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**Sustaining the gains of community-led total sanitation
(CLTS) through latrine demonstration centre: a case study
of rural communities' challenge of constructing latrines on
loose soil formation in Jigawa state, Nigeria**

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Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) remains a very effective sanitation strategy to help rural communities to stop open defecation. It is a Strategy that has had unprecedented outcomes in motivating rural communities to transform from a haven of open defecation to clean environments where all households now have and use latrines. This is the experience in rural communities of Birniwa Local government of Jigawa State where open defecation was a norm and was never connected to the prevalent cases of diarrhea especially among children. Even though, there had been several health enforcement interventions by the sanitary Inspectors of the LGA for people to build latrines, yet the practice of open defecation persisted. This situation remained until CLTS was introduced and implemented through UNICEF/DFID supported Sanitation, Hygiene and Water in Nigeria (SHAWN) aimed at promoting mass safe excreta disposal campaign, first among households and then to communities taking charge of their sanitation. Introduction of CLTS helped so many communities to construct latrines and open defecation was gradually becoming history. Suddenly, latrines began to collapse and open defecation crawled its back into nerve center of communities especially communities with loose soil formation.

The onus was now on us to find lasting solution to this challenge. A forum of local artisans was organized by the affected communities from which various local latrine options emerged for demonstration and adaptation. A demonstration center was supported by UNICEF for all communities to visit and borrow the most affordable option for their communities. Once again, this initiative has brought back smiles into faces of householders who were disappointed at the negative experience of collapsing latrines. Now, CLTS is back on its track.

The beginning

At the inception of SHAWN, reports from the state level baseline surveys revealed that less than 30% of households have latrine and as a result majority of the population practice open defecation (UNICEF 2011). Indeed the UNICEF/WHO JMP report of 2008 that observed that 7 out of 10 people who practice open defecation are from rural areas aptly captures the enormity of the sanitation challenge in rural areas of Birniwa LGA. Therefore, the UNICEF/DFID supported Sanitation, Hygiene and Water in Nigeria (SHAWN) could not have come at a better time when the people needed to be rescued from the pangs of preventable diseases caused by poor sanitation. Through SHAWN, Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) was adopted as a strategy to combat the menace of open defecation in the entire LGA which has a population of over 300,000 inhabitants.

So, what happened?

All the communities in the entire LGA have been triggered to implement CLTS and most of the communities have demonstrated full acceptance and willingness to change their sanitation behaviors and

take charge of their WASH affairs; there was a huge uptake of latrine construction and new social parameter evolved in the rural communities; youth began to boast of access to latrines as a qualification for marrying pretty wives; children and pupils celebrated this new trend as a new life emerged around a safe and healthy environment. Through all this success however, it has been observed that over 30% of the households have been reported to experience collapsed latrines during the rainy season forcing many households to revert to open defecation.

The over 300 communities of Birniwa LGA are living on land composed of sandy loose soil that is not only difficult to dig but prone to collapse when drenched by rainfall. Due to the high frequency of pit collapse, the people became frustrated and with no foreseeable local solution to this new challenge, some went back to practicing open defecation. This resulted in a great setback to the success recorded in these communities as the efforts of the people are about to be in vain and thus the momentum began to die off.

Steps taken to address loose soil formations

A rapid assessment was conducted to determine the extent of willingness of households to try various strategies to construct appropriate latrines for this type of soil formation. The assessment also revealed that in some of these communities, there were in-house capacities to construct durable latrines indicating availability of local expertise and materials for solving the problems of pit latrine collapse in these areas. A range of options to control latrine collapse were examined and it was agreed all should be constructed in a location to serve as a point of knowledge and learning for anybody who may want to construct any of the technology option.

A cluster of eight communities was selected for piloting Latrine Demonstration center to provide avenue for shared learning experience

Local artisans were identified to create a pool of Resource Persons and a 2-day training was organized for them to strengthen their skills to construct various types of innovative latrine options from each of the eight selected CLTS triggered communities in Birniwa ward as a cluster that could be trained on latrine innovations with plans to train six more clusters in the LGA.

An ODF community called Garin Musa Gabbas in the ward (Birniwa) was chosen to host the demonstration center because it is an ODF community and is centrally located for easy accessibility. The WASHCOM of the host community with the approval of the community leader allocated a portion of land to site the demonstration center.

Various durable latrine options were designed by these local artisans most of which have two features (pit lining and cover slab) using local available materials that are low-cost but durable such as old drum, mud blocks, big clay pots, cement blocks, asphalt, old tires and clay.

Based on demand, one more center in Fagi community, bringing it to two, has been established in the Birniwa LGA.

Development of costing

The latrine designs cost from as low as \$10 (for latrines whose walls that are rendered with mud plaster) to as high as \$120 (for those lined with cement blocks) per latrine compartment, providing a range of choices that is affordable to all socio economic strata of the communities.

Benefits of having the centre

- It provides community members access to model latrines for adoption and immediate construction with cost visibly displayed for the various latrine options in the Center.
- Evidence shows that more households have built latrines after having visited the center as they became convinced that the problem of loose soil formation is not insurmountable after all.
- Within the first two weeks of its existence, the demonstration center has hosted over 100 visitors comprising local artisans; WASHCOM members and community leaders.
- Already 15 persons from 3 communities near the 2 demonstration centers have constructed their stable latrines from among the options in display.
- So far, 23 Artisans (who were not part of the original plan) from as far as 200 meters away from the two centers have come and learned from the various models displayed at the center.
- The State government has realized the advantages of having the center and plans are on-going to establish 5 more Centers by the Government in areas where latrine collapse has been rampant.

Lessons learnt

- Local capacities exist to construct stable latrines in rural communities
- Given a little training many local artisans can be made resource persons to support a group of communities thus going to scale in implementing control measures to stabilize collapsing latrine walls
- There are local construction materials readily available in rural areas that can be used in controlling latrine collapse
- Cost is not a hindrance in constructing a stable latrine as some are as cheap as \$5 and are found to be affordable even by the people at the lowest wealth quintile.

Conclusion

A latrine Demonstration center has been established, for the first time under the CLTS strategy, in Garin Musa community of Birniwa LGA of Jigawa State to showcase use of local materials for latrine construction in loose soil formations. Sixteen trained artisans are now available to support their neighboring communities to construct durable latrines at very minimal costs.

The Latrine Demonstration center serves as a learning center for low-cost latrine construction for all community people. More community members are now owning and using durable latrines with expected longer life span. With the mandate that all the trained artisans scale up latrine innovations in resolving the challenges of pit collapse in the area, there exists possibilities of replication of the demonstration center latrine project across other SHAWN states.



Photograph 1 and 2. The tire type of latrine under construction



Photograph 2.



Photograph 3. The finished product of the tire type of latrine



Photograph 4 and 5. The drum



Photograph 5.



Photograph 6. The mud block type



Photograph 7. Latrine walls rendered with cement to stabilise walls



Photograph 8. Latrine walls rendered with cement to stabilise walls

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