

Plan ODF Sustainability Study



Between March 2012 and October 2013, Plan International carried out research on ODF sustainability in their programmes in Africa. This study, carried out on Plan's behalf by FH Designs and with support from the Australian and UK governments, was conducted in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

The study investigated results in CLTS programmes operated by Plan across the four countries. Data was collected in 4960 households in 116 villages where CLTS had been triggered and communities declared ODF two or more years before the study commenced. The study sought to answer three questions:

1. What percentage of households had remained ODF?
2. What were the primary causes of households reverting to open defecation (OD)?
3. What motivated people to remain ODF?

Findings

The study identified that 87% of the households surveyed still had a latrine and thus that if ODF status was equated with a household having a functioning latrine then the rate of reversion to OD (or 'slippage') was a remarkably low 13%. However, if a wider set of criteria for ODF qualification was applied - things like having a lid over the latrine squat hole, having hand washing facilities with water and soap or soap-substitute - then the slippage rate increased progressively to over 90%.

Motivators and enablers versus De-motivators and Barriers

Key factors supporting (motivators and enablers) and inhibiting (de-motivators and barriers) households and communities to invest in and maintain use of latrines were identified through interviews with 1200 households across more than 50 communities. Key factors – accounting for at least 10% of all factors mentioned in that category - are noted in the table below.

ODF Households	OD Households
Motivators	De-motivators
Health (22%) Shame, Disgust, Pride (18%) Privacy, Security (12%) Convenience, Comfort (12%)	Financial Constraints (18%) No more support (18%) Inconvenience, Discomfort (14%) Maintenance, Repairs (13%) Share with others (12%)
Enablers	Barriers
Availability of Land, Materials, Labour (28%) Technical Advice, Knowledge (16%) Local Soil & Ground Conditions (16%) Affordability (15%) Availability of Water (13%)	Availability of Land, Materials, Labour (32%) Local Soil & Ground Conditions (25%) Technical Advice, Knowledge (13%) Availability of Water (13%) Quality of Initial Construction (11%)

Practical implications

The study also identified a number of key practice implication for CLTS programs including:

- a need to more effectively address improved hand washing behaviours as part of sanitation programs;

- the value of incorporating at appropriate times in the CLTS process health messaging as a motivator for both uptake of sanitation and maintenance of latrines;
- greater (and more targeted) post-triggering follow up and support for households;
- the value of ensuring maximum household and family member participation in triggering events; and
- the importance of improved access to finance and market supplies of higher quality latrine materials to allow households to upgrade from basic latrines - in the absence of this the study found virtually no movement up the sanitation ladder from simple pit latrines built using local bush materials

The way forward

An extremely thorough and rigorous process was used to conduct this study and as a result the report provides information on the extent, and the factors influencing the sustainability of, ODF on a scale that has not previously been available. Plan recognises that there remains work to do to make best use of the information in the report: that we build into our monitoring and review process opportunities to reflect on what the study findings may mean for how we conduct CLTS in our programs; and that we draw on the lessons the report identifies as we design new CLTS programs in the future. We will be taking forward these issues as we continue our CLTS work across the four countries involved in the study and more broadly.