

# Community-Led Total Sanitation

in Liberia



## What is Community-Led Total Sanitation?

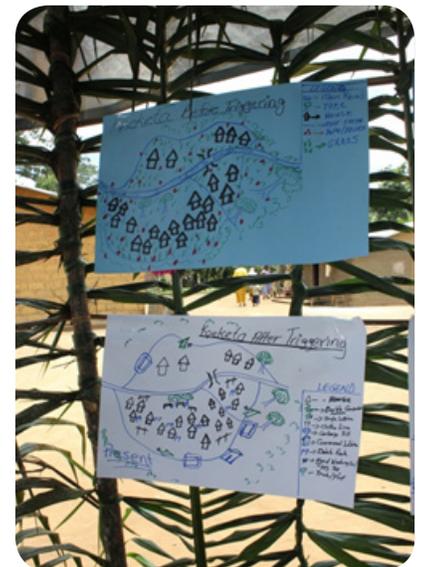
While the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector in Liberia has made significant strides in the past decade, nearly half of the population still practices open defecation. Global Communities is implementing Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) – an innovative methodology that mobilizes communities to eliminate open defecation – across several programs to increase sanitation access and help build healthier, more disease-resistant communities.

Through the USAID-funded \$10 million Improved Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program (IWASH),

which ended in April 2015, Global Communities developed an adapted CLTS methodology tailored to Liberia's specific needs. This "CLTS+" approach is now being implemented in Global Communities' disaster response and health systems strengthening programs in Liberia. In total, 313 out of 378 (83%) of triggered communities have become ODF through Global Communities programming to date.

## What is the role of Global Communities in expanding this approach?

Developed in Bangladesh, the CLTS methodology is a proven, highly customizable process. It allows individual communities to conduct their own appraisal and analysis of open defecation and develop a tailor-made, comprehensive plan of action to become open defecation-free (ODF). Global Communities triggered 351 communities in three counties as part of IWASH; 284 became ODF and reported zero cases of Ebola. Initial evidence suggests that the presence of IWASH programming and communities' ODF achievement substantially reduced their likelihood of having Ebola. In Liberia, Global Communities is continuing to roll out CLTS+ through its ongoing Assisting Liberians with Education to Reduce Ebola (ALERT) and Partnership for Advancing Community-Based Services (PACS) programs.



## How does it work?

Global Communities works closely with communities and encourages them to develop a plan of action to become ODF. CLTS focuses on behavior change needed to ensure real and sustainable improvements and invests in community mobilization instead of hardware. It triggers communities' desire for change, propels them into action and encourages innovation, mutual support and appropriate local solutions, thus leading to greater ownership and sustainability. It accomplishes all of this without external subsidies for latrine construction.

The program includes three phases: First, pre-triggering involves selecting a community and building a rapport. Second, triggering brings the community together to discuss open defecation. A series of interactive activities ignites communities to stop open defecation, and the process focuses on stimulating a collective sense of revulsion among community members as they confront the negative effects of open defecation. Third, post-triggering entails developing a concrete action plan and refining it as needed.

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## Why does it work?

Global Communities takes a partner-driven approach, working closely with government officials as well as with administrative and traditional leaders at the local, district and national level to develop a plan designed to meet the needs of their respective communities, and works with them to identify areas for improvement and build on successes to ensure the program is sustainable, practical and replicable.



Global Communities has also assisted in the establishment of government structures for managing the implementation of CLTS. These include the CLTS National Technical Coordinating Unit, CLTS County Steering Committees, District Steering Committees and Natural Leader Networks. Global Communities provides the members with logistical support during field monitoring visits and at other key moments in the program. Also, Global Communities is working with the Liberian government to create staff positions at county and district levels that will be responsible for CLTS implementation. Global Communities has also facilitated the development of national guidelines for CLTS implementation in Liberia.



Photos by Jenny Schmitzer

It is also successful because it uses knowledge to institute change by educating communities and employing methods designed by and for them. These methods include weekly clean-ups in the community employing the dig and bury method while community and household latrines are constructed and sanitation systems are developed and sustained. They also include building and using dish racks to keep eating utensils and cookware away from human waste, and clotheslines to help keep clothing clean. Hand washing facilities are another critical component of CLTS.

## Case Study

On behalf of the National Coordinating Unit (NCU), Global Communities facilitated county-level CLTS seminars within the Liberian government's three target counties to explain the CLTS process and establish county steering committees (CSCs). These seminars secured political will and fostered coordination. Since the end of 2011, Global Communities has joined forces with government workers to form CLTS CSCs responsible for county-level CLTS activities including monitoring of natural leaders – community members who help bring their communities to ODF status. Bong, Lofa and Nimba counties now have such a committee chaired by Ministry of Health & Social Welfare and co-chaired by the Ministry of Public Works; additional participants include the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, traditional leaders and other CLTS partners.

Global Communities also supports training for CLTS facilitators who are government employees at the county- and district- level that CLTS CSCs identified as key stakeholders. The NCU provides trainers for the five-day workshops, during which facilitators assist in the triggering of new CLTS communities.

*Global Communities is an international non-profit organization that works closely with communities worldwide to bring about sustainable changes that improve the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable. Development is not something we do for people; it is something we do with them. We believe that the people who understand their needs best are the people of the community itself. Please visit our website at [www.globalcommunities.org](http://www.globalcommunities.org) for more information.*

