A report on the review of Practice of CLTS Implementation in RUSHPIN Programme in Cross River and Benue states of Nigeria

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***Introduction:***

Nigeria is one of the MDG goal 7 off-track countries with about 102 million people without access to safe sanitation. About 33 million people still defecate in the open. An estimate shows that about194,000 Nigerian children under the age of 5 (not to mention teenagers and adults) die annually from preventable water and sanitation related diseases like cholera, typhoid fever, dysentery, diarrhea etc. According to a desk study by the Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP) Nigeria loses N455 billion ($3 billion) annually due to poor sanitation. (Source: AMETO AKPE, October 13, 2011.) The most worrisome factor is that the percentage of people practicing open defecation is steadily rising over last one decade.

While the problems are huge, the Federal Government of Nigeria of late has made considerable efforts to scale up its efforts to arrest the problem of open defecation by adopting CLTS as the core national sanitation strategy. Though the implementation is patchy mainly with donor driven projects, it offers an enabling policy environment for CLTS implementation and demonstrates scale and quality in implementation. On this backdrop, The Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion in Nigeria (RUSHPIN) programme with support from GSF aims to significantly increase sanitation coverage and attain a positive and sustained hygiene behavioural change in six Local Government Areas (LGAs). The programme not only provides support to 3 LGAS each from Cross River and Benue state, it also leverages the federal Government resource for other six LGSs in both states as scale up interventions. The programme is positioned to deliver scale, quality and replicability.

The programme is in its initial stage of roll out with only three weeks of field intervention by first of May 2014. On a contractual agreement with the executing agency and GSF programme, CLTS Foundation carried out a situation review in few select LGAs followed by a training of trainer workshop for the LGA level facilitators, RUWASS trainers, Civil society agencies to be involved in the project and the technical team members of Concern Universal, the executing agency for RUSPIN programme. Mr. Sisir Pradhan and Dr. Kamal Kar carried out the assignment over a period of 20 days from 1st May 2014 to 20th May 2014. While Mr. Sisir Pradhan has spent about 20 days in the programme location, Dr. Kamal Kar joined after one week from 7th May 2014 to support the RUSPIN programme in Nigeria. During the entire period field visits were made to six LGAs, 13 CLTS communities and few key Government functionaries in all these LGAs. The observations and recommendations described below are based on the limited exposure to some triggering and post- triggering follow-up actions at few CLTS communities, meetings with some key LGA officials and interactions during the training workshop.

**Observations:**

This is our first visit to GSF programme (RUSHPIN) in Nigeria since its inception in 2012. In spite of the fact that the programme suffered a few hiccups initially it picked up momentum and we are glad to see that the entire 6 programme LGAs have started activities on the ground. The following are some of the strengths and weaknesses observed during our field visit, training and interaction with different actors:

**Strengths**:

* We have observed a high level of motivation, energy and excitement amongst the LGA staff, CSOs and the EA staffs. Further, the CLTS WASH facilitation team consists of people drawn from different departments within the LGA, which makes it more inter-departmental and contributes values in terms of greater ownership by LGAs.
* CLTS is not totally unknown. There exists some knowledge (though quite incomplete) of CLTS on ground. Many received some training on the CLTS (Mostly around Triggering Tools). Therefore, there are many people found across different LGAs having some skill of facilitation and CLTS triggering.
* LGAs being the main sub-grantees of the Programme, the issue of institutionalizing the programme within the government are not a hindrance at all as it’s a challenge in few other GSF countries.
* The national sanitation policy of Nigeria supports CLTS with appropriate enabling environment unlike many other countries. Further provision in MoU for having matching grant portfolio from Government of Nigeria, makes the government responsive and more accountable towards effective implementation of CLTS.
* The two states where RUSHPIN is being implemented are contiguous do not have much of physical and environmental challenges like cyclone, flooding, submergence etc. All LGAs are connected with relatively better road network
* The number of villages in each LGA is fairly small as compared to some GSF countries. Hence with an effective planning, it is possible to reach the goal of having ODF LGA in a quick timeframe.
* There is homogeneity in the social structure and the traditional structure is still intact and functions in all the villages, which offers a great promise for effective CLTS interventions.
* Although local language varies from LGA to LGA, most of the people understand English. It makes easier for learning, facilitating and sharing experiences by the trainers and natural leaders from other linguistic groups.
* LGA WASH coordinator has freedom and access to utilize funds as per their discretion. This reduces redtapism, bureaucratic hurdles in execution of work plans.

