

## CONCEPT NOTE

# SCHOOL-LED TOTAL SANITATION (SLTS) IN SIERRA LEONE



School Health Club members promote the importance of sanitation and demonstrate how to build basic latrine.  
©UNICEF 2012/Singleton

**December 2012**  
**UNICEF Sierra Leone**

## Background

Sustainable behaviour change remains a big challenge in Sierra Leone. Only 19.0% people wash their hands with soap after contact with faeces, 66.3% wash with water only and 14.7% did not wash their hands at all. Their hand washing practices are poorer before contact with food with 10.2% washing their hands with water and soap, 48.3% with water only and 41.5% do not wash their hands at all.<sup>1</sup> The same trend was observed among school-aged children. Even in the schools where children have access to hand washing facilities, a quarter (23.6%) of schoolchildren wash their hands with soap after defecation and only 6.8% wash their hands with soap before eating. Girl students more likely wash their hands with soap than boy students.<sup>2</sup> It is also reported that children more often wash their hands with soap at home than in school. In addition to the physical lack of WASH facilities, inconsistent access to soap is one of the big barriers.<sup>1</sup>

The recently conducted baseline study shows that approximately half of primary schools have access to improved water supply and sanitation facilities. However, the compliance to the national standards for WASH in Schools is a big challenge. Only 9.5% of schools have improved water supply facilities up to the standards in their school compound. And half of them are not functional. 4.6% of primary schools meet the national standards in sanitation facilities.<sup>3</sup> Schoolchildren in 40.4% of surveyed schools practice open defecation in school. Non-existence, unhygienic conditions of latrine and lack of privacy such as no doors are three leading causes of open defecation.<sup>4</sup>

UNICEF Sierra Leone has supported the Government of Sierra Leone with a basic package of WASH in Schools Programme. It consists of three major components; (1) provision of Child Friendly WASH facilities in schools, (2) sanitation and hygiene promotion in schools through School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE) with the standard SSHE toolkit and (3) sanitation and hygiene promotion in school catchment communities through School-Led Total Sanitation (SLTS). Together with other two components, SLTS shows its effectiveness in synergy with another WASH component: Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS).

## SLTS Strategies

SLTS in Sierra Leone has two major strategies: “widening” and “deepening.” To achieve the government’s goal of 100% Open Defecation Free (ODF) in six target rural districts by 2015, the first priority of the selection of SLTS communities should be given to catchment communities where any implementing partners have never triggered. Then the WASH in Schools project would contribute to widening the coverage of target areas with CATS approaches. Only if all the school catchment communities have been exhausted by CLTS, an implementing partner shall conduct post-triggering with School Health Club (SHC) members and SSHE Focal Teachers. In deepening processes, an implementing partner is therefore expected to link up the existing Natural Leaders of the CLTS Programme with the SHC members and SSHE Focal Teachers for training, triggering and monitoring to accelerate or sustain total sanitation in the communities.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Baseline and KAP Survey for Hygiene Promotion and Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap (PPHWS) in Sierra Leone. 2011., MoHS and UNICEF*

<sup>2</sup> *Baseline Study for Rural WASH in Schools Programme in Sierra Leone. 2012, MoHS, MEST and UNICEF*

<sup>3</sup> *Baseline Study for Rural WASH in Schools 2012*

<sup>4</sup> *Baseline Study for Rural WASH in Schools 2012*

The Table 1 highlights the comparison between SLTS and CLTS. Having a school as a permanent structure in communities and children as agents of change, SLTS could help overcome challenges of CLTS such as retention of Natural Leaders, systematic monitoring processes and strengthening community-based WASH Committees in operation and management of water points and sanitation facilities. Additionally community members often see SLTS implementation as a part of school activities, therefore, they become more participatory in this perceived effective learning process and the WASH in Schools project, and sometimes even gain better understanding on schooling.

**Table 1: Comparison between SLTS and CLTS**

Domain	SLTS	CLTS
Entry Point	School/Pupils	Adults
Lead Agency	School	Community
Triggering	By pupils and SSHE focal teachers	By Natural Leaders
Progress Rate	Rapid Children's presence and influence have great impact	Gradual Retention of natural leaders is a challenge
Coverage	Limited (only walking distance) Average of three catchment communities per school	Unlimited Entire chiefdom
Advantages	Permanently exist More sustainable	Community-driven collective action Dynamics in enforcement (i.e. by-laws)

## SLTS Implementation

SLTS implementation has been adopted from CLTS methodologies. The following section demonstrates SLTS implementation at all three stages.

### I. Preparatory and Ignition Phase

This involves orientation and training for schoolchildren who will be directly involved in the implementation of sanitation and hygiene education both in school and communities. This phase is designed to enable children to change their own sanitation and hygiene behaviors and to assist their peers to adopt improved sanitation and hygiene behaviors as agents of change.



Preparing school children in triggering process

## II. Triggering Phase

This phase aims to enable children to transfer knowledge on improved sanitation and hygiene practices, gained in their schools, to catchment communities. These communities are communities where children live and come to school from. Children as a group are supposed to outreach communities with key sanitation and hygiene messages and carry out “triggering” in catchment communities.



Schoolchildren sensitize their families and community members on improve sanitation behaviours

## III. Post-Triggering Phase

In this phase, schoolchildren are expected to regularly monitor (according to School Sanitation and Hygiene Action Plan) and follow up triggered communities to achieve sustainable total sanitation. In communities where CLTS has triggered, schoolchildren shall conduct joint monitoring and post-triggering with Natural Leaders.



School Children monitor the status of community toilets for sustainability

### Achieved Results of SLTS

888 communities have been triggered by SLTS or SLTS/CLTS (367 by SLTS and 521 by SLTS/CLTS), of which 188 communities declared ODF by SLTS exclusively and 305 communities sustained ODF through SLTS/CLTS as of November 2012. Some households even built separate latrine rooms for females and males (moreover, sometimes additional latrine room exclusively for guests). In some areas, the collective actions of community members to achieve ODF have extended to build feeder roads by themselves to improve their lives. Some community leaders realize the importance of schooling, therefore, they start sending children to school and ensure their retention.



### Lessons Learned

The SLTS implementation at the pilot stage results in great success in widening and deepening. The key contributing factors for SLTS are the following.

- Involvement of all stakeholders in the education system in planning and implementation process;
- Mobilization of schoolchildren as agents of change brings impact on communities;
- Involvement of existing community structures in implementation process enhances sustainability and ownership;
- Capacity building of all stakeholders including implementing partners at various levels lead to community-led bottom up approaches a success;
- Joint field visits and WASH Task Force meetings enhance knowledge and capacity of stakeholders and serves as a platform to exchange innovations and implementing strategies.

### Way Forward

Locally made household latrines which are promoted through the CATS approaches have been demonstrated have sub optimal durability in some cases in the Sierra Leone's intense rainy season. Remobilizing the affected communities to maintain ODF has been proven to be an additional programmatic challenge. The SLTS/CLTS Programme in Sierra Leone therefore continuously encourages communities to "climb up the sanitation ladder" to have better sanitation options using more durable locally affordable materials.

The development of sanitation marketing is one of the key areas to be developed further to enhance sanitation options to address needs of each household.

## Human Interest Story

School-led sanitation programme in Sierra Leone empowers children and their community with life-saving knowledge

[http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sierraleone\\_66384.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sierraleone_66384.html)