



# Testing CLTS Approaches for Scalability

## CLTS Learning Series: Lao PDR Country Report

October 2014

---

Plan International USA Inc.  
1255 23<sup>rd</sup> St. NW, Suite 300  
Washington DC 20037

The Water Institute  
Gillings School of Global Public Health  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Rosenau Hall, CB #7431  
135 Dauer Drive Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7431

This document was prepared by The Water Institute at UNC for Plan International USA as part of the project *Testing CLTS Approaches for Scalability*, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Plan International USA Inc.  
1255 23<sup>rd</sup> St. NW, Suite 300  
Washington DC 20037  
Phone + 1-202-617-2300  
<http://www.planusa.org/>

The Water Institute at UNC  
Gillings School of Global Health  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Rosenau Hall, CB #7431  
135 Dauer Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7431  
Phone +1-919-966-7302  
<https://waterinstitute.unc.edu>

**Author and Data Collector:**

Vidya Venkataramanan

**Reviewers and Editors:**

Jamie Bartram  
Pete Kolsky  
Darren Saywell  
Jonny Crocker  
Mulugeta Balecha  
Corrie Kramer  
Kristen Downs

This report can be downloaded from the *Testing CLTS Approaches for Scalability* project website:  
<https://waterinstitute.unc.edu/clts>.

Please use the following reference when citing this document:

Venkataramanan, Vidya. 2014. *CLTS Learning Series: Lao PDR Country Report*. Chapel Hill, USA: The Water Institute at UNC.

© University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Plan International USA.

**Disclaimer:**

The findings, suggestions, and conclusions presented in this publication are entirely those of the authors and should not be attributed in any manner to Plan International USA, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill or the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

## About The Water Institute

The Water Institute at UNC provides international academic leadership at the nexus of water, health and development.

Through **research**, we tackle knowledge gaps that impede effective action on important WaSH and health issues. We respond to the information needs of our partners, act early on emerging issues, and proactively identify knowledge gaps. By developing local initiatives and international **teaching and learning** partnerships, we deliver innovative, relevant and highly-accessible training programs that will strengthen the next generation's capacity with the knowledge and experience to solve water and sanitation challenges. By identifying or developing, synthesizing and distributing relevant and up-to-date **information** on WaSH, we support effective policy making and decision-taking that protects health and improves human development worldwide, as well as predicting and helping to prevent emerging risks. Through **networking and developing partnerships**, we bring together individuals and institutions from diverse disciplines and sectors, enabling them to work together to solve the most critical global issues in water and health.

We support WaSH sector organizations to significantly enhance the impact, sustainability and scalability of their programs.

The vision of The Water Institute at UNC is to bring together individuals and institutions from diverse disciplines and sectors and empower them to work together to solve the most critical global issues in water, sanitation, hygiene and health.

## About Plan International USA

Plan International USA is part of the Plan International Federation, a global organization that works side by side with communities in 50 developing countries to end the cycle of poverty for children and their families. Plan works at the community level to develop customized solutions and ensure long-term sustainability. Our solutions are designed up-front to be owned by communities for generations to come and range from clean water and healthcare programs to education projects and child protection initiatives. For more information, please visit [www.PlanUSA.org](http://www.PlanUSA.org).

## About the Project

The project, *Testing CLTS Approaches for Scalability*, evaluates through a rigorous research program three distinctive strategies to enhance the roles of local actors in CLTS interventions in Kenya, Ghana and Ethiopia. The project aims to learn, capture and share reliable and unbiased information on CLTS approaches and scalability.

## About the Author

**Vidya Venkataramanan** is a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) and a researcher at The Water Institute at UNC.

## Acknowledgements

The Water Institute at UNC thanks team members from Plan International USA for their valuable guidance in this project. Specifically, we thank Darren Saywell, Mulugeta Balecha, and Corrie Kramer for their detailed review of this report, as well as Morgan Nelligan for coordinating activities with the Plan International Laos Country Office.

Special thanks are due to Plan International Laos staff, officials from the government of Lao PDR, and community leaders for sharing their time and experiences with UNC researchers. This study would not have been possible without their participation. We also acknowledge Souvanaly Thammavong, who played a vital role as the Lao-English interpreter for in-depth interviews. She also transcribed Lao interviews to English.

The Water Institute at UNC would also like to thank Plan International for financial support.

# Table of Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms	vii
Executive Summary	1
1. Background	4
2. Research Questions	4
3. Methods	4
3.1. Study Participants	5
3.2. Limitations	5
4. Findings	6
4.1. Lao PDR's sanitation policy	7
4.2. CLTS by Plan International Laos	9
4.3. Roles of local actors: planning stage	13
4.4. Roles of local actors: pre-triggering	17
4.5. Roles of local actors: triggering	18
4.6. Roles of local actors: post-triggering	22
5. Conclusions and Implications	30
6. References	32
7. Annex 1 – Summary of enabling and constraining factors	33

## List of Tables

Table 1. Study participants	5
Table 2. Plan International Laos' indicators for monitoring CLTS triggering and post-triggering outcomes	11
Table 3. Latrine coverage and ODF status in Plan International Laos's CLTS communities, 2013	12
Table 4. ODF versus non-ODF communities in Plan International Laos' program areas, 2013	12
Table 5. Roles of local actors during planning activities in Plan International Laos' CLTS program	14
Table 6. Enabling and constraining factors for successful planning of CLTS activities	16
Table 7. Roles of local actors in pre-triggering in Plan International Laos' CLTS program	17
Table 8. Enabling and constraining factors for successful pre-triggering	18
Table 9. Roles of local actors in triggering in Plan International Laos' CLTS program	18
Table 10. Perceptions of CLTS facilitators as 'educators' in Plan International Laos' CLTS program	20
Table 11. Enabling and constraining factors for successful triggering	22
Table 12. Roles of local actors in post-triggering activities in Plan International Laos' CLTS program	23
Table 13. Enabling and constraining factors for successful post-triggering	28

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Urban, rural and total sanitation coverage trend in Lao PDR, 1994-2012 (adapted from WHO/UNICEF 2014)	8
Figure 2. Institutional map of Plan International Laos' CLTS approach	10
Figure 3. Distribution of latrine coverage in Plan International Laos' CLTS communities, before and after triggering, 2013	13
Figure 4. Criteria for community selection as recalled by interview participants	16

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
CLTS	Community-led Total Sanitation
CO	Plan International Country Office
iDE	International Development Enterprises
JMP	WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme
LAK	Lao Kip (currency)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODF	Open Defecation Free
PADETC	Participatory Development Training Centre
PU	Plan International Program Unit
SNV	SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
TCAS	Testing CLTS Approaches for Scalability
THB	Thai Baht
TSSM	Total Sanitation and Sanitation Marketing
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNC	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar
WaSH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WSP	Water and Sanitation Program, World Bank

## Executive Summary

This report presents findings on Plan International’s Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR). The report is part of the CLTS Learning Series, a collection of case studies on CLTS implementation approaches. The study was conducted by The Water Institute at UNC as part of the Plan International USA project, “Testing CLTS Approaches for Scalability” (TCAS), which evaluates the roles of the following local actors in CLTS: local government, teachers, and natural leaders. The CLTS Learning Series investigates the roles of these and other important actors involved in the CLTS approach. This study is a result of a sub-agreement to UNC from Plan International USA, the recipient of a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

This report reviews Plan International Laos’ CLTS implementation approach by addressing the following research questions:

- What roles do local actors play in the CLTS implementation process in Lao PDR?
- What are enabling and constraining factors for successful implementation of CLTS?
- What implications does the involvement of local actors have for Plan International Laos’ CLTS implementation process?

In July 2013, a UNC researcher conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 31 respondents including policymakers, Plan International Laos CLTS staff, other international non-governmental organization (NGO) partners, district-level CLTS facilitators, and community leaders. The researcher also collected relevant organizational documents and national reports. Thematic analysis was conducted using interview transcripts, field notes, and documents. Key findings and implications are summarized below:

### Roles of local actors

The main actors involved in CLTS activities presented in this report are Plan International Laos, district government officers, CLTS “master trainers,” and CLTS Committees. Plan International Laos plays the primary role in terms of financing CLTS, but works with district government staff who facilitate and follow up on CLTS activities. Currently, government officers engaged in the CLTS process are formed into District Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WaSH) Teams (DWTs), and are trained by a small group of CLTS “master trainers” from the national government and other NGOs. A district-level Plan International Laos representative supports the DWTs, who conduct CLTS activities in addition to their other government duties. The aim is to ultimately transfer responsibility for CLTS promotion from Plan International Laos to the government; however, DWT members do not currently have a mandate to implement CLTS, which affects their ability to devote sufficient time and resources to community visits.

Plan International Laos and DWTs formally establish CLTS Committees in triggered communities and train them on WaSH practices. These committees consist of five to seven community leaders who are each assigned a specific follow-up responsibility related to latrine construction, safe water practices,

and environmental sanitation. CLTS Committees report to DWTs, who report progress to Plan International Laos. This approach is an important adaptation of the version of CLTS practiced in several other countries, where “natural leaders” (who are not necessarily existing community leaders) are identified during or after the triggering process. This study did not compare Plan International Laos’ CLTS approach to that of other organizations in Lao PDR using natural leaders. Therefore, it is not possible to comment on the relative effectiveness of these two different approaches at this time.

