



Plan

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Official Reaction of Plan Netherlands to outcomes of the end evaluation of The Pan African CLTS Programme.

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Introduction

An end evaluation of the programme was conducted by a team of international and national consultants between October- December 2015.

The aim of this evaluation was to determine the outcomes of the programme and generate as much as possible learned lessons which could help Plan and other organisations to improve future CLTS programmes.

In a nutshell the end evaluation confirmed that 1.82 million people (79% of the programme target group) were living in verified ODF communities as a result of programme activities, target communities were successfully empowered to improve their own sanitation and hygiene practices and health benefits were mentioned in all project areas, though health impact data was only generated by Plan Ethiopia. Besides these positive results the end evaluation also revealed weaknesses related to the programme design, monitoring and project management. These were translated into very useful recommendations that Plan wants to take on board for future programmes.

On the 20th of May 2016 the outcomes of the end evaluation were presented by the lead consultant Andy Robinson to the Senior Policy Officer Water Management of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS), Pim van der Male, . On the 14-15th of July the lead consultants of the end evaluation presented the findings of the end evaluation to all the WASH Programme managers of the 8 Plan country offices during an official end meeting of the programme.

As Plan believes the learned lessons and the recommendation of the end evaluation are also useful for other WASH organisations to improve the CLTS approach in general, Mascha Singeling, senior WASH Advisor at Plan Netherlands presented the outcomes of the end evaluation at the 39th WEDC conference in Kumasi in July 2016 in the form of a paper presentation and a side-event. The full end evaluation report and a short summary of the lessons learned of the programme will be shared widely and placed on the CLTS knowledge hub website for all to read.

In this document Plan Nederland will give an official reaction to the outcomes of the end evaluation and explain how Plan wants to incorporate the recommendations in future programmes.

Reaction of Plan Netherlands

Plan Netherlands is very happy with the quality of the end evaluation that was conducted. The lead consultants conducted a very thorough analysis of the programme that covers 8 countries. Especially the use of a well-designed smart phone monitoring system worked very well and enabled the auditors to guide the monitoring process in 8 countries from a distance.

Outcomes

In general we are content with the outcomes of the programmes as we were able to improve access to sanitation and improve hygiene practices for 1.8 million people (79% of the programme target group).

We are especially content about the fact that most of the target communities were empowered through project activities to improve their own sanitation and hygiene practices. A shift in social norm was found and as a result new households that enter these ODF communities construct latrines and when latrines collapse, household reconstruct them on their own. We believe this shift in social norm will contribute greatly to the sustainability of project results and ensure that a new generation grows up with the perception that using a toilet and washing your hands is normal.

Another positive outcome of the programme was that the government at local, district and national level were involved in the programme, and in many cases leading the CLTS process.

In all country projects, Plan used an inclusive CLTS approach, resulting in women and girls taking on roles as natural leaders and members of sanitation committees. The outcomes of the programme have improved the situation for women and girls. Studies, conducted as part of this programme by Plan Uganda and Sierra Leone have learned us that CLTS processes can contribute to improving the position of women and girls in communities.

The end evaluation also mentions important challenges that are known to us and we are happy with the concrete suggestions that were provided to overcome these challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the end evaluation the following 5 recommendations were provided to improve future CLTS programmes:

1. Design and budget for sustainability
2. Programme for impact
3. Strengthen the M&E system
4. Invest in special interventions
5. Look beyond ODF

(1) Design and budget for sustainability;

- Throughout the programme we have learned that sustainability is closely linked to government support. Without sufficient government engagement a project cannot attain sustainable results. For example in Ethiopia the government had embraced the CLTS process which has contributed to the positive outcomes of the project. In Niger they had not, which greatly constrained the sustainable outcomes of the project.
- In future projects Plan will first make a thorough analysis of the current enabling environment at governmental level, so as to investigate how Plan can best invest its resources to enhance the enabling environment and sustainability of the CLTS approach.

