How many people will shit in the bush today?

Only 11% of Malawians are practicing open defecation (OD), according to a mid-year report by the National Sanitation & Hygiene Thematic Working Group, part of the Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) for the Malawi water sector (published on June 15, 2009).

The remaining 89% are thought to be using either a traditional latrine, improved latrine or toilet.

Therefore the critical question is: Do these statistics represent actual sanitation practices in rural Malawi?

Let’s take a sampling from villages which have already been triggered in Malawi and examine the before-CLTS sanitation coverage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Households:</th>
<th>9583</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Number of Latrines:</td>
<td>5257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Sanitation Coverage:</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate Rate of OD:</td>
<td>~ 45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Above data was sourced from 180 triggered villages in Salima, Mchinji, Blantyre and Kasungu Districts.]

We couldn’t expect this sample to exactly match the reported national average. But, one must admit that 45% is considerably higher than the often-quoted 11% figure for OD in Malawi. It permits us reason that OD is indeed happening in many communities of rural Malawi and therefore the choice to use CLTS as an approach for affecting sanitation behavior is appropriate.

According to Malawi’s National Sanitation Policy:

A latrine is “improved” if it has an impermeable floor and a tight fitting lid over the squat hole.

IMPLICATIONS for MANAGERS:

In the 12 districts where CLTS is used to eliminate the practice of OD, we should be very curious to learn in advance (pre-triggering) how common the practice of open defecation actually is so that we can tailor facilitation to the actual sanitation practices of each village. Remember that CLTS works best when the transect walk reveals lots of shit in the bush to strongly ignite the community. Therefore select communities to trigger with known low latrine coverage and with lots of OD. How does your team conduct investigation in advance to identify the baseline sanitation situation?

Of course CLTS can also be conducted in villages with already high coverage of basic latrines. In addition to igniting consciousness about OD, also spend time during the transect walk visiting unsanitary latrines and asking questions that draw out benefits of hand-washing practice. KEY: Help your facilitator teams link their CLTS approach to the sanitation practices you are seeking to change.

Overcome Resistance during Community Mapping

Experience has shown that even those who do not use latrines need privacy and that is why they defecate in hidden areas. In most places in Mzimba district and other districts in Malawi, open defecation is commonly practiced in bushy areas and people do this in pursuit of privacy.

Experience has further revealed that in most cases, practitioners of open defecation are not comfortable pointing where they defecate during mapping. Instead, when asked by CLTS facilitators to indicate where they defecate they can become defensive and lie that they have toilets.

This poses a big challenge to facilitators who are also strangers presenting themselves as students in the village. In such a situation, facilitators may find it stiff to break through and trigger the village successfully. As such, it is always important during community mapping to highlight hideouts such as bushy or rocky areas and others that may be ideal for open defecation. However, this has to be done with a pinch of caution to avoid making the villagers realize what you are looking for. Hideouts ought to be highlighted just as some of the features in the village to avoid suspicion.

If all hideouts are shown on the map, it becomes easy for facilitators to embarrass the villagers by taking them to defecation areas to show their own shit even if they were not honest about latrine coverage and use on the map.

Contact Dambula to discuss more: khida2003@yahoo.co.uk
MANGOCHI gets BEYOND just TRAINING

In September 2009 the Mangochi DCT accomplished something great. They hosted the district’s first round of CLTS training sessions! During 2 sessions, 30 extension workers were trained from various local government offices, and 11 villages were triggered.

District Water Officer, Marvel Nakanga and Environmental Health Officer Samuel Katundu played key roles in planning and facilitating the training. There was also a guest appearance by Tamala Zembeni, the DWO from Blantyre District who joined the Mangochi CLTS team to share her expertise in training new extension workers on the practice of CLTS.

There is one aspect of Mangochi’s training which is particularly impressive. At least 6 additional villages have been triggered in Mangochi since the training finished.

The willingness of extension workers to continue triggering as part of their routine work proves that Nakanga, Katundu and Zembeni really ignited front-line staff with enthusiasm and initiative to keep using CLTS.

Nakanga and Katundu say that the 3 most effective practices of their training were:
• To convey to extension workers that the problem of OD should not be solved by outsiders. And since they are residents of targeted villages, they have to role model this positive attitude during triggering.
• To strongly ignite the extension workers before going into the field. The classroom part of training should be full of questions that stimulate critical thinking about how best to influence the elimination of OD. It is essential to create enthusiastic and confident CLTS facilitators.
• To invite a high-profile person of the district (i.e. District Commissioner, or Director of Administration) to open and close the training. This gave substance to the proposed new approach of CLTS.