**Weaknesses:**

* The overall understanding of CLTS was limited to triggering. As a result the ratio between triggered and ODF communities is a matter of concern.
* ALL LGAs have nearly planned for triggering all the villages without any clear idea of emergence of ODF villages. This is a matter of serious concern. If this tendency is not arrested RUSPIN programme will very soon trigger most of villages in programme area without really achieving any ODF communities.
* There is no clear idea of pre triggering and post triggering follow up. It is being perceived as the sole responsibilities of RUSHPIN programme. The concept of community led extension is totally non-existent.
* Forcing the idea of formation of WASHCOM on the day of triggering spoils the entire spirit of community led initiative and turns it back to externally prescribed programme implementation. This needs to be properly sequenced without affecting the process of CLTS facilitation.
* There is not a very clear understanding of the natural leaders. We found a lady Roslin in Logo LGA who is considered as Natural Leaders and she has not even constructed her own toilet after 15 days of triggering. How can we expect that she is going to convince others? Further Natural Leaders are perceived with a very mechanical approach and their numbers and names are almost sacrosanct with a very limited scope for them to evolve from the ODF process.
* The LGA level implementation plans is very straight jacketed and highly controlled without real consideration of field reality, community level dynamism, triggering outcome and clear understanding of post triggering follow up action steps.

**Gaps in Facilitation:**

* The word toilet and latrine is used extensively right from the beginning of triggering diluting the emphasis on collective behavior change.
* Most of the tools are not used at all except that of mapping where more verbal (lectures) modes are used rather than visual and interactive methods.
* Wherever tools are used; they are used just mechanically without analyzing its impact on human behavior change. In the process the triggering moments are not captured and effectively utilized towards achieving desired ODF status in quick timeframe.
  + In all the villages we found ODF dates are not realistic. It is very far from the date of triggering. We do not even provoke the community on this issue. It seems that we are contented with whatever date community offers. In one village when we went for monitoring visit, on WASHCOM member said since our date is October we did not feel the urgency of construction of toilets. With a little facilitation and provoking they shifted the dates to 30th June. The major element of triggering the “*collective realization of eating each other’s shit if one person defecates in open”* is lost due to poor facilitation.
  + The LGA CLTS facilitation teams go for fixed date of triggering. They do not often ensure the participation of maximum number of people in the village. Instead in some cases we observed that we are relatively content if we get the household representation to the meeting. Since it is about collective behavior change lack of participation of all in the village makes triggering exercises mundane and less effective.
  + The role of the group members in the facilitation team is not clearly understood. We observed that all the group members sit in one side of the circle and they do not make an effort to capture inter personal discussion among community members which is key to trigger positive discussion.
  + Environment setter doesn’t seem to be very active.
  + There has been lot of distractions during the facilitation as few people in the village as well as triggering volunteers were found busy in filling up lot of information. That divides the attention. In many occasions it defeats the purpose of the triggering exercise of three hours, i.e. effective community analysis of their own sanitation situation and maximizing community energy towards translating the collective realization into formative action like digging its own pits, bringing the old toilets into use by all the members in households, if there is any (which often found as relics without the intended use by the owners) sharing toilets with neighbours, maintaining public toilets (if there is any) etc.
  + The facilitation team tends to leave the discussion in a fairly ok situation. They look satisfied when two three persons from the community come forward for some individual level action. They do not make the effort to maximize community energy and build collective consensus by using positive speakers, through provocative questions like who agrees with him/her etc.
  + It is observed that in most of the triggering exercise, they fail to maintain the community enthusiasm and higher level of participation from beginning to end. Withdrawal syndromes are often seen as the facilitator do not employ techniques like raising hands, inviting them in the center, allowing them to speak, taking photographs of positive speakers etc. We may even employ the technique of seeking community support for opposite opinion by asking communities to take sides etc.
  + Somewhere it is observed that the facilitation teams are doing everything but not able to come out of the teaching mode. In many occasions the facilitator’s intervention is quite guided and thoroughly controlled with limited attempts for allowing the discussions among the participating community members.