(2) Programme for Impact

- The Pan African CLTS Programme had a relative large budget but was implemented in 8 countries and within these countries the budget was often divided within 4 areas.
- Also the programme aimed to implement four different approaches, CLTS, UCLTS, SLTS and Sanmark in one programme simultaneously.
- Budget and human resources were overstretched which had an impact on the overall result.
- In future design Plan will ensure a more geographical focus of resources to attain a larger-scale intervention in fewer areas for instance at district level, with more visible results. The increased visibility could enable more government support which in turn could contribute to ensure sustainability.
- Also in the future Plan will favour a phased approach in which not all methods are used at the same time. Another recommendation from the final evaluation worth investigating further will be having the different project elements implemented by different project teams with their own capacity, skills and budget, while they work together closely. Currently Plan Netherlands works together with Plan Ethiopia to implement an integrated WASH and Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) programme which builds on the results and experiences gained from the Pan African CLTS project in Ethiopia. Within this project two project teams have been selected. One to implement the WASH activities and one to implement the FNS component.

(3) Strengthen the M&E system

- Within the programme no baseline was conducted as it was thought this would have a negative impact on the CLTS approach. A lesson Plan Netherlands has learned is that within any future CLTS programme baseline sanitation, hygiene and health data will be collected, however only after a triggering session is conducted.
- In the baseline qualitative data on hygiene practices should also be incorporated to ensure that monitoring is not only limited to counting latrines.
- Measuring health impact however will always be very difficult and Plan is still not sure if in any future project this should be incorporated or not.
- Within the Pan African CLTS programme an old reporting system was used, consisting of narrative and financial reporting.
- In any new programme design, Plan will be using improved reporting formats that combine both qualitative and quantitative results and would use smart phone monitoring to ensure a rapid feedback loop to constantly improve the programme

(4) Invest in special interventions

- Within the programme hygiene form an integrated component of the Pan African CLTS programme, however in practice more emphasis was put on ensuring that people construct, use and maintain their households latrines.

- In any future CLTS programme hygiene/ handwashing (including menstrual hygiene management) should be incorporated as a distinctive component to ensure a sustainable improvement in hygiene behaviour.

(5) Look beyond ODF

- The end point for this programme was reaching ODF, therefore not much planning was done on after a community reaches the ODF status. However, this is just the starting point for ensuring that households sustain their ODF status and improve hygiene practices.
- In any future programme Plan will plan and budget better for follow up activities like re-verification and investing in sustainable local systems to attain and maintain the ODF status.

(6) Then last but not least Use CLTS as a tool to empower women and girls

- Plan believes that targeted investments in the promotion of gender equality will improve the quality of programmes and significantly contribute to poverty reduction. Gender has therefore been a cross-cutting theme in the programme. Within the implementation emphasis is put on the fact that women, men and children are equally involved in all project activities.
- However, the Pan African Programme was not originally used as a tool to improve gender relations in the targeted communities and no gender analysis was conducted during the inception phase of the programme.
- Through the life span of the programme Plan has learned that CLTS has contributed to an improvement in gender equality. This was confirmed by a research conducted by Plan Uganda in 2011 on the impact of gender on CLTS processes. The study found that overall the CLTS approach can inspire a shift in the gender division of labour related to sanitation and hygiene at the household level. Also, the increased cooperation of women and men due to the CLTS activities has improved the status of women and girls within the family and to some extent contributed to reducing domestic violence (Plan Uganda, 2012).
- Within any future CLTS programme Plan Netherlands will first conduct a gender analysis and will include gender training of all Plan staff and its partners. A gender study component will be included to learn more on how CLTS can be used most effectively to improve gender relations in different contexts and the potential impact on ODF sustainability.
- In any future CLTS programme Plan will also include a Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) component to ensure that women and girls can fully participate in social and economic activities and are not limited by practical obstacles, taboos, shame or inconvenience.

Conclusion

Plan will share the lessons learned and recommendations that come out of this end evaluation openly within the wider WASH sector as we believe they can contribute to improve the CLTS approach in general.

Plan Netherlands is looking forward to take all these recommendations on board to scale up the CLTS approach in future programmes.



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