

The Role of Local Government and Community Structures in Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) Monitoring

Authors

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Abstract

The abstract presents the experience of Plan Uganda in monitoring for Open Defecation Free (ODF) and sustainability through empowering the local government (LG) and community structures.

A three phased monitoring process over a period of 3 - 6 months is required before a community is declared ODF. The LG and community resource persons use pre-designed forms and checklists for monitoring. The community resource persons are members of village health teams, or natural or local leaders.

Plan Uganda together with the LG staff agree on key indicators, levels and frequency of monitoring. There is also a feedback mechanism where results of the monitoring are shared with the target communities for action.

The data collected is shared with the district officials who disseminate it to the national level to update the CLTS data base. This has enabled the tracking of national ODF progress. Monitoring has also been conducted during the post-ODF phase to enable community members not to lapse to OD and ensure that new migrants and newly married people with new houses construct latrines.

CLTS monitoring has fostered participation, learning and flexibility through recognizing the role of local people in planning and managing environmental sanitation, offering them an opportunity to learn from their own change. Furthermore it has promoted the use of existing structures, built capacity of LG, enhanced scaling up of CLTS, ODF attainment and sustainability.

Through this effective monitoring mechanism Plan Uganda together with the local government has been able to ensure that over 78 communities have been declared ODF within a period of two years in two districts. Moreover, an entire sub county with 40 villages has been certified ODF, the first of its kind in Uganda.

Keywords

Government, Local, Monitoring, Sanitation, Structures, Sustainability.

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Introduction

This paper presents how to monitor for ODF and for sustainability, it provides an overall description on how CLTS monitoring is undertaken and how roles and responsibilities are divided between programme staff, local government, and central government. It also highlights the links between monitoring at the local level and national level, capacity needs of the local government and how they have been addressed. As well as how local level participatory monitoring increases the chances for ODF and for sustainability of ODF status.

Context

Several governments have now recognized CLTS in their sanitation policies and strategy documents as an approach to scale up sanitation coverage. Yet very few government policies refer to CLTS monitoring and there is typically no guidance for national government on post-ODF monitoring (Lukenya Notes, 2011). For the case of Uganda efforts have been made to ensure that monitoring is part of the CLTS process. As a result a number of monitoring forms were developed to guide CLTS monitoring in the country. Monitoring is conducted at household/community level and data is analysed and shared with local governments and national level stakeholders. Special emphasis has been put on follow up of villages to ODF, a lesson that was picked from prior CLTS programmes in Plan Uganda. As such, 3 phases of monitoring over a period of 3-6 months (depending on the triggering outcome) are being implemented now. Before, follow up was not a priority and massive numbers of villages were triggered, but never followed up, which undermined the chances of attaining ODF status and consequently its sustainability.


Therefore the paper highlights how the engagement of local government and community structures in CLTS monitoring has fostered ODF attainment and sustainability.

Methodology

This section gives an overall description of how CLTS monitoring is undertaken and how roles and responsibilities are divided between programme staff, local government, and central government. It also highlights the linkages between different levels of monitoring.

CLTS monitoring process

CLTS monitoring is largely undertaken to track progress towards ODF attainment and sustainability. Monitoring is conducted in three phases whereby key indicators to measure the progress towards ODF attainment and sustainability are used. The critical indicator is ODF status, which is used as a key parameter for CLTS success. Other indicators include the number of new latrines, number of hand washing facilities, number of triggered villages and the number of people with improved sanitation. ODF status means 100% latrine coverage, presence of hand washing facilities and no open defecation.



The three phases of CLTS monitoring is where monitoring is done 3 times in a period of three months before a village is declared ODF. The first follow up visit by the community facilitators should be 3 weeks after triggering, then again after one and a half months and finally after 3 months for purposes of follow up.

The Village Health Teams and natural leaders engage in monitoring exercises to assess the progress made on the triggering action plans to support the community towards becoming ODF. Additionally, village-specific data on population, number of households including those with and without latrines, number of latrines improved, dates of triggering and ODF date pledged by communities is collected. The CLTS Monitoring form is used during the three months.