This report highlights various enabling and constraining factors that affect the ability of different local actors to effectively implement CLTS in Plan International Laos’ program areas. A brief summary of these factors is presented below.

### Enabling factors and related implications for successful implementation of CLTS

- Plan International Laos has a **strong working relationship** with the national government and other organizations implementing CLTS in Lao PDR. As a result, Plan International Laos is able to play a **leadership role** in shaping the national CLTS and WaSH agenda, from writing national CLTS training guidelines to developing a national open defecation free (ODF) definition.
- Plan International Laos conducts detailed baseline surveys in communities before triggering, which allows them to clearly **assess changes** in communities after triggering. These surveys could be used to target certain types of communities in future rounds of triggering.
- Plan International Laos has an **extensive monitoring system, which could serve as a model** for other programs and the national government to measure progress towards achieving progress in CLTS and other WaSH outcomes.
- Plan International Laos’ approach of **working with local government actors to facilitate and follow up on CLTS** helps integrate CLTS into government activities rather than solely being an NGO program.
- **Formal training of CLTS Committees** on hygiene and sanitation practices decentralizes follow-up to the community level. Therefore, even though routine follow-up by facilitators may not always be possible, communities are able to self-monitor and keep track of information to submit to the DWT.

### Constraining factors and related implications for successful implementation of CLTS

- The primary challenge for CLTS in Lao PDR may be related to the impact of subsidies. A **history of latrine subsidies** can make communities less receptive to a do-it-yourself message and create an expectation that all organizations will provide hardware support. This history of subsidies was evident in communities where Plan International Laos implemented CLTS and led to a preference for expensive pour-flush latrines, which many households cannot afford to build on their own. This can affect the CLTS message of behavior change through building latrines using any available and affordable materials.
- The impact of latrine subsidies on Plan International Laos’ CLTS activities could be lessened by **improving coordination with other NGOs or local government departments with latrine**

**subsidy projects** in Plan International Laos working areas. Plan International Laos cannot currently control whether subsidies are offered to CLTS communities, confounding the outcomes of CLTS. The **national government should play a stronger role** in sending a consistent and clear message to local governments and external support agencies on the role of subsidies in sanitation projects. This message should then be communicated to communities in order to make progress toward attaining ODF communities.

- Local government facilitators tend to have limited experience with participatory approaches; this study revealed that CLTS in Lao PDR does not emphasize techniques that trigger disgust or shame in communities, and triggering tends to be conducted in a **more educational and less participatory manner**. Therefore, before Plan International Laos is able to transfer responsibility of CLTS to the local government and scale CLTS to more communities, it needs to focus on **building DWT capacity and facilitation skills**. Capacity can be developed by conducting more trainings that **focus on participatory facilitation skills** and by increasing the size of DWTs. Ideally, the most skilled facilitator would serve as the DWT lead.
- Increasing the number and quality of trainings will require **developing more CLTS master trainers** in Lao PDR. Plan International Laos can address the training shortage in its program areas by training more of its own staff as master trainers. These internal trainers can conduct more intensive trainings with local government facilitators in a manner aligned with Plan International Laos' approach.
- Although Plan International Laos used **criteria to select communities** for CLTS, the overriding determinant was whether selected communities were in the district government's list of target communities for development. Therefore, communities that were triggered may not have always been appropriate for CLTS. Plan International Laos can analyze their monitoring data to decide what types of communities to select in future rounds of triggering and use these data to justify their criteria to the district government, so that only those communities that are appropriate for CLTS are triggered.
- CLTS facilitators reported **prioritizing follow-up visits to communities that are nearing ODF** so that they could be declared sooner. It would be more resource-efficient for Plan International Laos to target communities that are more likely to be receptive to CLTS at the onset of the project rather than trigger less appropriate communities without providing sufficient follow-up visits. The current approach may adversely affect results between different triggered communities, especially those that are more remote. The sanitation challenge in such communities may require alternative approaches.
- The **weak supply chain for sanitation hardware** in Bokeo province, combined with people's preference for pour-flush latrines, may be slowing progress towards ODF in many communities in Plan International Laos' program areas. It would be essential to introduce market-based approaches that expand access to low-cost, durable latrine options.
- Organizations implementing CLTS in Lao PDR cannot accurately compare results of their activities due to a **lack of a national ODF definition and ODF verification criteria**. This weakens the evidence base for CLTS at a national level. Efforts were ongoing at the time of this study to develop these national criteria and definitions.

## 1. Background

The Water Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), in partnership with Plan International USA and Plan International offices in Ghana, Kenya and Ethiopia, is implementing a research project titled Testing CLTS Approaches for Scalability (TCAS). This project evaluates the roles of local actors identified as important to CLTS: local government, teachers, and natural leaders. As part of this project, UNC and Plan International USA conducted case studies of CLTS projects implemented by Plan International country offices (COs) to form a “CLTS Learning Series.” Plan COs applied to be included in the study, and countries were selected by Plan International USA and UNC. Individual reports will be produced for each country. A cross-country synthesis, guided by the goal of assessing different approaches to CLTS implementation, will also be produced at the end of the series.

In July 2013, a UNC researcher collected data for the CLTS Learning Series in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR) with support from Plan International Laos. This report describes Plan International Laos’ CLTS implementation approach, focusing on the roles and perspectives of local actors at each phase of CLTS. The most commonly cited enabling and constraining factors for successful implementation are also discussed, along with implications for Plan International Laos’ CLTS approach. This report does not capture CLTS activities funded by other organizations. It is intended to serve as a case study describing the roles of local actors in Plan International Laos’ CLTS program.

## 2. Research Questions

The primary research questions this report addresses are:

- What roles do local actors—including natural leaders, teachers, and local government—play in the CLTS implementation process in Lao PDR?
- What are the enabling and constraining factors for successful implementation of CLTS?
- What implications does the involvement of local actors have for Plan International Laos’ CLTS implementation process?

## 3. Methods

Data collection consisted of in-depth interviews with a variety of stakeholders and gathering of policy and programmatic documents. A list of process indicators was developed to guide the document review and the development of semi-structured interview guides. Responses from interviews were validated by comparing accounts from different sources. Purposive sampling was used to identify key informants at the national, sub-district, and village levels who could describe experiences with Plan International Laos’ CLTS approach. Interviews were conducted with the support of an independent Lao-English interpreter who was not affiliated with Plan International. These semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the author and the interpreter, who also cross-checked the recorded Lao-English translation..

Interview transcripts and recordings were analyzed using Atlas.ti, focusing on the types of roles of local actors and enabling and constraining factors for their activities. The analysis presented in this report is one part of a cross-country comparison of all Learning Series countries, which will be produced at the culmination of the project.

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of UNC and by the Centre for Environmental Health and Water Supply (Nam Saat) in the Ministry of Health, Lao PDR.

### 3.1. Study Participants

Thirty-one people were interviewed for this study in July 2013 (see Table 1) in the capital city, Vientiane, and in Meung district and Paktha district in Bokeo province. Eight interviews were conducted in English, and the remaining interviews were in Lao. Respondents represented the national government, district government, Plan International Laos CO and field office staff, other NGOs familiar with CLTS, and community leaders. Half of those interviewed were community leaders from four triggered communities in Bokeo province.

Two of the four communities were triggered in December 2011. These two communities were verified and declared as open-defecation-free (ODF), and were also Model Healthy Villages<sup>1</sup>. The other two communities that were not ODF were triggered in 2012 and 2013, and had latrine coverages of 79% and 59%, respectively (Plan International Laos 2013).

**Table 1. Study participants**

<b>Stakeholder Type</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
National government	2
Plan International Laos	5
Other NGOs	5
District WaSH Teams (local government)	3
Community leaders	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

### 3.2. Limitations

#### Boundaries of a qualitative study design

This study describes and analyzes the process of CLTS as implemented by Plan International Laos through the perspectives of local actors. The qualitative methods used in this study do not identify relationships through statistical correlations between variables. Sample sizes in qualitative studies are intentionally small to allow in-depth analysis. Readers should be cautious about broadly generalizing findings presented in the following sections beyond the scope of Plan International

---

<sup>1</sup> The Model Healthy Villages program was established by the Lao PDR Ministry of Health in 2011. It combines eight elements of primary health care, including water supply, sanitation, village health volunteers, village drug kits, sleeping under mosquito nets, immunization, birth spacing, breast feeding, antenatal care, risk case referrals, and birth and death reporting (Ministry of Health 2011).

Laos's activities.

Section 4 presents reported criteria for community selection (Figure 4). Because of the small sample size, it is not as useful to compare frequencies of these reported criteria. They are themes or patterns that were mentioned repeatedly by participants without prompting by researchers; therefore, Figure 4 represents what participants perceived to be the most important criteria at the time of the interview. Further research with a larger sample size would be required to weight the importance of such factors.

Quantitative data on CLTS outcomes in Plan International Laos' program areas cannot be directly correlated with findings from this study because of methodological differences. These data were provided by Plan International Laos and were not independently verified. Therefore, while findings from this study may be compared to Plan International Laos's monitoring data to generate hypotheses on the effectiveness of CLTS, it would not be appropriate to draw definitive conclusions on effectiveness. There are also likely to be other factors affecting the outcomes that this study may not have identified.

#### Practical considerations

Four communities were visited out of 46 triggered communities, so some variations in CLTS implementation may have been missed. Furthermore, leaders and key informants were interviewed to represent the experiences of their communities. The perceptions and opinions of other residents of the communities may differ from those of their leaders, but it was beyond the scope of this study to survey community members not directly involved in CLTS activities.

