

## KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING

### Main Messages

1. Develop policy frameworks for knowledge management.
2. Strengthen investment in IT and other systems at district and community levels for knowledge management on CLTS.
3. Strengthen funding for research on key issues and disseminate findings to inform policy-makers and practitioners.
4. Encourage knowledge management, sharing and learning at all levels of implementation and across partner organisations (e.g. through governmental/agencies/NGO/community coordinating committees). Also set up systems for continuous communication and feedback both vertically (national – community and back and horizontally (between Government and NGOs, etc.) Be open to learning and adjusting programs accordingly.
5. The media should be effectively involved in monitoring and follow up on public/political pronouncements – for instance when politicians and practitioners include monitoring data in speeches – as well as progress on ODF status.

### Introduction: Issues and challenges

Sector professionals require reliable, up-to-date and well-organised information for learning and decision making. There are increasing amounts of information available – for instance there are a number of good guidance materials based on field experiences, websites and data presented in graphs, charts and maps. The issue is that this material is not always widely known or else is not read or used as evidence for decision making. Knowledge management is the deliberative and purposive effort to structure and facilitate the production, capturing, processing, packaging, use and storage of knowledge and information.

Other key issues are:

1. What is knowledge management, learning and documentation?
2. Why is knowledge management important?
3. What systems are in place for knowledge sharing? What should be documented and how?
4. How should the knowledge be collected, processed, presented, shared and used? And, who are the intended users?
5. What are some of the lessons learnt (positive/ negative) with regard to knowledge management?

### 1. Develop policy frameworks for knowledge management

A number of countries have started setting up programmes and frameworks for Knowledge Management, the following case studies outline some of their experiences:

**Ghana:**

The Ministry of Local Government and Community Development in Ghana has developed a sanitation knowledge management initiative (KMI). The KMI is a 5-year project with the main purpose of enhancing sector capacity for generation, documentation, sharing and knowledge management. It is also to address the current gaps in the sector KM effects and additionally provide framework for coordinated action. The initiative is funded by UNICEF and includes the following activities:

- CLTS website: this features MDG progress tracking and ODF League
- Quarterly newsletter on sanitation (hard and electronic versions)
- Publications: including programme reports, factsheets, policy briefs and case studies
- Learning alliance sessions: at national, regional and district levels
- Exhibitions at national sector events
- Mass media publicity events in collaboration with GWJN and WASH Ambassadors.

**Zambia:**

The Zambian government established the National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Program. The program has 8 components including research and communication, which refer directly to knowledge management. The research component has the mandate to generate new innovations and information through research. The communication component has the mandate of information dissemination and sharing of research findings through publications and journals as well as packaging and developing appropriate messages for behaviour change. The other mandate is to establish resource and information centres at both national and district level for effective knowledge management.

**Nepal:**

The Government of Nepal has initiated a program towards establishing resource centres at regional level with an objective of knowledge management and capacity development of communities and stakeholders in the Total Sanitation Program in Nepal. It is necessary for the government to allocate adequate resources for the initiative, and scale up throughout the country at district and community levels so that all stakeholders (including communities) have access to these resources

[www.dwss.gov.np](http://www.dwss.gov.np) and [www.mppw.gov.np](http://www.mppw.gov.np).

**Indonesia:**

In Indonesia, the National Community-based Total Sanitation Strategy (STBM) has knowledge management as one of its components. That means both national and local governments are able to allocate funds in annual budgets to institutional learning and knowledge management activities that they are involved in. East Java initiated the following knowledge management activities:

- a. Stakeholder learning reviews, where programs and M&E results are presented at district level
- b. An annual learning champion's award promotes a culture of institutional learning
- c. Java Post Institute Pro-Autonomy annual awards for districts and a web based rural sanitation knowledge resources and program implementation tools.

## 2. Strengthen investment in IT and other systems at district and community levels for knowledge management on CLTS.

District, sub-district and community level knowledge management are an area of vital importance, both for local learning and feedback, and as a source for information higher up the system. ICT and other systems are outlined in other Briefing Notes. ICTs have considerable potential; and there is now experience with other approaches to participatory M&E and to processes involving local level staff (see Briefing Note on *Use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Monitoring*).