The data collected is usually presented in different ways to convey key messages to different groups to support the decision-making process to solve problems and/ or plan for the future.

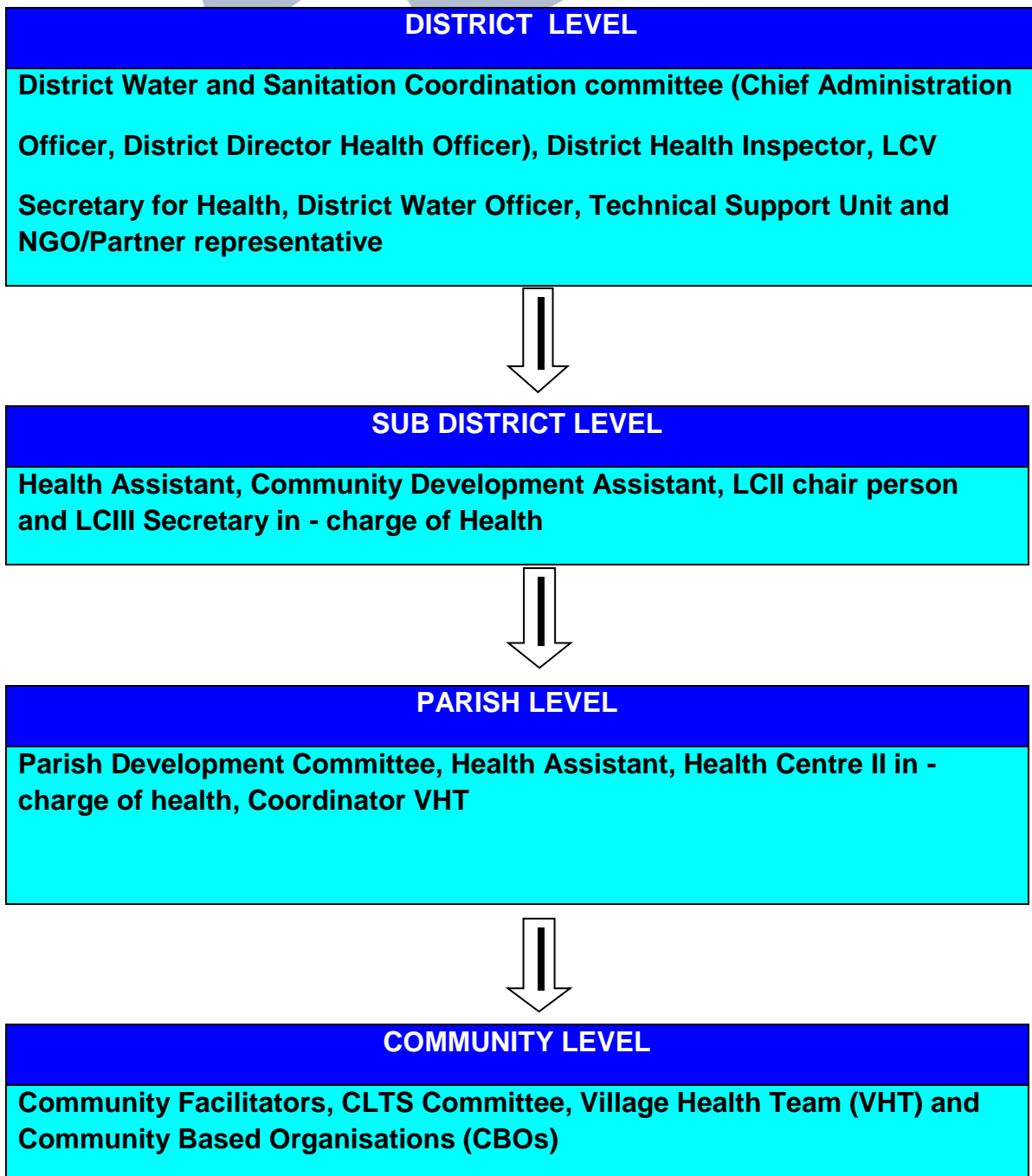
The purpose of the first phase is to observe the pace of progress towards ODF and then motivate the community to increase the momentum attained at triggering. The Open Defecation spots, which were identified on the community map during the mapping exercise, are periodically checked to assess progress. After every monitoring visit, feedback meetings are conducted at community level to establish progress made and what needs to be done differently so as to improve on the sanitation status. For the second and third phases, a team of different stakeholders is assembled to assess whether all villages in the parish have attained ODF status. After verifying that the parish is ODF, the district certifies the parish and a celebration is held.