Because three of the four communities were triggered one-and-a-half to two years before this study, there may be recall bias among community leaders, which could have affected the accuracy of their responses, especially with regard to recalling trainings and triggering events. Additionally, Plan International Laos played the primary role in arranging interviews and community visits based on recommendations from UNC. For this reason, it is possible that respondents may have biased their answers to be more favorable towards Plan International Laos. To minimize this, the independent nature of this study was emphasized during the informed consent process, and all interviews were conducted in private so that analysis presented in the report could not be linked to respondents.

Lastly, it is also possible that some data were lost in translation.

## 4. Findings

Firstly, an overview of Lao PDR's sanitation policy and Plan International Laos' CLTS approach is presented for context. The remainder of the report focuses on the roles of local actors at each stage of the CLTS process in Plan International Laos' projects: planning and pre-triggering, triggering, and post-triggering.<sup>2</sup> Sub-sections of this report cover themes that emerged in these phases as a result of the involvement of certain local actors, and are largely descriptive; they reflect analysis of

---

<sup>2</sup> For detailed information on CLTS, refer to the *Handbook on community-led total sanitation* (Kar et al. 2008).

interview transcripts of how people described their own roles and the roles of other actors. Each sub-section ends with a table of the main enabling and constraining factors, along with implications for Plan International Laos' CLTS approach. These factors emerged from analysis of the interview transcripts, and implications were identified by the author. Some of these enabling and constraining factors may have been suggested previously in the grey literature by practitioners but may not have yet been identified through independent research, whereas other identified factors were novel to this research.

The final section of the report presents conclusions and implications from this study for Plan International Laos' future CLTS activities. These implications may be useful to other CLTS practitioners working with a similar implementation approach in a similar context.

#### 4.1. Lao PDR's sanitation policy

The Ministry of Health's Centre for Environmental Health and Water Supply (also called Nam Saat), is responsible for rural water and sanitation in Lao PDR. More than half of the investment in rural water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) has come from external support agencies such as bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, while the remaining contributions are from the national government and household investments (Ministry of Health 2012).

The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) estimates rural coverage of improved sanitation in 2012 at 51%, with 42% practicing open defecation (Figure 1). Lao PDR's national rural sanitation target is 60% access to sanitation by 2015, with additional proposed sanitation targets as follows:

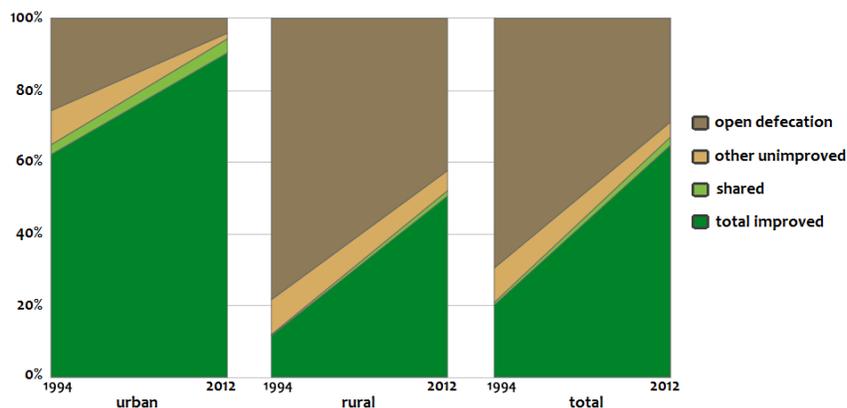
- improved sanitation access among poor populations to 32%<sup>3</sup>
- improved sanitation facilities used by 90% of members of households with sanitation facilities
- handwashing with soap at critical times practiced by 50% of the rural population (Ministry of Health 2012)

The primary document for rural WaSH in Lao PDR is the National Plan of Action for Rural Water Supply Sanitation and Hygiene (Ministry of Health 2012). This document serves as an update to the National Strategy for the Rural Water Supply and Environmental Health Sector, which was adopted in 1997 and revised in 2004 (Lao People's Democratic Republic 2004). The 2004 national strategy reinforced the government's policy of decentralisation "and the need for bottom-up planning, meaningful community participation and [...] innovative approaches at local levels" (Ministry of Public Health 2004). The primary contribution of the strategy document to rural WaSH was the introduction of the "7 Steps" process to project implementation that emphasized community participation. The more recent National Plan of Action acknowledges this 7 step process, but advocates revisions to it in light of "evolving approaches to WaSH, such as Community Led Total

---

<sup>3</sup> The National Plan of Action for Rural Water Supply Sanitation and Hygiene does not define "poor populations."

Sanitation (CLTS) [...] and a more market-based approach” (Ministry of Health 2012).



**Figure 1. Urban, rural and total sanitation coverage trend in Lao PDR, 1994-2012 (adapted from WHO/UNICEF 2014)**

The National Plan of Action “moves away from and does not support the use of (financial and hardware) subsidies for household sanitation” (Ministry of Health 2012). The government instead places the responsibility for WaSH services on households and communities. While endorsing non-subsidy approaches such as CLTS, the National Plan of Action still allows for direct subsidies to villages or households classified as poor or vulnerable. This classification includes single-parent households, and disabled-supported elderly households.

A national government official interviewed for this study said that CLTS activities may be done “in parallel with [other] interventions of sanitation.” There is no explicit mandate for CLTS in the national sanitation policy. This leaves room for the overlap of subsidy and non-subsidy approaches in communities, which became a significant implementation challenge for Plan International Laos. For example, both communities interviewed in Paktha province claimed that Plan International Laos had supported them with material for building latrines, either for free or by charging them transportation fees. While it was not possible to verify these claims, villagers’ confusion about who provided support to them may be explained by the lack of coordination between Plan International Laos’ CLTS facilitators and other district government officers providing subsidies in the same communities through other NGO projects. This example echoes Plan International Laos staff’s concern about how the National Plan of Action will be harmonized with other government decrees and programs that provide sanitation subsidies. Plan International Laos was also unsure of the process for disseminating this new sanitation plan to the provincial and district governments to ensure their acceptance of CLTS; there is currently no mandate for local governments to implement CLTS. Until these two concerns are addressed by Nam Saat and other government departments, it will be challenging for organizations to successfully broaden the scope of CLTS and other sanitation activities in a harmonized manner.

## 4.2. CLTS by Plan International Laos

CLTS was introduced to Lao PDR by Concern Worldwide and the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) in 2008 and 2009, followed by SNV Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) in 2009. These three projects served as a “big burst for CLTS,” according to a Plan International Laos staff member, in part because the projects developed training materials for CLTS in the Lao language that could be used by other organizations. Plan International Laos began implementing CLTS in 2010 in five communities in Bokeo province in northern Lao PDR. By the time of this study, they had worked in three districts in Bokeo province and were expanding activities to Oudomxai province. All of their CLTS activities thus far have been financed by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) through Plan International Australia.

### Institutional arrangements

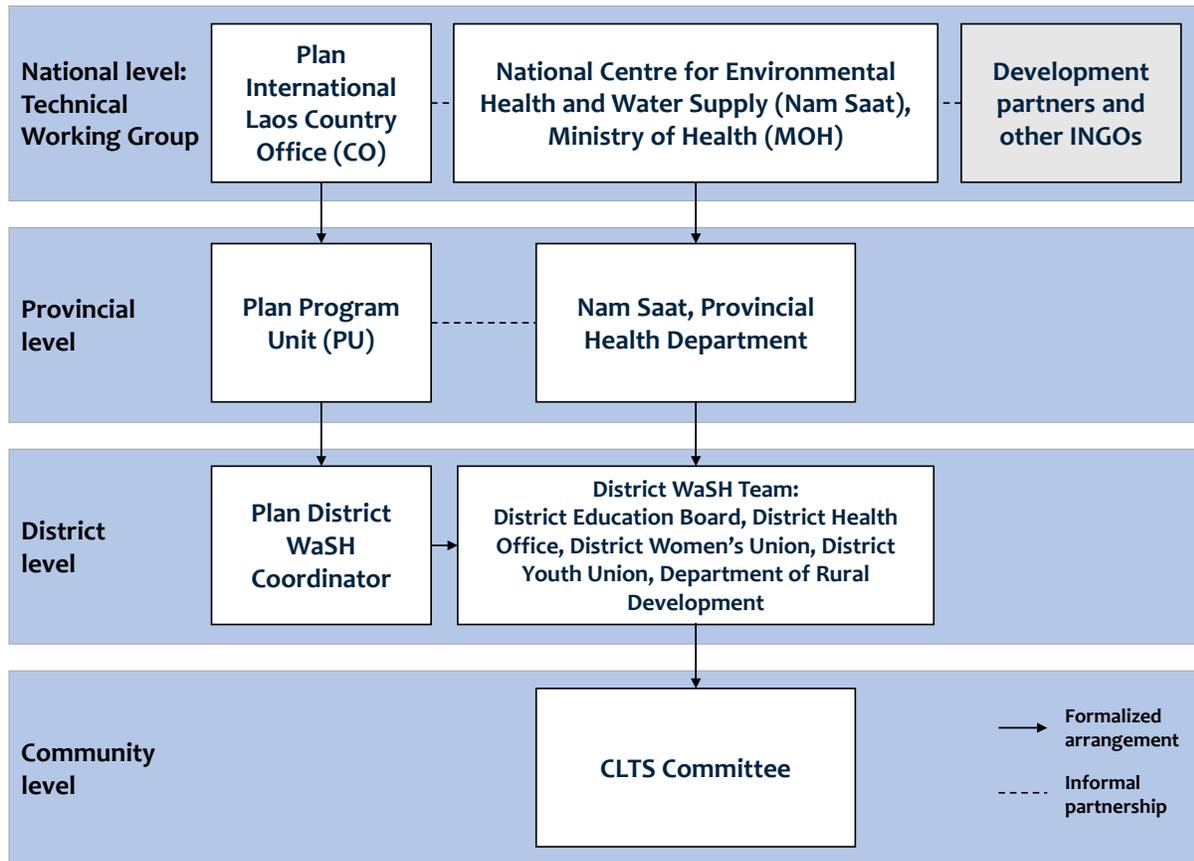
Figure 2 illustrates an institutional map for Plan International Laos' CLTS activities. Plan International Laos meets with Nam Saat and other WaSH external support agencies on a monthly basis through a WaSH Technical Working Group (TWG). This group, which also jointly coordinates CLTS trainings, consists of WSP, Concern Worldwide, SNV, Plan International Laos, UNICEF, and Nam Saat.

