CLTS Knowledge Hub Learning Brief

CLTS Knowledge Hub

Strengthening and broadening Community-led Total Sanitation at scale

Using a CLTS Approach in Peri-Urban and Urban Environments: Potential at Scale

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This note summarises the potentials and limitations of using a CLTS approach in peri-urban and urban environments. It identifies the actions needed to take the approach to scale. It is one output from a workshop convened by the CLTS Knowledge Hub at the Institute of Development Studies, and Plan International Ethiopia in Addis Abba between June 13th-15th 2016. A more detailed report can be found on the CLTS Knowledge Hub website: www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/resource/using-clts-approach-peri-urban-and-urban-environments

Unimproved, basic and dirty latrines, open defecation and the unsafe and unhygienic management of faeces pose a serious risk to human health in towns and cities across the developing world. Although rural populations have a much higher proportion of people relying on unimproved sanitation, high population densities, socio-economic inequalities and the painfully slow rates of access to safely managed sanitation services (since 1990 those with access to improved sanitation in urban areas has decreased by 3%), increase the urgency of the challenge in urban settings (McGranahan, 2015).

Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) encourages communities to decide together how to create a clean and hygienic environment and take a leading role in making their environment open defecation free (ODF). It has proven to be effective in tackling sanitation challenges in rural areas, but there are a growing number of examples of its use in peri-urban and urban areas (Myers 2015, 2016) and consequently a growing evidence base demonstrating its applicability.

Challenges of the urban context

In urban areas there are a number of additional challenges that necessitate some adaptations to the traditional 'rural' CLTS approach. From an institutional perspective there is often far greater array of actors involved in urban sanitation with little coordination between them, and little familiarity with the CLTS approach. Construction standards for toilets are often unrealistic and unattainable by poor householders.

At the community level, triggering is more challenging in heterogeneous communities with busy, transient, and sometimes homeless populations who do not typically meet or work together. The nature and boundary of a 'community' is itself hard to define. Space constraints, insecurity of tenure, high population density, illegal settlements, markets and other public places, and landlord-tenant relationships are all additional factors to consider in the urban setting.

Principles of CLTS

Reflecting on the different challenges faced in the urban context, workshop participants identified a number of principles that still underscore both rural and urban CLTS practice:

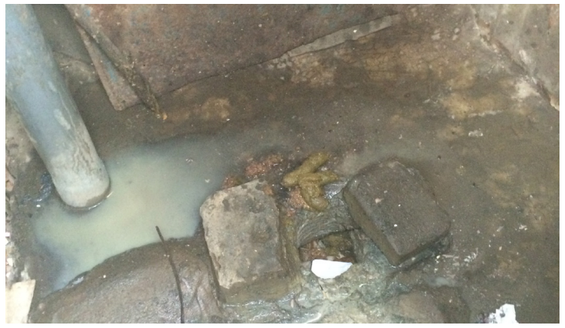
- Participation: *community members are at the heart of the process and should drive the agenda.*
- Empowerment: *communities make their own decisions and are encouraged to take their own actions.*
- Collective behaviour change and collective action: *the process focuses on all, everyone must change unsafe sanitation practices in order for the risk of faecal-oral contamination to be reduced.*
- Community ownership: *directly and symbolically (through high levels of community buy-in).*
- Triggering to create demand: *a set of tools used to evoke powerful emotions and confront the negative impacts of open defecation and poor sanitation.*
- Natural Leaders: *activists and champions who emerge and lead the process.*
- ODF is an objective: *it is not considered a success unless all have appropriate sanitation facilities and use is sustained.*

Activities in urban CLTS (U-CLTS)

Due to the different challenges found in urban areas, participants identified important adaptations and additional elements to the traditional rural methodology. These include:

- Situational and stakeholder analysis: d*ue to the greater complexity in urban areas, gaining a thorough understanding of the context and identifying the range of relevant stakeholders is critical.*
- Stakeholder engagement: *partnerships and relationships with multiple stakeholders is essential, it is important to get strategic players to understand, support and complement implementation.*
- Institutional capacity building and coordination: *any demand driven approach will require training and coaching of relevant stakeholders and institutions.*
- Design or selection of technological options and solutions: *simple pit latrines will not be suitable in most urban areas, a range of appropriate solutions for a given context should be explored.*
- Facilitating supply: *products may not be available in local markets or costs may be too high, programmes should enable access to appropriate and affordable sanitation products and services.*
- Safe management of faecal sludge: *population density and a lack of space requires a focus not just on containment but also on ensuring safe management across the sanitation chain.*
- Triggering: *triggering units need to be identified. Triggering events are likely to be competing with other interests so should be fast, exciting and enticing. Multiple triggering events may be needed.*
- Post-triggering follow-up: *efforts to ensure community engagement and action after a triggering event are likely to be more complicated and take much longer. Competing demands also make this stage critical in building and maintaining momentum.*
- Monitoring, verification and certification: *because community units are harder to identify and shit enters communities through a number of different ways, what should be monitored is less obvious and difficult to standardise.*
- Beyond ODF and wider service provision: *considering other sanitation and hygiene related services like solid and liquid waste management (SWLM) and faecal sludge management (FSM) is important for gaining and maintaining a clean and hygienic environment.*
- Mobilisation of social movements: *advocacy for sanitation and wider improvements for the urban poor on a town/city wide scale can help expand the reach of an intervention.*