ODF Verification

The table below gives the composition of the ODF verification team spearheaded by the district, which verifies the ODF status for the community at least within one month after notification. At the moment this exercise is paid for by the NGO operating in a given area.

In ODF villages, post-ODF monitoring is conducted where the assessment goes beyond checking full latrine use to include maintaining a safe water chain, good food hygiene and appropriate refuse disposal. Post-ODF monitoring is conducted after the community has been declared ODF. There is no specific structure for post-ODF monitoring at the moment, but communities monitor the status depending on their own action plans.

ODF Verification Team Composition



Roles and responsibilities of programme staff, local government, and central government

The monitoring process involves a multitude of stakeholders at different levels;

The Central Government maintains the national CLTS data where data from different districts is stored, furthermore it compiles country progress status and reports to the Joint Sector Reviews and other stakeholders at the national level, plays a key role in refining and reviewing national monitoring forms, it helps in defining monitoring and verification standards. Generally the central government is supported by the National

Sanitation Working group chaired by WSP-World Bank and the CLTS steering committee to develop strategies, action plans, a Monitoring and Evaluation system, undertake quality control, learning mechanisms and resource mobilization.

The Local Government (LG) at sub county and district level participate in the monitoring process in different ways, but also play a critical role in supporting the Village health teams (VHTs) that conduct monitoring at household level. The LG mobilizes and trains the VHTs to undertake monitoring. It keeps a record of aggregated data from the communities and uses it to monitor and compare progress between communities.

The local government shares monitoring data with Plan and central government.



Local government staff training VHTs



VHTs during a monitoring exercise

The Programme staff provide technical advice to the local government given the fact the CLTS is a relatively new approach in some districts. In order to support scaling with quality, programme staff support capacity building of local government staff, community resource persons, review monitoring reports, keep records of monitoring data, undertake quality assurance of monitoring as well as technical back stopping. Support in assembling of multi-stakeholder team during verification exercise.

Links between the monitoring going on at the local / programme level and the government-led monitoring system

Monitoring has three levels namely; community, local government and central government/national level.

Data is collected at community/household level by Village health teams supported by the Sub County health assistants and Plan staff. The data is collected using a CLTS monitoring form. The data from villages is consolidated into parish level data and submitted to the sub county which analyses it for consistency and accuracy before it is presented to the district and other stakeholders. The district health inspectors consolidate data from different sub counties and share it with the line ministries which maintain a CLTS data base. At the national level data is used to provide useful feedback to stakeholders on the status of CLTS in the country but also support decision making.

Monitoring is part of the activities at local government level and there is a minimal budget though not adequate to support this process.