District WaSH Coordinators lead Plan International Laos' CLTS implementation activities, with supervision from the Program Unit (PU) WaSH Manager at the provincial level. Nam Saat also has an office at the provincial level, which approves Plan International Laos' activities in each province. At the district level, Plan International Laos has created District WaSH Teams (DWTs), which consist of government appointees from the District Education Board, District Health Board, District Women's Union, District Youth Union, and the Department of Rural Development. The DWTs are responsible for CLTS facilitation and follow-up in communities. DWT members conduct CLTS activities in addition to their respective government jobs and are provided travel and meal allowances by Plan International Laos for CLTS activities. Plan International Laos reported that they circulated criteria for selecting ideal DWT members to the district government, but it is unclear if those criteria were used in the actual selection process.

At the community level, Plan International Laos and the DWTs form CLTS Committees, which are responsible for motivating villagers to change various hygiene and sanitation behaviors and for monitoring progress. The CLTS committees consist of five to seven community leaders who are each assigned a specific follow-up responsibility by the DWT related to latrine construction, safe water practices, and environmental sanitation.

At the time of this study, there was no Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for CLTS between Plan International Laos and the provincial government; Plan International Laos was instead using a MoU with the Department of Education for school WaSH activities to also conduct CLTS in communities. This was not only an administrative technicality. While planning CLTS activities, this lack of a MoU made it more difficult to get district government acceptance for CLTS [see Section 4.3 on planning]. It also meant that DWT members struggled to decide whether to prioritize CLTS or other government responsibilities, as they did not have a direct mandate to assist with CLTS [see

Section 4.6 on post-triggering].



**Figure 2. Institutional map of Plan International Laos' CLTS approach**

Interviews with Plan International Laos staff indicated a desire to eventually transfer the responsibility of CLTS to the government. One staff member said, “We focus the training and activities on [the government] and we do the activities with them, with the intent of pulling back and letting them just continue. First, with budget support and training support, and then just [by] giving them technical and training support only. They have to take care of the rest by themselves.”

Plan International Laos has also integrated the government’s Model Healthy Villages program into its CLTS activities, which is evident by the long list of indicators they monitor (Table 2) and the varied responsibilities of CLTS committee members. This makes it more efficient for district government staff to monitor progress on various hygiene and sanitation behaviors during the same follow-up visit with communities. However, it is possible that by integrating CLTS with Model Healthy Villages, communities may focus less on sanitation—the primary message of CLTS—and more on other behaviors that CLTS does not directly aim to change. For example, most CLTS committee members who were interviewed for this study first described their roles with regard to improving environmental sanitation, water, and hygiene before discussing their role in promoting the use of latrines or monitoring open defecation in the community.

## Monitoring CLTS outcomes

While organizations implementing CLTS in Lao PDR were attempting to develop a national definition for ODF at the time of this study, Plan International Laos was already using a detailed monitoring system that included indicators on latrine use and cleanliness, handwashing, safe water practices, and environmental sanitation. For a community to be declared as ODF, all households had to meet seven out of the eight indicators in the category named “Toilets” (Table 2).

**Table 2. Plan International Laos’ indicators for monitoring CLTS triggering and post-triggering outcomes**

Category	Indicator	Reported or Observed
<b>Toilets</b>	Latrine use	Reported
	No offensive smell	Observed
	Soap in or near toilet location	Observed
	Functioning door to toilet	Observed
	No animals or insects coming into contact with shit	Observed
	Clean toilet facility	Observed
	Sound superstructure	Observed
	Bucket and scooper available (pour flush latrine) Secure cover for hole with ash available (dry pit latrine)	Observed
<b>CLTS Committee</b>	CLTS Committee comprises both men and women for each hygiene promotion (HP) category	Observed
	CLTS committee actively monitors, enforces regulations, advises on HP topics	Observed (committee monitoring forms)
<b>Handwashing</b>	Handwashing facility in household (tippy tap)	Observed
	Soap available for washing hands in house	Observed
	Do women wash hands with soap before eating?	Reported
	Do women wash hands with soap after using latrine?	Reported
<b>Water treatment and storage</b>	Drinking boiled water	Reported
	Kettle or pot for boiling only water in the house	Observed
	Separate scooper cup for drawing water from container	Observed
	Boiled water is kept in clean, closed container	Observed
<b>Environmental sanitation</b>	Garbage is collected and managed in compound	Observed
	Household has provisions for drainage in compound (cooking, washing areas)	Observed
	Pit (sump) in kitchen area	Observed
	Waste container in compound	Observed
	Domestic animals are kept in pens and not roaming free	Observed

Source: (Plan International Laos 2013)

## Available data on CLTS outcomes

The most recent data obtained from Plan International Laos is shown in Table 3 and Table 4; median values are provided because the data are skewed in some districts, which makes the mean or average a poor representation of the data. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of latrine coverage by district in CLTS-triggered communities, both before triggering and after triggering. Latrine coverage

is defined as the percent of households in a village with latrines. Plan International Laos had triggered 46 communities as of March 2013, with 37% declared as ODF. Communities were starting with relatively high baseline latrine coverage, potentially because of a history of latrine subsidy projects, especially in Meung and Paktha districts (Table 3). Triggered communities in Phaodom district had the lowest median baseline latrine coverage (32%) and saw the greatest change in coverage between baseline and post-triggering (120% increase). Triggered communities in Meung district started with the highest median baseline latrine coverage (59%), and saw a 54% increase in access after triggering. CLTS communities in Meung district had the best performance overall, with a median of 91% of households having access to latrines after triggering. Meung district also had the highest percentage of communities attaining ODF status (46%). Paktha district has seen the slowest progress of the three districts (12% increase in latrine access), despite reports of latrine subsidy projects co-occurring with CLTS activities. Slow progress may be partially attributed to geographical context: CLTS facilitators in this district struggled to follow-up with communities on a frequent basis because they often had to travel for long periods by boat and foot, and they reported frequently spending the night in communities. Overall, it appears that CLTS has had the greatest success in Meung district, where CLTS communities did not report ongoing subsidy projects. It is unclear whether subsidies were provided in Phaodom's CLTS communities.

**Table 3. Latrine coverage and ODF status in Plan International Laos's CLTS communities, 2013**

Indicator	District		
	Meung	Paktha	Phaodom
<b>No. of communities triggered</b>	11	15	20
<b>Total no. of households</b>	909	1061	2057
<b>Median no. of households per community</b>	71	61	98
<b>Median latrine coverage before triggering (baseline)</b>	59%	53%	32%
<b>Median latrine coverage after triggering</b>	91%	59%	71%
<b>No. (%) of communities declared ODF<sup>a</sup></b>	5 (46%)	5 (33%)	7 (35%)