Mangochi says they also learned several things which will help them have greater success with their next training session:
• Collect village profiles much earlier to ensure the selected villages are a good ‘training ground’ and to know if there have been previous sanitation programmes with a hardware subsidy. You may be setting your team up for failure if you arrive to trigger a village “blind”.
• Treat every triggering differently. Never assume that the community will respond in a particular way. Don’t take for granted that the community can be genuinely ignited without quality facilitation.

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READ THIS TRAINING TIP!

Do you want your extension workers to continue triggering and following up after training finishes? If so, on the last day of training set aside a half-day for ACTION PLANNING. Before you begin ask the whole group, “Do you think that anything should be done related to CLTS after the training?” If the consensus is yes divide them up into small teams, according to the geographic areas they work in. Instruct the teams: “Take 45-60 minutes to discuss what you will choose to do over the next 3 months related to CLTS”. After the teams have developed rough plans, let them take turns presenting to one another. Be sure to encourage lots of question asking by the group to ensure that each team’s plan is complete and well-thought out. This means clarifying who within the team will be responsible for what activities, asking when the activities will take place, and asking why the team is choosing not to do any key activities you notice that are missing from their plan. Clap hands for everyone for their initiative and ambitious goals. Districts who have done this facilitator-led Action Planning notice that extension workers will do CLTS activities as part of their normal work (i.e. self-motivated, without allowance). As part of a team, they feel responsible to each other to follow through on their plan.

1 Participants in the classroom at CLTS training practice the mapping tool before trying it in the village.
2 Members of one of the triggered villages in Mangochi District spend time afterwards creating an action plan.

S.H.I.T.S. Sharing Highlights In Total Sanitation (maLawi)
CLTS is an innovative approach that has been gaining momentum in Lilongwe District. Many people working on hygiene and sanitation have witnessed the potential of the approach. Of course, the need for improved hygiene and sanitation in Malawi is obvious given the high rates of diarrheal disease.

This is attested to by Ben Mitochi, the District Environmental Health Officer, who was speaking of past efforts saying, "we had done a lot but achieved little." However, an innovative approach is not enough to improve sanitation across Malawi. CLTS is proven to have potential but its success depends on good facilitation and thoughtful implementation. The best approach will fail if it is not implemented properly.

But there are many reasons to be optimistic about the implementation of CLTS in Malawi and in Lilongwe district. Since being introduced in the country last year, Lilongwe district and various development partners have been working to implement the approach aimed at ending open defecation as a first step to improved sanitation. As part of the Unicef funded WASHE program, the District Water and Health Offices have worked together to train 150 extension agents from the traditional authorities of Kalumbu and Malili.

According to Rudo Kalonga, the District Water Officer, representatives from other NGOs working in the district have also attended trainings so that CLTS can reach more people in the district, resulting in greater improvements in hygiene and sanitation. Facilitators from the district and from NGOs like Plan Malawi are working together to provide CLTS training to extension agents and to provide support afterwards to ensure that CLTS is being implemented after the trainings. Determining how best to do this is essential to effectively scaling up CLTS in Malawi.

“We had done a lot but achieved little.”

Lilongwe DEHO Ben Mitochi, speaking about past sanitation efforts.

In the district, Plan Malawi has trained over 60 extension agents, including Health Surveillance Assistants from the TAs of Njewa and Chimutu. Plan staff have also been trained on CLTS and have been providing ongoing support by helping HSAs to trigger villages in TA Njewa. An ODF celebration is going to be held soon for one of these villages.

In Mnjati village (TA Njewa) the villagers have painted sanitation messages on their newly constructed latrines. One message states CLTS yabweretsa mgwirizano (CLTS has brought togetherness). In addition to ending open defecation and constructing latrines, they say CLTS has helped them to work together as a community. They have reclaimed the area where they once went to defecate and have planted a vegetable garden and a tobacco nursery.

In June, the district held an Open Day to celebrate the village of Dako in TA Kalumbu being ODF. According to Rudo Kalonga, the Lilongwe District Water Officer, children were encouraged to participate because “when something starts from the children it will go to the whole district.” She said the billboard provided to the community “brought a sense of pride to the villagers.”

Since CLTS is relatively new to Malawi, there are opportunities to improve the delivery of the approach. Partners working in Lilongwe have identified some opportunities to improve implementation, such as the use of newly developed tracking forms to monitor CLTS activities and to contribute to the institutionalization of the approach. Gloria Jeremiah, an Environmental Health Officer in Lilongwe District is engaging field staff to help ensure they have sufficient incentive to incorporate CLTS into their work plans and to provide them with supervision and support in doing so.

