream. The children also educated their parents and that helped to settle the dispute over the borehole. The children supported the women and men to weed, and sweep the surroundings and wash the borehole platform.



Prior to CLTS activities, the community members used to fetch water from the stream and had abandoned a borehole in the community. Weeds had taken control of the borehole site and it was virtually impossible to access the facility. When the community was triggered and members went through the walk of shame and glass of water, the community realized that they were indirectly ingesting their faeces through their continuous use of the water from the stream. The children who were mostly seen swimming in the stream realized the risk of open defecation; they had a change of mind and attitude.



#### **4.0 Formation of a children's Club in the school**

Through the CLTS process, a club was formed by the children to carry hygiene messages across the community. The children used drama, role play and quiz competitions in the awareness creation process.

The children are responsible for sweeping the classrooms, compound, and toilet and urinal. From time to time, the community members visit the school to weed the surroundings and remove cobwebs. These were done in collaboration with the Parent Teachers Association (PTA), school management and opinion leaders. The club periodically cleans the communal latrine and sweep streets. They also promote hand washing with soap campaign in school and at home. In short, the children are the hygiene ambassadors in the community. The teachers have also been helpful in developing action plans for the school and community to attain an open defecation- free status.



#### **5.0 Obayambo receives support from Japan**

In the year 2006, Plan Ghana received grant support from Plan Japan to construct a 4-class room block with modern pre-school facilities for the community. The support came as a result of the community self help spirit and good leadership qualities exhibited by the chief and elders.



## **6.0 lessons from the CLTS implementation**

- Children's active involvement in the CLTS helped to settle the dispute among community members over improper financial accountability of borehole water sales.
- Children participation in the CLTS process facilitated the need to provide the school with child friendly toilet facilities, hand washing facilities, drinking water facilities, urinals and canteens
- Formation of school young club led to the training of food vendors on good nutritional practices and food handling.
- Children and teachers effective collaboration with parents and opinion leaders attracted support from Plan Ghana to search for grant to build modern classroom for the community.
- The formation of School Clubs helped to carry the hygiene message across the community.
- Children were involved in ODF declaration and celebration.

## **7.0 Key Success factors and best practices**

- One of the key factors that led to the successful project implementation was the fact that there were regular follow-ups and high commitment on the part of the natural leaders.
- People who were caught defecating openly were fined an amount of five Ghana Cedis (\$3.50 equivalent) and a bottle of schnapps. The community watch- dog committee was very vibrant.
- Good leadership and community self help spirit
- Good facilitation by Partner Organizations and follow ups by Plan staff.
- The neighboring community has learnt from the Oboyambo community and has adopted the CLTS approach.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the involvement and active participation of children in CLTS or SLTS is paramount. Children are capable of transforming a community and therefore they should be involved in community developmental project.

## **Acknowledgement**

The author would like to extend sincere appreciation to Plan International, the donors and all those who contributed in diverse ways during the preparation of this paper.

---

**Reference**

1. Report on improving sanitation and hygiene situation at Oboyambo using CLTS, 2008
  2. End of phase one report for Plan Ghana's water and sanitation program in the Mankessim Program Area, July 2006
  3. Interview with Plan Program Area Manager, Bawjiase, (21<sup>th</sup> July, 2010).
  4. Interview with Plan community facilitator, Bawjiase, (21<sup>th</sup> July, 2010.)
- 

**Keywords**

School Led Total Sanitation, School Young Club, Northerners, Preschoolers

---

**Contact details**

---

Daniel Sarpong

Water and Sanitation Advisor

Plan Ghana

Tel: +233 244 48 84 40

E-mail: [Daniel.Sarpong@plan-international.org](mailto:Daniel.Sarpong@plan-international.org); [dsarpong@yahoo.com](mailto:dsarpong@yahoo.com)

---