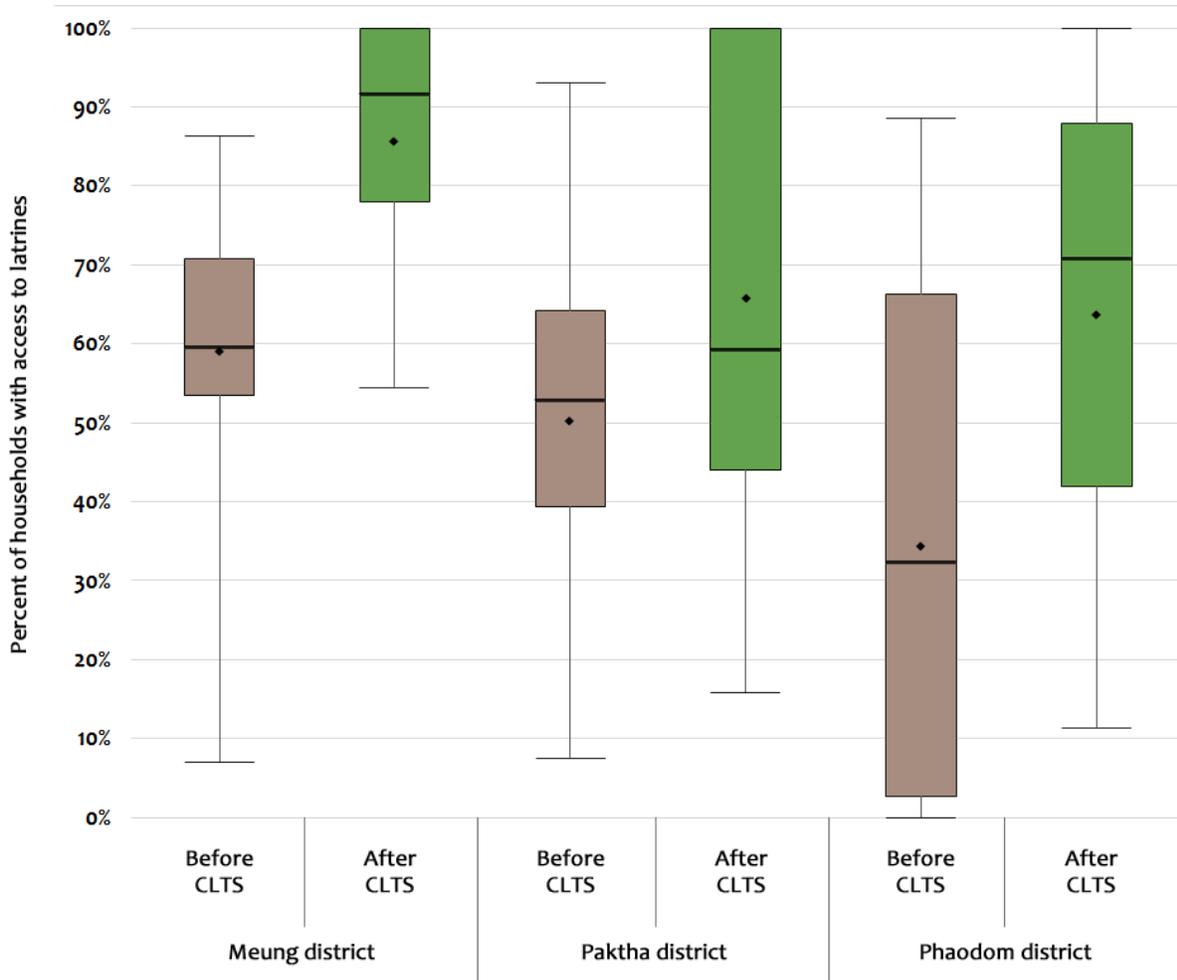
Source: (Plan International Laos 2013)

<sup>a</sup> Latrine coverage after triggering for ODF communities ranged from 77% to 100%, but included other hygiene and sanitation outcomes detailed in Table 2.

**Table 4. ODF versus non-ODF communities in Plan International Laos' program areas, 2013**

	Meung district		Paktha district		Phaodom district	
	Non-ODF	ODF	Non-ODF	ODF	Non-ODF	ODF
<b>No. of communities</b>	6	5	10	5	13	7
<b>Median no. of households per community</b>	100	59	63	43	107	64
<b>Median latrine coverage before triggering</b>	54%	66%	42%	66%	32%	35%
<b>Median latrine coverage after triggering</b>	78%	100%	46%	100%	48%	94%

In all three districts, communities that became ODF tended to be much smaller in terms of number of households (Table 4). These communities also started with higher baseline latrine coverage than other communities. This suggests that smaller communities that already had more latrines may have responded more favorably to CLTS, or that follow-up was targeted to communities with more latrines. Non-ODF communities made little progress in increasing latrine coverage after CLTS. Therefore, ODF communities were responsible for most of the increase in latrine coverage in Table 3.



**Figure 3. Distribution of latrine coverage in Plan International Laos' CLTS communities, before and after triggering, 2013**

Note: Data on post-CLTS latrine coverage are from March 2013. The solid black line across the colored box represents the median value, and the diamond represents the mean, or average, value.

#### 4.3. Roles of local actors: planning stage

This section describes the roles of local actors as they relate to central themes that emerged from the case study during the planning stages of CLTS. The roles are summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5. Roles of local actors during planning activities in Plan International Laos' CLTS program**

<b>Actor</b>	<b>Role</b>
Plan International Laos	Financing; training; community selection
National Government (Nam Saat)	Training
Other NGOs	Training
Local Government and DWT	Community selection

### Financial responsibility for CLTS

Plan International Laos plays an active role in CLTS implementation and finances all CLTS activities, including trainings, triggering sessions, travel and per diem allowances for follow-up, workshops, and communication materials. Although it eventually plans to transfer the responsibility for CLTS to the government, Plan International Laos currently maintains the sole financial responsibility in its program areas. This pattern is reflective of overall financing trends in the sanitation sector in Lao PDR. The only study on sanitation financing patterns in the country found that in 2008/2009, the national government was responsible for only 12.5% of the total national spending on sanitation, whereas external support agencies were responsible for 35.3% of national spending on sanitation; the remainder was spent by households on sanitation hardware (Colin 2012).

### Training

At the time of this study, there were four CLTS “master trainers” in the country, who worked for Nam Saat, SNV, and the Participatory Development Training Centre (PADETC), a national NGO. These master trainers were trained in CLTS in 2009 by WSP Indonesia’s Total Sanitation and Sanitation Marketing (TSSM) team and serve as the primary resource for CLTS trainings in Lao PDR. While an advantage to this structure is that trainings can be fairly standardized, Plan International Laos staff suggested that more trainers are needed to adequately conduct all the required CLTS trainings in the country. Plan International Laos staff attempt to bridge this gap by conducting CLTS trainings at the district level for their DWTs, but they do not have as much experience training facilitators as the master trainers. DWT members also do not always receive these trainings because of high turnover and transfers in district government departments, and some instead have to learn on the job. Even Plan International Laos district-level staff wanted more training in CLTS, especially on how to troubleshoot problems in the field. One senior Plan International Laos staff member noted that although CLTS trainings to date were conducted “*individually according to organizations and working areas,*” the TWG was attempting to organize national level trainings to certify more master trainers, especially from the government.

The TWG was also in the process of developing national training guidelines by consolidating field experiences of Plan International Laos, WSP, SNV, UNICEF, and Nam Saat, including those of the master trainers. As these guidelines were not finalized at the time of this study, Plan International Laos’ CLTS approach detailed in this report is based on a translated version of the CLTS Handbook (Kar et al. 2008), with minor adaptations based on the Lao context and government recommendations. One Plan International Laos staff member noted, “*From the beginning, [CLTS] was adapted to put less stress on shame because of cultural issues.*” It was unclear from this research

whether these “cultural issues” were more of a reflection of facilitators’ discomfort than communities’ discomfort with candidly discussing open defecation. The other adaptation was adding more educational tools such as disease transmission games and memory games. A CLTS master trainer also reported that they spent extra days at the beginning of the CLTS training to teach general facilitation skills to CLTS facilitators, because most trainees did not have the preferred background. The quality of facilitation is discussed in Section 4.5 on triggering.

### Community selection

There was no consensus among respondents about whether CLTS is an approach that is universally applicable. For example, DWT members suggested that CLTS would not be successful in communities with non-Lao ethnic minorities who appeared to be less interested in changing their sanitation behavior than did other ethnic groups. On the other hand, three of the five Plan International Laos staff who were interviewed thought that CLTS could work everywhere (“*[It is] better than not doing anything*”), but they did caution against expecting success in communities that are going to be relocated<sup>4</sup> by the government. Therefore, while there was some ambivalence on the universality of CLTS, it was clear that both Plan International Laos staff and DWTs recognized the importance of targeting communities for CLTS. Their perceptions are important because they determine how CLTS is implemented in Plan International Laos’ working areas, specifically the manner in which communities are selected, triggered, and monitored.

To select communities, Plan International Laos develops a list of target communities for CLTS based on desk studies, baseline surveys, and consultations with DWT members and district Plan International Laos staff. Interviews with implementers and facilitators at the national, provincial and district levels helped identify the criteria for selecting communities presented in Figure 4. The most frequently cited criteria were low latrine and water coverage, easy access to communities, and the absence of other NGOs who were providing latrine subsidies in the same or nearby communities. International guidelines also suggest selecting smaller and tight-knit communities (Kar et al. 2008), which the Lao facilitators also cited. Despite listing these criteria, one Plan International Laos staff member noted that in practice they are not always appropriate to apply in the Lao context because most communities have a history of latrine subsidies, vary by village size, tend to be spread out, and tend to be ethnically diverse. These challenges are compounded by the requirement that Plan International Laos must select communities that are in the district government’s list of target communities for development. As a result, the final list of CLTS communities tended to have a high baseline latrine coverage, and were also generally remote and difficult to access. Moreover, latrine subsidy projects overlapped with CLTS in many of these communities; the nature of this overlap and ensuing challenges will be discussed in more detail in Section 6 on post-triggering. Ultimately, communities that were triggered may not have always been appropriate for CLTS, and progress in communities that were appropriately selected may have been confounded by the work of latrine

---

<sup>4</sup> As part of the government’s relocation policies (Bird 2009), many smaller, remote villages in Plan International Laos’ program areas have been consolidated into larger villages to make it easier to provide public services. Other villages have been relocated to make room for large hydropower projects.

subsidy projects.



**Figure 4. Criteria for community selection as recalled by interview participants**

Note: This figure is meant to illustrate the main criteria that were mentioned by more than one participant without prompting by researchers, and therefore represent what participants perceived to be most important at the time of the interview. The small sample size does not lend itself to weighting the importance of individual factors.