Continuing to take advantage of opportunities like these will help to ensure the potential of CLTS is fulfilled.

Comments, questions? Please connect with: christopher.masina@plan-international.org rumarere@yahoo.com (DWO Rudo Kalonga)

1Lilongwe DWO Rudo Kalonga, on a transect walk. 2Members of the newly ODF village Mnjati (TA Njewa, Lilongwe District), and 3A billboard which declares another village ODF in Lilongwe District (Dako Village).
Blantyre District has conducted 2 CLTS training workshops. The first was in March, 2009 and the other was in July, 2009. During these trainings thirteen and fifteen villages of TAs Kuntaja and Kunthembwe, in the Dziwe and Chikowa Health Centre Catchment Areas were triggered.

The district came to the realisation that the final day during CLTS training workshops is unique, important, and should be treated with great consideration as it has a great bearing on post triggering exercises like supervision and follow-ups.

The final day is characterised by a get together of CLTS training participants, natural leaders and headmen from the triggered villages. It provides a source of encouragement to everyone and they start looking at the triggering process as a serious first step towards achieving ODF status. People from different villages talk about the situation in their villages and their desire to change within a short period of time. This element is very important in CLTS where immediate action is advocated for.

The get together also brings out a sense of competition, the desire to do better than others. Natural leaders make presentations about how triggering took place and about their action plans. The presentations reveal that the presenters want to show their friends that they will do better than them.

The final day also acts as a day for reemphasising the importance of change and putting an end to open defecation. At the centre of the get together is talk about shit found in open places, its effects, and how to get rid of the OD and put an end to the effects. This discussion ensures that the village headmen and natural leaders become firmly rooted in the desire to have an ODF village.

Realising how impactful the final day can be, during the second training workshop the district invited one of the village headmen whose villages were triggered during the first training workshop and had done very well in ensuring that OD became history in his village. The idea behind this was to let people from triggered villages hear from their respected neighbour so that they should know that it is possible to put an end to OD.

“When people came to my village with the same kind of intervention I was ashamed. Firstly, because of the presence of shit in my village and secondly, because the name that came out was not of the person who had defecated in the open but was my name, Ngoleka, which is the name of the village. As a result of this I was furious and I made it a point that the act of open defecation should come to an end in my village… Let all do well so that TAs Kunthembwe and Kuntaja will rise and put an end to cholera.”

This is part of Village Headman Ngoleka’s speech which he offered during the final day’s get together. It was evident that the speech will motivate people to do something about their situations since Ngoleka Village is not far away from the newly triggered villages.

This shows that the final day during CLTS training workshops should not be taken for granted. Rather the day should be organised in such a way that it leads to a desired outcome (ODF) even when the triggering outcomes in triggered villages may not have seemed favourable.

**EWB’S WORK ON CLTS**

EWB has 2 staff working alongside partner agencies who are implementing Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) in Malawi and Zambia. This issue of the newsletter reviews learning and experiences from Malawi district government implementation (which receive their financial support from UNICEF Malawi).

**UNICEF-SUPPORTED WASHE DISTRICTS IN MALAWI**

Ashley Raeside is collaborating with District Coordinating Teams (DCTs) in the 12 UNICEF-supported WASHE Districts in Malawi on their CLTS programmes: Chitipa, Nkhata Bay, Likoma Island, Mzimba, Kasungu, Dowa, Salima, Mchinji, Lilongwe, Mwanza, Mangochi, and Blantyre. She is facilitating the exchange of learning between all stakeholders; helping programme leaders refine their approach to increase impact.

**EWB’S OTHER CLTS & DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS**

Alynne Iversen is working with PLAN Malawi and local government extension staff in Lilongwe District to facilitate improvements to their collaborative CLTS implementation. EWB has also partnered with Africare and UNICEF Zambia to help district CLTS managers refine their approach and enhance district collaboration. In addition, EWB has seconded personnel to Ntchisi, Machinga, Thyollo, Lilongwe, and Chikwawa Districts to strengthen district water point monitoring for more feasible O&M facilitation.

**Last Day of CLTS Training:** Full of opportunity, not to be taken for granted

**Written By:** Tamala Zembeni, DWO & WASHE Coordinator, Blantyre District

In Malawi and Zambia, EWB collaborates with government, donor and NGO partners to enhance the sustained adoption of sanitation and hygiene behaviour change.