

What is CLTS? And what is happening in other countries?

Community-Led Total Sanitation is a community-led people-centred approach to rural sanitation innovated by Dr Kamal Kar in Bangladesh in late 1999 and now in about 50 countries. It is Government policy in at least 20 including Indonesia, Nepal, Ethiopia, Kenya and Zambia, and is supported widely by Unicef, WSP, DFID, WSSCC, international NGOs and other agencies. After discounting for inflated statistics, over 20 million people can be estimated to be living in communities credibly open defecation free (ODF) as a result of CLTS. In some countries in Africa and elsewhere, it is spreading exponentially. Despite outstanding exceptions, its progress in India so far has been quite limited and slow.

CLTS differs radically from traditional approaches of hardware subsidy and IEC. In many countries, upfront hardware subsidy to individual households has led to widespread waste of resources and failure. Traditional IEC has had limited and slow impact. In contrast, CLTS well implemented has often triggered rapid change through Natural Leaders and collective action leading to many credibly ODF communities.

Basic principles and practices of CLTS can be summarised as radical shifts

- From upfront household hardware subsidy to self help
- From individual to collective behaviour change
- From teaching to facilitating
- From disgust (facing the shit) to pride and self-respect
- From standard engineering latrine/toilet design to local innovation and choice
- From counting latrines/toilets to counting and celebrating communities credibly ODF

CLTS in many countries is spreading fast in through no household subsidy. African countries have been turning down international loans and grants which involved subsidy. Much experience is being gained with taking CLTS to scale through government departments and staff, with Zambia one pioneer.

In going to scale with quality and sustainability there are many issues concerning training, triggering, post-triggering follow up, monitoring, verification and certification, marketing, post-ODF sustainability and so on. Innovation is rapid. You can keep in touch and up-to-date with CLTS experiences and insights in two ways:

The CLTS website www.communityledtotalsanitation.org

The bi-monthly newsletter. This includes links to recent materials. If you would like to receive this please add your name and email to the sign-up sheet.