The importance of these activities, how they are conducted and their sequencing will take a different form dependent on context. For more details about the different activities, along with past experiences and ideas for how they can be modified to the context please see the longer report www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/resource/using-clts-approach-peri-urban-and-urban-environments



Dirty toilet and almost full pit latrine in Mathare, Nairobi, Kenya. *Credit: Jamie Myers*

Potentials and limitations

CLTS in the urban context can support the aim of safely managed sanitation, provided: (1) it is adjusted to the local context, (2) is one component embedded into a larger town or city wide sanitation plan and (3) is agreed upon by all relevant stakeholders. The potentials and limitations for the approach to be used at scale are discussed below.

U-CLTS in the Sustainable Development Goal Era

There are a range of synergies between U-CLTS and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The characteristics of the approach mean that it has the potential to contribute not to just SDG6 on WASH and SDG11 on cities but also those concerning the reduction of inequalities and the promotion of inclusive societies. Although donors typically invest in large-scale infrastructure in cities and small towns, arguably more attention is needed for community initiatives in order to meet the SDG targets. As a pro-poor development strategy, CLTS has the potential to mobilise the urban poor to collectively demand for access to safely managed sanitation, hygiene and water services and through social accountability mechanisms which ensure no one is left behind. As has been demonstrated with the Community-Led Urban Environmental Sanitation (Lüthi et al, 2011) approach and other examples, U-CLTS can increase the space for community participation in urban planning and management and help strengthen and support local community involvement in improving sanitation systems and the management of services.

Though U-CLTS fits nicely into macro level development debates, an enabling legal and policy environment in towns and cities, countries and internationally is lacking, limiting the potential for success.

Accountability and community-led action

U-CLTS can increase the likelihood that household, community and public sanitation facilities will be used, operated and maintained appropriately. The experience in Mathare, Nairobi, shows that the community-led nature of the approach means that, alongside direct community action U-CLTS can unify community demands on governments and service providers for adequate and equitable service provision. Furthermore, though communities cannot lead all the different processes across the sanitation chain, inclusion of communities in discussions about different options can help build symbolic ownership.

A recently upgraded shared toilet and bathroom facility in Nakuru, Kenya. *Credit: Katherine Pasteur*

Enabling environment

Achieving ODF in all counties by 2030 will require a repertoire of strategies and approaches that can be implemented in urban settings. Supportive frameworks are required such as policies and institutional leadership. Policies are changing in some countries: in Kenya urban sanitation policies are being developed that includes reference to CLTS and the Tanzanian government recently released U-CLTS guidelines (Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2015). Political environments and municipal systems, budgets and capacities will have an effect on the ability to follow this type of approach. Nevertheless, U-CLTS can work within existing government structures and municipal plans and should not be promoted in isolation or in competition. It can also help inform sanitation plans that have not yet been designed.

An evidence base

There is already considerable evidence of CLTS's success in rural areas, and its reputation amongst national governments, national and international agencies and donors is strong. The evidence base in urban areas is much smaller, however it is growing and beginning to demonstrate that a community-led model can work at scale in urban environments. In Nakuru, Kenya, 190,000 people have been reached, in Gularyia, Nepal, a town of 30,000 people became ODF in six months and in Rosso, Mauritania, close to 32,000 people are now living in an ODF environment. More examples are needed that document process and highlight results.

Next steps

- U-CLTS will take a different form depending on the context: defining principles for U-CLTS should be further refined in order to demonstrate how it differs from rural practice and other urban sanitation approaches. The development of a more coherent protocol or toolkit would be an appropriate next step.
- Advocacy is needed at the municipal, national, regional and international levels to help influence city and town sanitation plans, national and international policy discussions. Appropriate forums and spaces can be used at various levels to showcase the approach and demonstrate the potential of U-CLTS.
- Continuing to build a body of evidence from different urban contexts: peri-urban, small and medium sized towns, large cities, informal settlements and slums. Documentation of its use, failures and successes can help advocacy efforts and inform future practice.
- As this approach is a departure from traditional urban sanitation programmes, capacity development will be needed for relevant stakeholders at different levels. This will include municipalities, line ministries, utility companies, NGOs and community members. Those facilitating the process will need a different skill set from those working on rural CLTS. Natural Leaders will need to be supported in different ways dependent on context.
- U-CLTS is not a complete solution to urban sanitation: it must be incorporated into municipal sanitation strategies and master plans. It will also be important to consider how it can be linked to wider issues in the urban environment such as SLWM and FSM.
- The co-production of services is encouraged in order to support a comprehensive approach to city-wide coverage of sanitation as well as greater sustainability. U-CLTS facilitators and communities should work with other sanitation actors across the sanitation chain to ensure appropriate FSM services, disposal systems or rubbish collection.
- A strategy for scale is needed in order to demonstrate the potential of U-CLTS to contribute towards city-wide coverage. Cities and towns that have gone to scale should be showcased in order to advocate for the approach.

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