## 3. Strengthen funding for research on key issues and disseminate findings to inform policy-makers and practitioners

Experience to date has shown the importance of in depth, evidence based research in informing strategies and implementation of CLTS. Documentation of experiences, and the sharing of this information is also key.

### **Eritrea: Documentation and sharing information**

A report that documented the experience of the peri-urban and urban CLTS implementation strategy in Eritrea has been used to inform implementation by UNICEF in West Africa. Eritrea is now planning to encourage all practitioners of CLTS to document the process from pre-trigger to ODF status to foster greater learning and sharing across the region, supported by UNICEF Headquarters.

Research and case studies: There are a number of examples on CLTS underway in Africa. Some of these are:

1. In Malawi, an impact evaluation was conducted in Mkanda Traditional Authority for triggered villages declared ODF; it was found that less than 50% were actually ODF. The results led to changes in the verification criteria (2 levels of ODF were instituted) and changes to implementation based on the challenges faced in the field.
2. Plan International USA, in partnership with the Water Institute at University of North Carolina and funded by the Gates Foundation is conducting applied research to test CLTS approaches for scalability in Ethiopia, Ghana, and Kenya. The research aims at improving effectiveness, scalability, sustainability and management through three objectives: learning, capturing and sharing. Knowledge, tools, and lessons learned will be collected and evaluated to enhance the contributions of local actors and partner organisations at the community, facilitator, and government levels in CLTS implementation  
<http://sanitationupdates.wordpress.com/2011/11/17/plan-international-usa-receives-7-million-grant-for-community-led-total-sanitation-clts-research/>
3. Plan Australia, with support also from Plan UK, has commissioned research on post-ODF sustainability in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Uganda, with preliminary findings due in December 2012.
4. Plan Uganda commissioned a study on the impact of gender on CLTS to investigate how gender relations and other socio-cultural factors influence the process of attaining ODF and its sustainability. This study can be accessed on:  
<http://communityledtotalsanitation.org/resource/research-impact-gender-clts-processes>
5. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has funded WSA (formerly CREPA) to conduct and sponsor research on *Developing a scalable model for demand-led sanitation approaches in Africa: Understanding the drivers and constraints for implementing at scale in Africa*. The

research is to be conducted in eight countries – Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Zambia.

#### **4. Encourage knowledge management, sharing and learning at all levels of implementation and across partner organisations and set up systems for continuous communication and feedback (both horizontal and vertical). Be open to learning and adjusting programs accordingly**

##### ***Use of exchange visits and learning forums:***

As part of the process of encouraging learning and sharing of experiences on CLTS implementation in Nigeria, the following activities are organised:

- Exchange visits between ODF and OD communities
- Exchange visits between local governments and states implementing CLTS
- An annual national roundtable conference on CLTS; 3 have been organised so far.

In Uganda there is a National Sanitation Working Group that organises annual learning visits on sanitation for national level stakeholders comprising of representatives of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Water and Environment, NGOs, development partners and the media.

The Uganda Water and Sanitation Network (UWASNET) has a working group on sanitation and hygiene chaired by Plan Uganda. This is a platform for learning, sharing experiences and knowledge on hygiene and sanitation. The members of the group meet quarterly and develop an annual work plan which is reviewed on a quarterly basis.

##### ***Communicating successfully to different audiences***

###### **Use of websites:**

When designing websites, it is important to bear in mind that the people contributing to the website need to benefit from it, the website should also provide for the horizontal, up / down movement of information. Ghana has a well-developed web based knowledge management initiative and India has published the CLTS database on the web.

###### **Creative writing / documentation:**

Professionals and practitioners often don't find time to read; it is therefore important to be creative when communicating – for instance use different media and pictures such as cartoons, drama and videos to tell a story, or social media such as Twitter or Facebook. Think about your audience: what will they find interesting? What will capture their attention? What will they understand best? How much time do they have? What makes it easier and more fun / interesting for you yourself to do documentation regularly?

**Newsletters:** In Malawi a newsletter is published for learning and sharing on CLTS. The districts and other implementers write articles based on their lessons learnt and innovations. The intention is that implementers will adapt programmes based on this new information.

For further examples of this, please see the TA Mkanda CLTS Research example in the 'Target Setting and Reporting' briefing.