Community Facilitator's Monitoring Form

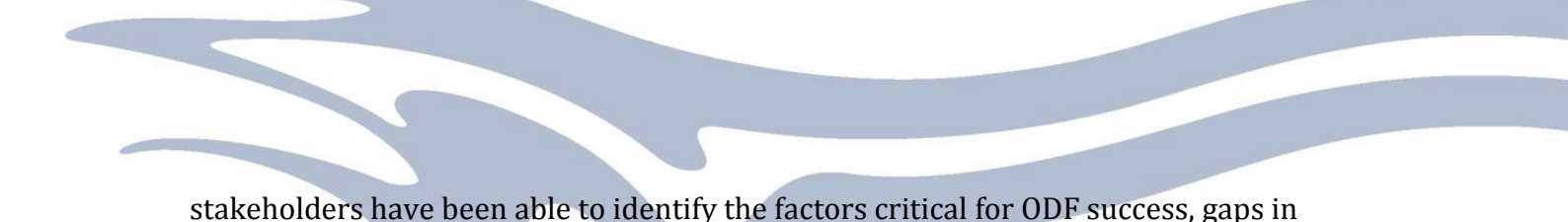
District Name:				
Sub county Name:				
Village Name:				
Implementing Agency	NGO:	District		
CLTS Facilitators name(s):				
Facilitator trained by:				
Does village have a trained mason?				
Number of households:				
Was hand washing included in the trigger event?				
Did the village trigger? (one of the following is true: 1) All are prepared to take action 2) The majority agreed to take action 3) Some agreed to take action	Yes	No	If no provide comments:	
			If no provide comments:	
			If no provide comments:	
Did the village agree on date when community will attain ODF and all households have an improved latrine?	Yes	No	Comments:	
	Date:			
Did the village put together an action plan?	Yes	No	If no provide comments:	
Start Date:				End date:
Households baseline (No. of HHs)	No of improved latrines	No of unimproved latrines	No of shared latrines	No. of HH using OD
Supervisors' Name and signature	Name:		Signature:	
	Date:			

Post Trigger Visit / Follow - Up				
Has the village/participants taken action to facilitate and improve their sanitation situation	Yes	No	Comments:	
Has the village/participants started implementation of action plan?	Yes	No	Comments:	
Following up supervision 3 months after triggering	No. of improved latrines	No. of un improved latrines	No. of shared latrines	No. of HH using OD
1 st follow –up supervision				
2 nd follow –up supervision				
3 rd follow –up supervision				
Date:				
Has the village declared itself as having attained ODF status and every household has an improved latrine?	Yes	No.		
	Date			
Verified by:	Name & Title		Agency	
Date				

Findings and discussion

For a monitoring intervention to be successful it requires adequate skills, human and financial resources. However, some local governments are constrained in some of these areas. To avert the situation, Plan has supported capacity building of local government staff in CLTS processes, provided Training of trainer manuals and facilitator guides to further enhance their skills. The local government staff have in turn trained community groups which have supported them to monitor and create awareness on CLTS in the communities.

The local level participatory monitoring has fostered participation of different stakeholders and learning from the monitoring results. For instance the different



stakeholders have been able to identify the factors critical for ODF success, gaps in monitoring and CLTS processes and how to address them. This is usually done during the final day for verification when the ODF status is established. This has not only increased the chances of ODF attainment but also its sustainability. The role of local people in planning and managing environmental sanitation has been recognized and this has offered them an opportunity to learn from their own change. Furthermore monitoring has promoted the use of existing structures, volunteerism, built capacity of LG as well as fostered scaling up of CLTS, ODF attainment and sustainability.

Through this effective monitoring mechanism Plan Uganda has been able to ensure that 78 communities have been declared ODF within a period of two years. Moreover, an entire sub county with 40 villages has been declared ODF the first of its kind in Uganda.

Basing on the experience above it is recommended that:

- Monitoring should be effectively coordinated at the different levels with specific roles and responsibilities outlined for the respective levels.
- Build capacity of local government and community structures in monitoring to ensure that it is adequately undertaken and sustained.
- Use existing structures in monitoring to enhance ownership, sustainability and avoid duplication of services.
- Monitoring system should be kept simple to make it easier to replicate in different areas.
- Establish strategies for ensuring that post-ODF monitoring is conducted in a sustainable and effective way.

Conclusion

Local level participatory monitoring has proved effective in tracking progress towards ODF attainment and sustaining ODF status through the use of existing structures like the local government and community resource persons. Furthermore the linkage between monitoring at the local/ programme level and the government/national-led monitoring system has enhanced the keeping of real time data on ODF status in the country. In turn this has supported decision making and the feedback mechanism.



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