**Enabling and constraining factors for successful planning**

Table 6 summarizes the most frequently cited enabling and constraining factors for planning CLTS activities that are relevant to the role of local actors. The enabling factors allow Plan International Laos to conduct CLTS activities more effectively, whereas the constraining factors pose a challenge to CLTS implementation. Alongside each factor is a brief discussion of its implications for Plan International Laos’ CLTS approach.

**Table 6. Enabling and constraining factors for successful planning of CLTS activities**

<b>Enabling Factor</b>	<b>Relevant Local Actors</b>	<b>Implication for Plan International Laos</b>
Good working relationship between organizations implementing CLTS	National government Plan International Laos Other NGOs	Strong coordination with other NGOs with CLTS experience has meant that Plan International Laos can consolidate resources and develop national guidelines and training manuals with these partners. This working relationship can enable future comparisons of CLTS outcomes across programs, so long as they are implemented in a harmonized manner.

A core group of national master trainers, including those from the government	National government Plan International Laos Other NGOs	As Plan International Laos expands its CLTS activities, it can utilize these trainers and build the capacity of the government. Having government trainers also allows Plan International Laos to start realizing its goal of transferring CLTS responsibilities to the government.
<b>Constraining Factor</b>	<b>Relevant Local Actors</b>	<b>Implication for Plan International Laos</b>
Insufficient number of CLTS trainers	National government Plan International Laos DWT	For Plan International Laos, this means that new DWT members or Plan staff who were unable to participate in trainings must learn on the job, potentially affecting their ability to effectively trigger communities.
No MoU for CLTS between Plan International Laos and provincial government	National government Plan International Laos Local government DWT	The lack of an official agreement makes it difficult for Plan International Laos to get local government buy-in for CLTS. It also leads to a perception that this is a Plan project and not the responsibility of the government.

#### 4.4. Roles of local actors: pre-triggering

This section describes the roles of local actors as they relate to central themes that emerged from the case study during the pre-triggering stage of CLTS. The roles are summarized in Table 7.

**Table 7. Roles of local actors in pre-triggering in Plan International Laos' CLTS program**

Actor	Role
Plan International Laos	Community visits and baseline surveys
DWT	Community visits and baseline surveys

#### Community visits and baseline surveys

Interviews revealed that the term *pre-triggering* was synonymous with the term *survey*, indicating a strong emphasis by Plan International Laos on conducting physical baseline surveys of selected communities. Monitoring reports provided by Plan International Laos show that DWTs gather census data on the number of households with latrines before CLTS. These reports also have baseline data for all other indicators relating to handwashing, household water treatment and storage, and environmental sanitation (Table 2). In this manner, Plan International Laos is able to measure changes in the community that have resulted following CLTS triggering.

#### Enabling and constraining factors for successful pre-triggering

Table 8 lists the most frequently cited enabling and constraining factors for pre-triggering that are relevant to the role of local actors. The enabling factors allow Plan International Laos to conduct CLTS activities more effectively, whereas the constraining factors pose a challenge to CLTS implementation. Alongside each factor is a brief discussion of its implications for Plan International Laos' CLTS approach.

**Table 8. Enabling and constraining factors for successful pre-triggering**

<b>Enabling Factor</b>	<b>Relevant Local Actors</b>	<b>Implication for Plan International Laos</b>
Extensive baseline surveys	Plan International Laos DWTs	These surveys enable Plan International Laos to clearly assess changes in communities after triggering. Analysis of these data, along with consultations with DWTs, can help Plan International Laos decide what types of communities to select in future rounds of triggering. If Plan International Laos' list of communities does not match the district government's list, data from baseline surveys can help Plan International Laos justify why different communities should be selected.
<b>Constraining Factor</b>	<b>Relevant Local Actors</b>	<b>Implication for Plan International Laos</b>
Time required for pre-triggering	Plan International Laos DWTs	Although extensive baseline surveys provide valuable programmatic data for Plan International Laos, the length of these surveys place an extra burden on DWTs, who are already struggling to allocate enough time for CLTS activities. Plan International Laos can maintain the quality of these surveys without increasing pressure on DWTs by adding more members to the DWTs and ensuring that an agreement is signed with the provincial government that details the time commitment required from DWTs for all CLTS activities.

#### 4.5. Roles of local actors: triggering

This section describes the roles of local actors as they relate to central themes that emerged from the case study during the triggering stage of CLTS. The roles are summarized in Table 9. Triggering activities in Plan International Laos' program areas follow many of the steps established in international CLTS guidelines and practiced around the world. The steps most commonly cited by respondents in this study were village mapping, shit calculation, medical analysis, discussion of disease transmission, and the transect walk or "walk of shame."

**Table 9. Roles of local actors in triggering in Plan International Laos' CLTS program**

<b>Actor</b>	<b>Role</b>
Plan International Laos	Facilitate triggering
DWT	Facilitate triggering

The DWT and Plan International Laos' District WaSH Coordinators are responsible for facilitating triggering sessions in communities, which they conduct in groups of four to six facilitators. As mentioned in Section 4.2, Plan International Laos aims to transfer responsibilities to the government in the long run by building local government capacity to conduct CLTS. One Plan International Laos staff member noted that they are now "starting to step back" so that DWTs can take the lead in future CLTS activities.

### Challenges affecting quality of facilitation

Both Plan International Laos and the national government emphasized the importance of facilitation, with Plan International Laos staff noting that *“if [facilitation] is not done properly, it comes back to square one, as any other health advocacy program.”* A national government official observed, *“The facilitator is the main resource, the main person, the key team to work on this. Without them, it will not happen. That's why [they have to] be convinced of the theory. If they still remain 50-50, they're just like the villagers. [They will say] ‘Oh, I got the order from our boss to come to talk with you. Can you build the latrine or not?’”*

Some essential qualities of effective facilitators that emerged from interviews in this study were confidence, the ability and skill to influence people, good public speaking skills, and in-depth knowledge of the CLTS approach. However, because DWT members are full-time government workers who were not previously familiar with participatory methods of community mobilization, these qualities were not necessarily evident in all facilitators. One Plan International Laos staff member observed that, *“In some cases, the people who were chosen were perhaps not the best for the job.”* For example, Plan International Laos staff and DWT members spoke of language barriers between them and ethnic minorities, who did not understand the main Lao language. This is a significant challenge, as northern Lao PDR has a high concentration of non-Lao ethnic minorities, and most villages in Plan International Laos’ working areas are likely to be home to many such families (Messerli et al. 2008).

Another challenge to effective facilitation is the perceived lack of buy-in for CLTS from the DWTs themselves, as illustrated by the following quotes by Plan International Laos staff:

- *“The [DWT] is not strong enough, and not motivated enough to [follow-up] as often as we needed.”*
- *“In CLTS work, the government staff do not really appreciate the CLTS model. Mainly, they don't want the community as the center, as the ones who lead sanitation. The government wants the project [Plan International Laos] to be the one that leads the sanitation program, because they think that the villagers are already poor. [They say,] ‘So why do you still want them to build latrines by themselves? Just support them!’”*

Lack of appreciation for CLTS and the philosophy that Plan International Laos should provide support to communities may help explain why DWT members may not always prioritize CLTS activities; if they perceive the responsibility for sanitation to lie with Plan International Laos, then the local government would naturally take a step back. The lack of a MoU with the local government exacerbates this lack of buy-in.

### Method of educating communities

The manner in which facilitators trigger communities can strongly influence CLTS outcomes. CLTS facilitators are expected to help communities analyze their own situation, rather than take on the role of an educator (Kar 2005; Kar et al. 2008). It was not possible to observe firsthand the techniques used during a triggering session because there were no triggerings scheduled at the time

of the study. Instead, perceptions of facilitation techniques were deduced through interviews with DWT members, District WaSH Coordinators, and community leaders. These interviews revealed that facilitators were viewed primarily as educators or trainers. Table 10 highlights representative quotes from these different actors. One Plan International Laos staff member, for example, repeatedly referred to facilitators as “trainers,” and one CLTS Committee member also described triggering as a “training.” A CLTS master trainer explained why this perception and behavior is likely to exist:

*“Most of the facilitators from the government are used to reading announcements or orders. When they would go to the communities, they would say, ‘Build the latrine! This is the order from the governor. This village has to build.’ They would just say that, give the agreement from the governor, and ask them to read it. [...] Because they are used to this, sometimes even after the training, they still [do it this way]. So that’s why I say, we train many [people], but only a few are good facilitators.”*

**Table 10. Perceptions of CLTS facilitators as ‘educators’ in Plan International Laos’ CLTS program**

<b>Local Actor</b>	<b>Quotations illustrating perceptions of CLTS facilitators as educators</b>
CLTS Committee	<i>“The district officers came here and then said that open defecation is not good. You should go to defecate in the latrine. And that after that, we have to wash hands every time before eating.”</i>
Plan International Laos staff	<i>“Plan gives [communities] education on hygiene and sanitation.”</i>  <i>[Describing the DWT facilitators]: “We have trainers from the district level. We have trainers from the Education Board, Health Office, Youth Sector, and Women’s Union.”</i>
DWT member	<i>“We just explain frankly. If they defecate, they have to clean their own feces because they are the ones that will eat their own feces. [...] We also explain in many ways in order to make them know that they need to have ownership of it. [...] We have to clarify many times until they understand.”</i>

This tendency to educate communities about hygiene and sanitation was not only driven by the government but was also supported by community leaders. A CLTS Committee member noted that earlier, district health staff did not visit their communities as often as they now did with Plan International Laos, “so some families forgot about good hygiene information.” After CLTS, “they came quite often—monthly, weekly—to tell and encourage people to do good things, so people followed the advice and remembered the importance of it.” A chief from another community wanted Plan International Laos and DWTs to “go around the village and go to each household and point out the things that are not good hygiene practice [...] and make them feel ashamed in front of the others. Then compare that with the other people that already have good practices. It might help a lot.” These leaders depended on Plan International Laos and DWTs to continually reinforce hygiene messages.

