ACHIEVEMENT OF OPEN DEFCATION FREE (ODF) STATUS IN EIGHT VILLAGES OF PADER DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

According to an assessment report conducted by Netwas Uganda in 2011, Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) as an approach was first introduced in the Districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader in 2010. Despite training of all Health Assistants and support to all triggered villages, no village in the area was declared ODF until the end of 2011, and this was in Pader District only. This case therefore examines what was done differently by ZOA (an INGO) in Pader to reach positive results.

BACKGROUND OF THE INITIATIVE

CLTS is an integrated approach for achieving and sustaining Open Defecation Free (ODF) status. Its aim is to induce sustainable behaviour change and practices in hygiene and sanitation.

Pader District, like the Districts of Gulu and Kitgum in the Acholi region, was introduced to CLTS in 2010 by a national facilitator and a Senior Health Educator from the Ministry of Health, with support from UNICEF. They trained all the District Health Inspectors (DHIs) and Health Assistants (HAs) from the Sub Counties. Some NGOs working in the District were also trained and have been implementing CLTS. These included ASB, ZOA, Concern Worldwide and Caritas Gulu Archdiocese.

Following the end of the 20 years insurgency in the area, the resettlement of community members from the camps to the villages in the last years created a demand for latrines and better sanitary facilities. Unfortunately, having spent a long time in the camps, most people got accustomed to humanitarian aid and expected free handouts, even after settling in their original communities.

At the same time, the districts were faced with the challenge of working with smaller budgets as many international NGOs were cutting aid, or even leaving the region. The introduction of a more sustainable approach to improving sanitation was critical at this time, as there were rampant cases of cholera and other sanitation related diseases.

After the introduction and training of District Officials on CLTS in 2010, over 40 villages were triggered according to the Pader DHI. However, it was difficult to attain open defecation free (ODF) villages. In 2011, ASB working closely with the Sub County officials achieved one ODF village while ZOA was able to achieve eight ODF villages out of the 21 triggered in the same year.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

In this paragraph we present the CLTS process as implemented and described by ZOA Uganda in Pader District.

The following steps were applied in the targeted communities:

1. **Community mobilisation**

After planning of the intervention, an invitation letter and a programme for the triggering session were given to the Sub County. Different stakeholders were involved in the process: the LC1 chairperson and his executive committee, community mobilisers and the project officers of
ZOA. Mobilization was done door to door by the entire group to ensure full attendance of the community on the day of triggering.

2. Triggering
During triggering community members were taken through different experiments and calculations. This raised their awareness about the impacts of bad hygiene practices and attitudes on their health. During this session, the following steps were taken.

i. Community entry
When the triggering team (staff, Sub County officials, community mobilisers) arrived at the triggering scene, the team members divided themselves into two groups. One group always remained at the meeting venue to entertain those already present, while the other group moved around the village in order to get an overview of the village sanitation status, to have an initial rapport building and to alert the community to the meeting.

ii. Rapport building
This was done by either telling stories or asking questions that motivated community members to sit and continue listening to the facilitators.

iii. Problem identification
Facilitators asked open ended questions about the kind of water, hygiene and sanitation problems the community is facing. The Sub County officials would then respond to possible concerns from the community members while a brainstorm for finding solutions to other challenges could also be organised.

iv. Resource mapping
The community members would then be invited to draw its village resource map. On this map, the boundaries were marked, as well as schools, hospitals, boreholes and other water sources, and markets. After locating all the above on the map, each person was asked to locate his/her household on it. People were also asked to locate their latrines and/or where they practice open defecation using different colours or other available materials such as leaves or ashes.

v. Walk of shame
Using the resource map, meeting attendants together with the facilitators would then go and visit the water sources and areas where community members practice open defecation. Facilitators would ask the community to tell them which households have the best sanitation and hygiene practices and which ones are doing less well. When time allows, all these areas should be visited.

Community members participating in the Walk of shame in one of the triggering sessions

vi. Shit calculation
This is the calculation of the quantity (in kilogrammes) of faeces that the community members in a given village produce in a day, a week, a month and a year. The results were then converted into understandable measurements such as sacks, lorries, etc.
Community members attending the triggering session with faeces in front of them

vii. F-diagram
After all these calculations, the facilitator would ask people “where do all these faeces go???” Respondents usually came up with many places where they believed the faeces go. This is the point where the facilitator made them realise that they are eating their own shit.

viii. Calculation of medical costs
First people were told how faeces left lying after defecating in the open can lead to ingestion of pathogens causing diseases such as diarrhoea. Then they were shown the financial implications. In other words, a calculation is done showing the amount of money communities spend on treating diseases that they get from eating their own faeces.

ix. Bottle experiment
By putting a small amount of faeces in a bottle of water and proposing community members to drink from it, facilitators demonstrate how people may drink water contaminated with their own faeces without noticing.

x. Community action planning
The last step of the triggering visit is community action planning. People are asked which day they expect to reach Open Defecation Free (ODF) status in their village, so that facilitators can come back and witness the changes. This planned ODF date is registered and a promise is made to the community to mobilize many local leaders to come and witness the achievement.