## **5. The media should be effectively involved in monitoring and follow up on public/political pronouncements – for instance when politicians and practitioners include monitoring data in speeches – as well as progress on ODF status**

Sanitation issues rarely get adequate media coverage unless there are some grave situations like cholera outbreaks. The engagement of the international, national and local mass media is a key strategy in CLTS implementation and scale up, and in maintaining a national scale campaign. Mass media involvement also helps ensure stakeholder and government recognition and buy-in. The media have a key role in providing information on CLTS, investigating the causes of poor services, and informing a public debate. The internet has been widely used in developed countries for making information generation more efficient. Grassroots channels of communication have been particularly effective.

### ***Experiences:***

- In Ghana, the environmental health directorate has an informal arrangement with a reporter who writes on WASH issues. Since these newspapers do not sell well enough, the Directorate buys them and distributes to staff.
- In Kenya, MOPHS (Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation) conducts TV interviews ahead of major campaigns, for example, hand-washing day.
- In Zambia, in March 2009, 85 media personnel across the country were invited to a CLTS media awareness meeting which was graced by the then Minister for Local Government and Housing. After that a CLTS workshop was held for both national and private media. At that time specific individuals were selected as part of the national trainers programme on CLTS.
- The media in Nepal have been part of the WASH program, more specifically the total sanitation (ODF) movement in the country. There are a team of media journalists in the district termed as WASH journalists who have been supporting, critically commenting on and covering the ODF movement in the districts. They have been part of the joint monitoring and verification of ODF progress and achievement. They are involved in getting success stories, community voices and failures as well, and disseminating them at a wider scale through different channels. The media have also been effective in advocating on issues related to WASH. This is a practice at different channels. The media has been recognised by giving annual awards to the best articles/write ups on sanitation. The government has a plan to formulate a separate media and communication strategy and implement it to mainstream the media into sanitation and hygiene promotion in the country.
- In 2003, Bangladesh formed a media sanitation committee to monitor and document the progress on sanitation in the printed and electronic media. The committee comprises of journalists from different printing and electronic media houses both national and private. The committee exists at the national and district level (there are currently around 65 committees). Along with the government and development organisations, the media committee visits ODF committees and disseminates its findings through media channels.

- In Ethiopia, a Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Media Forum has been established as part of the WASH movement where media professionals both from the government and private sector come together to discuss on issues related to WASH. They meet regularly and make field visits to follow progress and report findings on TV, radio, newspapers and other media outlets.

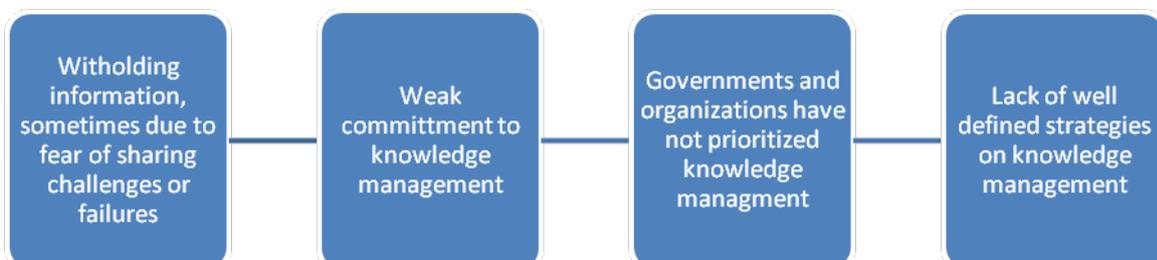
**Nigeria Case Study: Media involvement in monitoring CLTS activities**

The Media Network on Water and Sanitation is a group of journalists covering Water, Sanitation and Hygiene activities in Nigeria. The Media Network on Water and Sanitation is also a member of the National Task Group on Sanitation (NTGS), which is a coordinating mechanism comprising of all relevant Government ministries, departments and agencies as well as NGOs and development partners working on sanitation and hygiene in Nigeria. The Media Network is actively involved in the monitoring of CLTS activities either as part of NTGS or as a separate group.