**Gaps in Post triggering follow up**

* The approach towards follow up is less dynamic and the team is doing its first follow up visit after two weeks and they are supposed to give five follow up visits in every village and so on. But the team doesn’t take into consideration community momentum, triggering outcomes etc. while designing the follow up strategy. Fifteen days are enough to kill the community’s momentum. Hence the first follow up visit is to be made within three four days from the triggering day. There has to be flexibility in deciding upon the number and extent of follow up visits at the LGA team level though the budgetary limit must be realistic and fixed on the realistic assumptions.
* After triggering the team immediately shifts to individual level of interaction with little scope for building community pressure and collective monitoring by the communities themselves. We found we are more interested in collection of data and counting number of toilets than facilitating the aspect of collective behavior change and collective action towards achieving ODF status. We need to employ various mechanisms to bring more collective accountability. In fact in Logo, monitoring visits are considered as surprise visits. They do not even inform the natural leaders and WashCom members. Surprise visits may be necessary after the community claims ODF status, not before that. In that case we are giving a wrong message of policing the community, which is not CLTS.
* Natural Leaders and WashCom are not aware about their roles. In fact, no take home activities of Natural Leaders are planned during the post triggering follow up visits and the LGA teams take whole responsibility of follow up and guiding the communities towards ODF which is not at all advisable.
* Hygiene messages given at the community level are not clear and the logic of such actions like covering the toilet, application of ash and putting hand washing station is not clearly understood by the community. The messages are not communicated properly though the team often delivers such messages in large gatherings. The team has little exposure and idea about the activities like demonstration of toilets, onsite discussions with Natural Leaders and community members and provoking communities to find answers if there are gaps observed etc.

Recommendations:

* The institutional engagement and interaction of Executing Agency needs to be improved at the national and state level. EA should explore the possibility of involving the PCM more in project activities, orient as well as apprise all 17 PCM members who are well established and have different levels of influence. EA must work towards leveraging the potential of the entire PCM members by building functional relationships with them. EA must put in mechanism for regular formal and informal visits, organizing field visits, arranging exposures for PCM members, and regularly updating them about the project activities. PCM must act as interface between EA, state i.e. RUWASSA and national ministry because of their position and status. One phone call from the PCM down the line makes a lot of difference in minimizing bureaucratic hurdles in implementation.
* At the state level, RUWASSA requires to be taken into confidence and the EA must engage with them in a subtle way to improve and plug the quality gaps in the trainings imparted by RUWASSA. One strategy could be to develop a core team of trainers from within the project teams by selecting about 10 best trainers (including both men and women) from among the LGA level teams and Technical Support officers deployed by Concern Universal.
* There has to be a well thought out communication strategy in place for harmonious and cordial interaction with state level RUWASSAs both in Cross River and Benue state. Benue state has locational disadvantages as Concern Universal has its office in Calabar. Hence the programme team needs to put extra effort in Benue state to strengthen the functional relationship.
* RUSHPIN team needs to explore possibilities of developing champions at the higher level of governance. The team needs to make efforts to find inroads to the larger governance actors like Governors, Deputy Governors and Commissioners from both the states. In fact, the PCM member can be very helpful in creating such opportunities.
* All the LGA chairpersons must be triggered. The functional association with all six LGAs could be further strengthened with greater engagement. The LGA Task Group on Sanitation requires being more involved in all stages of programme implementation instead of only involving them during the ODF verification process. According to a suggestion made by Deputy Chairperson of Logo LGA, a protocol needs to be developed ascribing their roles will be quite useful. Some of the ideas could be launching ODF campaign with involvement of all, conducting monthly review meetings to discuss challenges, progress and share some of the responsibility of follow up if possible. District administration has many outreach departments like health, agriculture, planning, general administration etc. Such departments will not only provide additional support, they will also bring in new dimensions in terms of leveraging the collective action build from the ODF process for other livelihood options.
* The RUSHPIN team ensures that all 20 villages triggered during the training programme must attain ODF status within a month and these communities can be treated as learning schools for others.
* The approach and outlook towards LGA level CLTS facilitation planning needs to be changed with the following considerations.
  + Area saturation approach must be reanalyzed with perspective of effectiveness of natural leaders and scale of coverage with geometric progression approach. The current targeting of entire clan after clan triggering may limit the scope for effective engagement of natural leaders, as their influence zone is limited. Instead the LGA CLTS facilitation teams need to be divided into smaller units and each unit should assume the responsibility of few ODF clans. They must expand their teams by producing and involving natural leaders with them and together saturate the clans (assigned to them) over a realistic timeframe.
  + At any given point of time the ratio between triggered village communities ODF communities has to be 50:50. For every 10 triggered communities there needs to be at least 5 communities becoming ODF before the 11th community is triggered.
  + All the four stages of CLTS facilitation must be given due importance without only focusing on triggering exercises. Post triggering follow up activities as explained during the training programme (also elaborated in the training report) must be taken up seriously. Post triggering follow up action needs to be initiated within three to four days of triggering and it has to be more dynamic based on the triggering outcome rather than counting definite number of visits with a 15 days interval between each visit.
  + RUSHPIN team must work on sequencing of activities like collection of baseline and other village level information, formation of WashCom etc. While all the relevant information can be collected during the pre-triggering and post triggering process, the formation of WashCom must be avoided during the day of triggering. The triggering exercise must have a much focused agenda of collective analysis by the people and maximizing community energy for corrective actions by themselves.
  + The facilitation team needs to ensure the quality of triggering by ensuring at least 70% of the population of the CLTS community is present during the triggering exercise. Otherwise the team should stop triggering. In addition, the team needs to use multiple triggering tools and should use the tools in a desired manner to realize their potential of generating desired triggering outcome.
  + The monitoring process needs to capture both outcome and process indicators. Outcome indicators like health data, knock on effect data, household income expenditure must be tracked along with all other information collected by the implementation team. At the same time, the facilitation team must analyze the triggering outcomes just after every triggering exercise based on different behavioral aspects like disgust, shame, fear, emotion and self-respect (the format outcome analysis is discussed during the training programme and also captured in the training report)

**Conclusion:**

The visit provided a good understanding and outlook of CLTS implementation in RUSHPIN programme in particular and across Nigeria in general. Though the programme has just kicked off on the ground, this visit helped to analyse the extant understanding, skill and mechanisms for CLTS implementation at scale. A number of gaps in CLTS implementation and programme execution have been identified from field visits, interaction with implementation team, support team and some key governance actors from the region. Recommendations made in this report, if implemented properly would be able to help in bridging such gaps and achieving quick and fast results in terms of producing ODF communities. At the same time, Nigeria has little added advantage of having a clear federal policy in favour of CLTS and there are dedicated state agencies with mandate of facilitating CLTS on the ground. The LGA authorities also seemed to be quite proactive and supportive to the programme as well. Overall the RUSHPIN programme has all the potential to be successful and also to demonstrate new pathways for CLTS implementation for the global CLTS fraternity to learn from.