

## Learning and Exchange Workshop: Liberia Note

### Background

The Learning and Exchange Workshop, organized by IRC in partnership with WaterAid, SNV and UNICEF, explored rural sanitation as a service. It brought together 10 West African countries and over 70 participants to share experiences in Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) and other programmatic approaches to sanitation and how to integrate these into service-led rural sanitation delivery. It took place 12-14 November 2013 in Cotonou, Benin. Six representatives<sup>1</sup> from Liberia participated, three of which presented papers on the Liberia experience with CLTS; they are:

- *Natural Leader Network-Drive CLTS: a Cost-Effective, Sustainable Model for Sanitation* by Piet deVries & Jennifer Schmitzer
- *Using Social Marketing to Accelerate CLTS in Liberia* by Jefyne Togba
- *Strengthening the Institutional Framework for CLTS in Liberia to Trigger Progress* by Jennifer Schmitzer

The workshop agenda included case study presentations from several countries in the region, which focused on three key areas on Day 1 and two broad themes on Day 2:

- records of CLTS implementation in the field with a focus on Ghana, Niger, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso and Cameroon;
- sharing experiences on leader-driven total sanitation from Benin, Burkina Faso and Liberia and also one experience on women-driven total sanitation;
- other examples of approaches in rural sanitation, including evidence from Guinea Bissau, Burkina Faso, community empowering in the Democratic Republic of Congo and social marketing in Liberia;
- feedback from the institutionalization of CLTS in Liberia and two experiences from Nigeria on local inter-administration collaboration and the scaling up of the Local Government Area (LGA) wide approach; and



Liberia Delegation at the Workshop

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<sup>1</sup> In order L-R in photo above: Elizabeth Geddeh, Global Communities (formerly CHF International); Cathy Stephen, Liberia WASH Consortium ; Dr. Ochi Ibe, US Agency for International Development (USAID); Jefyne Togba, Population Services International (PSI); Jennifer Schmitzer, Ministry of Health & Social Welfare (MOHSW); Piet deVries, Global Communities

- financial issues such as the operationalization of Public Treasury accounts in Burkina Faso, micro-financing for sanitation facilities in Benin and excreta valorisation in an EcoSan initiative.

On Day 2 IRC representatives made a presentation on their analytical framework for sustainable sanitation services and there was a world cafe (round table) and group discussions organized around the four main components of sanitation service: social/cultural; financial; technical; and institutional.

At the end of the third day, the group summarized key points and discussed the way forward; the Liberia delegation also created an action plan.

### Reflections

The main purpose of the workshop was to share experiences among countries and expand participants' thinking around CLTS and other approaches to sanitation, to achieve total and sustainable sanitation service delivery in West African countries.

In reflecting on the workshop, the Liberia delegation noted the following key points:

- Countries in the region are contextualizing the CLTS approach in significant ways including social and financial incentives. Based on this, Liberia should feel confident in adapting its approach from that defined by Kamal Kar more so than has been done in the past. There should be further thinking of approaches *beyond* ODF to ensure that ODF is both achieved and sustained in Liberia.
- For effective implementation of CLTS, the National Technical Coordinating Unit (NTCU) needs to further decentralize its work so that county and district staff has more ownership and power over decision making (including training, verification and certification). This should be budgeted both at national and local levels.
- Liberia needs to start looking at ways to finance sanitation at a community level, so that communities can move beyond ODF and into improved sanitation. There were examples of using different funding sources such as WASH committee income.
- CLTS guideline revisions should include:
  - training program for county level staff;
  - clear county responsibilities for CLTS and decentralization of power;
  - a clear statement on subsidies: when and how they can be used in different contexts of Liberia - e.g. the poorest, in urban areas etc.;
  - information on the role of natural leaders and support that natural leaders should be provided by government/NGOs (subsidy vs. no subsidy); and

- considering a coordination mechanism at national level that goes beyond CLTS community updates and looks at sustainable sanitation services (rural/ urban).
- Knowledge management is important but evidence from the region is lacking; Liberia can contribute to the dialogue with quantitative and qualitative evidence.
- CLTS is just one approach to sanitation and should be integrated into broader sanitation and child survival efforts; Liberia may want to consider curtailing the creation of CLTS-specific bodies and instead focus on emphasizing sanitation more comprehensively.
- Challenges to sanitation are similar across countries and all solutions are not yet available; Liberia should maintain its energy around sanitation knowing that others are also facing obstacles.
- Countries are still looking for sustainable approaches to scale-up, urban CLTS and going beyond ODF; Liberia can provide valuable lessons as efforts increase.

### Action Plan

The Liberia delegation agreed on the following action plan given the need to incorporate lessons from other countries and share the experience with stakeholders unable to attend. These activities are general based on conclusions above though implementing partners will also bring back points to incorporate into programming.

No.	Activity	Lead	Timeframe
1	Share note and Liberia papers through various forums (email, WASH website, next CLTS coordination meeting, upcoming Liberia WASH Consortium workshop, etc.)	MOHSW	22 Nov 2013
2	Present workshop paper on NTCU to NSC	MOHSW	15 Dec 2013
3	Explore possibility of adding sanitation indicators to HMIS/ health indicators	MOHSW	30 Jan 2014
4	Incorporate lessons learned from workshop in revised CLTS Guidelines	MOHSW	28 Feb 2014
5	Develop concept notes on incorporating EcoSan options in Liberia; private sector; and innovative financing	MOHSW	28 Feb 2014
6	Write Liberia case study for next IRC sanitation workshop in early 2014	MOHSW/MPW/ implementers	28 Feb 2014
7	Develop Liberia-specific menu of options for latrines that looks at materials, costs and the positives/negatives of each technology	IWASH/ MPW	15 Mar 2014
8	Continue to advocate for the GoL to account for international commitments around sanitation and hygiene in budgets and policies	LWC/ implementers	July 2014