In June 2011, some journalists from the Media Network on WASH were commissioned by NTGS with financial and technical support from UNICEF, Nigeria to carry out an assessment of perceived impact of WASH interventions, including CLTS, in the two States of Jigawa and Cross River State. The exercise was conducted through field visits to 28 randomly selected communities (16 communities in Cross River State and 12 communities in Jigawa) and interactions with various segments of the communities using the structured checklist. The information gathered was grouped into: major changes since the communities had access to safe water; major changes since the communities became Open Defecation Free (ODF); functionality of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Committee (WASHCOM); and impact of WASH interventions on school enrollment. Most of the information was qualitatively collected through focus group discussions with various segments of the communities. The findings of the assessment were revealing and clearly showed health and socio-economic benefits of WASH interventions, especially CLTS.

**Common and on-going challenges**

Key and common weaknesses and challenges are:



A check list of on-going challenges includes:

- Most organisations have limited plans in place or strategies for knowledge management.
- There can be an information-overload so that it is difficult to know which publications, networks and information should be prioritised. The coordination and exchange of information within the sector may also be weak
- Organisations that collect M&E data often do not define clearly how they should and can be used. M and E information and knowledge in themselves are not sufficient: it is important to understand how to apply them, especially lessons learnt and good practices
- Increasing the accessibility of information to practitioners is critical but there can often be limited capacity for knowledge management at programmes/project level
- The research base for CLTS can be weak and the results are not always published and so not available for wider learning. There appears to be a lack of rigorous evaluations and reviews for CLTS by implementing agencies that specifically measure the impacts of CLTS
- Practitioners and professionals do not always have the time and space to reflect on their work, moreover there is low and infrequent use of these reflections to adapt and change practice
- There is often an information gap in both directions between the government and communities. The community is not usually consulted for the purposes of knowledge management and learning. Where communities' knowledge is documented, their ideas are not always incorporated in programme plans or reach the national level. In the other direction central information tends not to be shared with rural communities.
- Horizontal communication and information sharing does not always take place between government departments and between them and partner organisations.
- More honest reflection on the challenges/constraints implementers face with scaling up CLTS would help learning out what has worked well and what not.

### **Recommendations/ ideas**

- Encourage each organisation to have a policy on knowledge management that includes strategies and plans
- Intensify research to generate evidence-based learning information
- Governments should allocate adequate funding for knowledge management and learning
- Prepare advocacy and information kits, and package messages in ways that attract attention
- Use cultural shows, soap operas, dramas etc. to pass on sanitation messages
- Support the establishment of a Media WASH Group (as for example, Nepal) as a way to expose and involve the media in CLTS. A sympathetic media, and particularly area-based newspapers, have a key role as a watchdog, as an awareness raising tool, and as a communication channel for the public.
- Involve the media in publicising pronouncements and commitments by politicians and practitioners, and in following up on progress towards ODF status and its achievement

### **Sources:**

#### **Writing Courses**

- Let's write! Running a participatory writeshop: <http://pubs.iied.org/G02810.html?k=CLTS>
- Writing Course for WASH Professionals Improving documentation in the WASH sector for policy, programmes and publication: a writing course for WASH professionals: [www.rural-water-supply.net/en/projekts/details/60](http://www.rural-water-supply.net/en/projekts/details/60)

## Journals

- Journal of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Development: [www.iwaponline.com/washdev/](http://www.iwaponline.com/washdev/)
- Waterlines: <http://practicalaction.org/waterlines>

## Resource Centres

- Community Led Total Sanitation: [www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/](http://www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/)
- Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative council (WSSCC): [www.wsscc.org/](http://www.wsscc.org/)
- Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC) resources: <http://wedc.lboro.ac.uk/knowledge/know.html>
- Sustainable Sanitation Alliance: [www.susana.org/](http://www.susana.org/)

## Newletters

- ACCESS (WSP): [www.wsp.org/wsp/newsletter/all](http://www.wsp.org/wsp/newsletter/all)
- Source (IRC): [www.source.irc.nl/](http://www.source.irc.nl/)
- WASHplus (USAID): [www.washplus.org/](http://www.washplus.org/)
- SHITS Newsletter: [www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/resource/shits-sharing-highlights-total-sanitation](http://www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/resource/shits-sharing-highlights-total-sanitation)
- SHARE News and Events: [www.shareresearch.org/newsandevents](http://www.shareresearch.org/newsandevents)
- Sanitation Updates: <http://sanitationupdates.wordpress.com/>
- DevInfo is a free, downloadable database system for storing and analysing data: [www.devinfo.org](http://www.devinfo.org)

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