CLTS expects community-led change, but this can be a challenge in a context described earlier where deference to authority may be cultural and political. This study found that the government’s role in the lives of rural communities was perceived as hierarchical by facilitators and community leaders. Plan International Laos can continue to train government facilitators in participatory approaches.

However, the existing socio-political norms will affect the style and manner of government-led facilitation of CLTS. If the ultimate aim is to transfer responsibility for CLTS to the government, it is likely that facilitation will become less participatory than anticipated. Furthermore, sanitation outcomes from these communities should also be attributed to the approach that has been implemented, whether it is an educational approach or a participatory approach to behavior change.

### **Adaptations to triggering**

CLTS guidelines in Lao PDR were adapted to reduce the emphasis on shame and disgust. In practice, this means that the government does not encourage the water-feces demonstration, a standard step in the triggering process where facilitators mix feces in a water bottle and offer it to people to illustrate the consequences of open defecation on drinking water quality. Instead of this step, which is considered to be too disgusting and direct for the Lao context, facilitators are taught to place a plate of cookies next to a pile of feces during triggering activities. Participants watch as flies move between the feces and the plate of cookies. At the end of the discussion about disease transmission, facilitators offer the cookies to community members, who most often refuse to eat them. A Plan International Laos staff member said that, *“Initially, for some reason, this glass of water was considered to be a little bit too over the top for communities. But I think we've gotten that back in.”* However, a CLTS master trainer maintained that the new national CLTS training guidelines will remove this step. Trainers will therefore not be allowed to teach the step to facilitators in the future. Plan International Laos and CLTS master trainers must coordinate the details of which triggering approaches will be taught in trainings to ensure that methods are harmonized.

The transect walk or “walk of shame” is another step that is sometimes excluded because of logistical reasons. DWT members and District WaSH coordinators suggested that they skipped this step to retain attendance for the rest of the triggering meeting: *“In some villages, if we go along together [on the walk of shame], they just leave and we cannot gather them again.”* They also felt that if they had a larger triggering team, they could better “control” the group during this activity. Leaders from only one of the four communities recalled the walk of shame, which supports implementers’ reports that it is frequently skipped.

In order to transfer leadership of CLTS to the district government, the quality of DWT facilitation needs to become more consistent. These two adaptations that exclude key steps to trigger disgust in communities, along with variable quality of facilitation, may affect progress towards ODF attainment in Plan International Laos’ CLTS communities.

### **Enabling and constraining factors for successful triggering**

Table 11 lists the most frequently cited enabling and constraining factors for triggering that are relevant to the role of local actors. The enabling factors allow Plan International Laos to conduct CLTS activities more effectively, whereas the constraining factors pose a challenge to CLTS implementation. Alongside each factor is a brief discussion of its implications for Plan International Laos’ CLTS approach.

**Table 11. Enabling and constraining factors for successful triggering**

<b>Enabling Factor</b>	<b>Relevant Local Actors</b>	<b>Implication for Plan International Laos</b>
Working with district government staff to trigger communities	Plan International Laos DWT	Allows CLTS to slowly be integrated into the governmental system rather than solely being an NGO program.
<b>Constraining Factor</b>	<b>Relevant Local Actors</b>	<b>Implication for Plan International Laos</b>
Variable quality of facilitation	Plan International Laos DWT	Insufficient capacity, training, and time of DWT staff may adversely affect CLTS outcomes in Plan International Laos’ program areas. Because triggerings are facilitated as a group, expanding the size of the DWT into multiple groups, while ensuring that at least a few members in each group have the necessary skills to succeed as facilitators may improve the quality of triggering.
Lack of buy-in from DWT on CLTS approach	Plan International Laos DWT	DWT members’ expectation that Plan International Laos should support communities, or that communities need to be educated reveals a lack of buy-in for this approach in the local government. Therefore, CLTS may not be implemented as a truly participatory, self-analytical behavior change approach.
Reluctance to use strong techniques to elicit shame or disgust	Plan International Laos DWT Communities	By adapting or omitting some core CLTS triggering steps, Plan International Laos risks slowing progress toward ODF communities. Communities may not be sufficiently “triggered” to internalize the need for behavior change.
Language barriers between facilitators and communities	Plan International Laos DWT Communities	Triggering may not occur effectively because communities with ethnic minorities that speak non-Lao languages and dialects do not get the full message. Plan International Laos should either consider prevalence of Lao language fluency as part of its community selection criteria or consider training local leaders on CLTS triggering to address this challenge.

#### 4.6. Roles of local actors: post-triggering

This section describes the roles of local actors as they relate to central themes that emerged from the case study during the post-triggering stage of CLTS. The roles are summarized in Table 12. This stage consists of following up and encouraging communities to stop open defecation, monitoring progress, facilitating access to sanitation hardware, and verifying and certifying ODF status.

**Table 12. Roles of local actors in post-triggering activities in Plan International Laos' CLTS program**

<b>Actor</b>	<b>Role</b>
Plan International Laos DWT	Follow-up with CLTS committees; provide technical support and link to supply-chain; verify/declare ODF
CLTS Committee	Routinely collect data; persuade communities to change hygiene and sanitation behaviour
Local Government	Declare ODF communities; attend ODF ceremonies

### Follow-up frequency

The main responsibility for post-triggering lies with the DWT and the Plan International Laos District WaSH Coordinator. Most Plan International Laos staff, DWT members, and CLTS committees largely corroborated each other's reports of follow-up frequency. According to a CLTS master trainer, Lao PDR's CLTS guidelines indicate that communities should be visited every two weeks for the first three months, followed by one visit every month till the community achieves ODF status. After ODF status has been achieved, visits should be made every three months. The CLTS master trainer was not able to cite a clear end-date in the government guidelines. Follow-up appears to continue until ODF status is achieved or project funding expires. The CLTS master trainer accepted that this timetable was ambitious and that three follow-up visits would be sufficient given currently available resources. A Plan International Laos staff also supported this simpler follow-up schedule, reporting a total of three follow-up visits on average to communities:

- the first visit was to select the CLTS committee,
- the second visit was to train the committee, and
- a final follow-up visit was to check on progress in the community.

Plan International Laos' monitoring forms require monthly follow-up with communities; therefore, all other Plan International Laos staff and DWT members said that they would ideally like to monitor communities once a month till the communities achieve ODF status. CLTS Committees and other leaders from the four communities that were visited largely confirmed the follow-up frequency by reporting DWT and Plan International Laos staff visits as occurring between three times a month and once in three months. It is important to note that communities visited as part of this study were selected as a convenience sample and were not the most difficult to reach within Plan International Laos' program areas. Because the study was conducted in the rainy season, many communities were impossible to access. Therefore, responses in this study from community leaders on follow-up frequency are not likely to represent the experiences of truly remote communities.

There were three primary challenges for monitoring per the expected schedule: an insufficient number of DWT members, limited availability of existing DWT members, and difficulty accessing remote communities. In Paktha district, DWT members had to travel by boat and foot to visit communities, where they would often have to spend the night. Female members of DWTs had to coordinate follow-up visits together for safety reasons. One DWT member explained that because DWT members came from different departments, *"when we try to ask them to go with us as a team, it's really hard for them to get the same time to work on the same day."* Despite some Plan

International Laos staff members' complaints of lack of motivation in the DWT, CLTS activities consumed a lot of DWT members' time. DWTs in both districts described being reprimanded by their district government supervisors. A DWT member said, “[My boss asks me], ‘Are you government staff or are you project staff? Why do you go to work with the project more than spending time with government projects? You still get your salary from the government.’”

### Prioritizing communities

DWT members' inability to ensure routine follow-up in all communities means that they prioritize communities during post-triggering in different ways. Only one Plan International Laos staff member preferred focusing on communities that were showing less progress after triggering, assuming that the more active communities would be able to achieve ODF status on their own. The remaining respondents said they focus on communities showing more promise towards achieving ODF status; according to one respondent, communities that were not receptive after the first follow-up visit were not likely to change anyway. Another Plan International Laos staff member felt that it was not worth doing routine follow-up visits with communities such as those where people lived in the fields for a long period of time and did not want to invest in their dwellings, or those where ethnic minorities did not want latrines and preferred to live in their traditional way of life. The staff member thought that CLTS was not likely to be the most successful approach there, even though such communities had already been triggered as part of the work plan. The DWT members who were interviewed shared the same opinion, with one member acknowledging that they prioritized follow-up activities in communities that were nearing ODF so that they could declare them quickly. Plan International Laos' monitoring data corroborate this pattern of prioritizing certain types of communities: by March 2013, while ODF communities had neared 100% latrine coverage, non-ODF communities were still far behind (Table 4).