This raises the expectation that the village will be visited by very important people on that day. It also motivates people to work hard and meet the deadline.

Ask the Community members to raise hands to accept new changes and follow their action plan

3. Monitoring
For ZOA, monitoring or follow up is the most important activity in Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS). Monitoring encourages the community to continue working hard to meet its deadline. This was done continuously and in stages by the different people who were already involved in the mobilization process, like the Village Health Teams (VHTs), LCs, community mobilisers, project officers and Sub County officials.

Monitoring is done door to door; the project officers also use this opportunity to give health education to community members on the need to have latrines as well as other sanitary equipment such as a dish-drying rack, rubbish pit, handwashing facility with soap, etc. Project officers also encouraged community members to continue working together (man, wife and children) to ensure the health of the whole family.

ZOA developed two monitoring forms, A and B. Form A is used every time a follow up is done,
while the data is entered in form B for record keeping and for management.

A man digging his latrine

A woman showing her latrine

4. Declaring a village ODF

After extensive follow up and monitoring and when visible improvements have been recorded, a joint monitoring / verification team is set to verify the status of the village. The team moves around to check the presence of latrines in the village and find out whether the latrines are being used by everybody, including elders and children.

When verifications are completed and the community is proved to be ODF, a celebration is organized and other neighbouring communities are invited, together with district and Sub County officials. Gifts (2 goats per village) were given to the ODF village and its status is then officially declared. Sign posts are designed and put in the ODF village to discourage the passers-by from practicing Open Defecation in an ODF village.

Acayo Margret washing her hands in front of her latrine.

- In all the ODF villages, by-laws have been set by the community themselves to keep their ODF status and improve levels of hygiene and sanitation.

- Hygiene and handwashing practices within households improved significantly thanks to the follow up and health education provided.

- The medical expenses of community members reduced considerably. On average, the households triggered by ZOA used to spend up to UGX 27,000 (approx. US$ 10) per month on medical expenses due to sanitation-related diseases; this has been reduced to UGX 5,000 (US$ 2) in some homes.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS

- After triggering 21 Villages in Pader District, 8 were declared ODF; this means 948 households are having latrines and are practicing good hygiene.
SUCCESS FACTORS

- Constant door-to-door follow up within the communities by different stakeholders to both remind them about their commitment and monitor progress.

- Availability of resources to support the process (see following section for more details).

- The support of the initiative by the local leaders such as LCs and VHTs made the process successful.

- The lively and skilled facilitation of the process by ZOA staff triggered shame among the communities and encouraged them to take action.

RESOURCES/COST OF THE INITIATIVE

Expenses made by ZOA in the process of triggering, follow up and celebration of ODF status included:

- Transport for staff from ZOA office to the communities, which cost about UGX 74,000 (US$ 30) for 20 litres of petrol per week during the first 3 months, for triggering and follow up in 21 villages.

- Expenses incurred during joint visits (3 conducted), during which about UGX 40,000 (US$ 16) was given to each local government staff and politician who participated in the 3 joint visits.

- The celebration of the attainment of ODF status in the communities was done jointly on Sanitation awareness day. Money was spent on food given to the community members and invited guests. Also fuel, around 30 litres, was given to district officials (about UGX 111,000/US$ 44), together with a lunch allowance of about UGX 30,000 (US$ 12) for each District officer.

CHALLENGES

- All the 21 villages were triggered at one go by only 2 project staff assisted by local leaders. This somehow affected the consistency in follow up due to the bulk of the work.

- Some community members were hiding behind their culture and tried to chase ZOA officers for collecting faecal matter. They claimed that this would culturally amount to witchcraft; they even threatened to throw the team out of the village.

- Villages triggered during rainy season found it difficult to make bricks, while the new pits were constantly filling up with rainwater.

- Some community members stopped following the process along the way for various reasons, one being sickness.

- Sustainability of the process by the Sub Counties is still a challenge, because whenever the responsibility of following up an ODF village is handed over to them, they usually don’t follow up due to inadequate resources.

- The attitude of the Sub County staff has been challenging as most of them expect transport and lunch allowances, without this they refuse to go to the villages.
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PADER DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Some communities/villages are naturally slow; they have taken a much longer time to become ODF although they are still being followed.

LESSONS LEARNT

- Trigger few villages at a time. This will enable consistent follow up and increase the chance of getting more ODF villages.

- Some communities are naturally slow, they may need more follow up and more time to become ODF.

- It’s important not to trigger during rainy season, this affects the latrine construction process. It will be difficult to make bricks and latrine pits fill up with water.

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