This approach to prioritizing follow-up visits can be viewed as an attempt to troubleshoot challenges in CLTS implementation at the post-triggering stage rather than the pre-triggering stage. It may be more resource-efficient to target communities at the onset that are more likely to be receptive to CLTS rather than trigger less appropriate communities and not provide them with sufficient follow-up.

### Training CLTS Committees

One method Plan International Laos uses to deal with the inability to follow-up frequently with communities is to train CLTS Committees as community-level monitors. Two weeks after triggering communities, facilitators return to form CLTS Committees. The composition of these volunteer committees was discussed earlier in Section 4.2. The committees are tasked with monitoring hygiene and sanitation progress in their communities and reporting back to the DWT and the District WaSH Coordinator. It is important to note that these committee members are not CLTS “natural leaders,” a group of local actors identified during triggering as the most active participants who are then used to motivate communities. Instead, existing community leaders are used to encourage their peers to change their hygiene and sanitation behavior. None of the interviews conducted for this study revealed any systematic identification or use of natural leaders in Plan International Laos' CLTS communities, which is an important adaptation from the CLTS approach practiced in other countries.

Because global evidence on the effectiveness of natural leaders in CLTS is only anecdotal, it would not be appropriate to recommend Plan International Laos to identify natural leaders in addition to CLTS Committees. More research is required on the comparative effectiveness of natural leaders and CLTS Committees before making recommendations.

CLTS Committees in Plan International Laos's working areas are formally trained by facilitators on hygiene, latrine construction, water protection, and environmental management during a second follow-up visit. Plan International Laos suggested that communities might recommend other topics such as enclosures for domestic animals, on which facilitators will provide additional training. Members from all four CLTS Committees interviewed in this study described these trainings in a similar manner, confirming facilitators' descriptions. Plan and DWT members assign roles to the CLTS committee based on these WaSH and environmental sanitation topics, but it is up to the committees to set rules and deadlines. One DWT member explained the formal nature of this process: *"When we go to the community, we have a form for them to fill up [detailing their roles]. Then within one month, they have to lead that activity based on a list of tasks to do in the paper. In the paper, it identifies what is their exact role. Every activity that is under their role and responsibility has to get their approval."*

The CLTS Committees are trained to send monthly monitoring reports, either in writing or in person, to the DWT and the District WaSH Coordinator; it was not possible to verify whether these reports were routinely submitted in practice. The District WASH Coordinator then submits quarterly progress reports to the Plan PU and Plan CO; these electronic reports were used to quantify CLTS outcomes in Section 4.2. Meanwhile, the CLTS Committee rules are approved and signed by the community chief and by the district governor. In this manner, *"CLTS kind of becomes enshrined into the rules that the villagers have come up with,"* according to one Plan International Laos staff member.

This formalized structure at the community level also leads itself to the development of penalties for not meeting deadlines. Plan International Laos called it a *"fine balance,"* wondering, *"How much is having the rules [...] in the first place an indicator that the CLTS triggering was not very effective?"* However, they felt that as long as the penalties were developed and enforced by communities themselves, it would not conflict with the CLTS approach. Furthermore, only one community visited in this study mentioned such a rule, conceived by the community chief. He explained, *"If you don't have a latrine, if you openly defecate, then I will get angry at you. So I made this rule [...] in writing. And then I got the signature at the district level, so everyone has to follow it. [...] If you don't follow the rule, you have to pay 50,000 Kip...and the second stage, after 2013, 2014, 2015, if you still don't do it, you have to return the materials that you received, and also you will get a fine of 100,000 Kip."* A CLTS Committee member in this community also thought that enforcement would ensure that the unmotivated villagers would also build latrines, *"because this group of people do not understand and not want to develop, that's why these problems still happen. People got the pans [latrine slabs] here, 15 pans for free. And then they don't do anything with that, so I think it's better to have kind of rule or regulation to force them to do it."* Leaders in this community clearly admitted that they developed these rules themselves, so there was no coercion from facilitators. However, despite these sanctions being community-based, it is unclear whether they will be able to change individual behavior and communities' social norms in the long-term. It is also not clear how widespread these sanctions are

across Plan International Laos' CLTS communities.

### Latrine subsidies and link to the supply-chain

All four communities that were interviewed reported a history of latrine subsidy projects, which was consistent with Plan International Laos' baseline data; across all of its triggered communities in three districts, the median latrine coverage before triggering was 53%, but coverage ranged from 0% in one community in Phaodom district to 93% in one community in Paktha district. In both districts visited in this study, Plan International Laos and community leaders attributed latrine subsidies to three organizations: Lao Red Cross, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and Enfants & Développement (EED), a French NGO. Reported dates for these projects ranged from 1996 to 2004 and involved free provision of pans, cement, and pipes. Some projects also provided material for superstructures and trained technicians in the community for maintaining latrines.

In Meung district, there was no indication from the two communities that were interviewed of any ongoing subsidy projects during CLTS implementation. However, in Paktha district, both communities talked of "*the project*" or the government supporting them with supplies, either for free or by charging them transportation fees after triggering. Most respondents here insisted (upon probing by the researcher) that the latrine subsidies came from Plan International Laos through the local government, but these claims could not be verified through this study. It is possible that other district government officers visited the same communities after DWT members' CLTS triggering sessions and offered free or subsidized latrines to interested community members. DWT members had no knowledge of these latrine subsidies; one DWT member said she only learned about these subsidies "*from the villagers, not from working at the office.*" Another Plan International Laos staff member said that the District Health Office, which is in charge of projects for the ultra-poor, does not coordinate subsidy projects with Plan International Laos. This lack of coordination creates confusion in communities and leads to expectations that both Plan International Laos and the government will support communities with hardware after triggering.

### Cost of latrines

A major role of Plan International Laos district-level staff and DWT members during post-triggering is to provide technical support to communities on latrine construction options. The history of latrine subsidies by different organizations has engendered a strong preference for pour-flush latrines, even if Plan International Laos and DWT members encourage construction of lower-cost pour-flush or dry latrine options. Of all the latrines that were constructed after triggering in Plan International Laos' CLTS communities, 72% of the latrines were pour-flush and the remaining were dry-pit latrines (Plan International Laos 2013). This means that CLTS facilitators have to adjust to the communities' preference for more expensive latrines.

The cost of these pour-flush latrines can vary dramatically. One study conducted by the WSP in Lao PDR suggested that the cost of a pour-flush latrine with a soak pit, three concrete rings and a superstructure was 100 US Dollars (USD); for subsidized latrines, they found the cost for just the superstructure to be 79 USD, or 635,000 Lao Kip (LAK), based on data from Oudomxai and Savanakheth provinces (Colin 2012). Another study by International Development Enterprises (iDE)

found that unsubsidized latrines without a superstructure cost between 52-75 USD (420,000-600,000 LAK), excluding transport costs (Pedi et al. 2012).

Estimates from community leaders in the present study were lower than previous studies. In Meung district, leaders reported that a simple pour-flush latrine, excluding labor and a superstructure, cost between 13 and 37 USD (100,000 and 300,000 LAK), including concrete rings, cement slabs, and offset pipes. One CLTS Committee member also reported that it cost 13 USD (100,000 LAK) per family to transport materials in bulk from the nearest town to their village.

In Paktha district, where ongoing latrine subsidy projects were more prevalent, the reported cost of building a latrine was lower, ranging from 3-6 USD (20,000-50,000 LAK) because it was only the cost of subsidized transportation; community leaders reported that the remainder of the cost was borne by the government or “*the project*.” One CLTS Committee member estimated that if they would have to pay for the latrine themselves, it would cost at least 31 USD (1,000 THB) for the materials. Although the numbers are different, this finding is similar to the iDE marketing study in Sekong and Champasak provinces, where it was found that communities who had been exposed to latrine subsidies tended to underestimate the cost of latrines, lowering their willingness to pay (Pedi et al. 2012).

#### *Access to the supply chain*

The weak supply chain in Lao PDR means that access to this kind of hardware is limited unless it is brought to communities by NGOs or the government, or the community itself is highly motivated to procure hardware from far away.<sup>5</sup> For example, Plan International Laos staff and DWT members in Meung district offer to transport materials for communities if they were willing to pay them in advance for the transportation costs. The communities interviewed in Meung district, where there was no indication of ongoing subsidy projects, also described transporting materials for the whole community from the market in the district capital. They said most people could afford to build their own pour-flush latrines in their communities; one community had a local fund for those who could not afford latrines. They also learned from each other: “*We learned from the ones who already had latrines. Just mix sand, gravel, and cement. Make concrete and then put reinforced bars, steel bars, [and that’s how we] made the latrine.*”

In Paktha district, on the other hand, there was no discussion on access to the supply chain because both communities reported receiving materials from “*the project*” or the government. CLTS Committee members recalled that those who wanted latrines were put on a list and received materials on a given date; the remaining households did not build latrines. One CLTS Committee member said that, “*Buying the pan and cement, we can afford that. It may be possible. But buying the concrete ring for the hole [pit] is impossible.*”

---

<sup>5</sup> It was beyond the scope of this study to assess the supply chain for sanitation in Bokeo province. For readers interested in understanding the supply chain in more detail in two other provinces in Lao PDR, refer to iDE’s *Development and Marketing of Affordable Technology Options for Sanitation in Lao PDR: Field Research Report* (Pedi et al. 2012).

Introduction to market-based approaches can help increase access to the supply chain for communities that can afford to build pour-flush latrines. However, the more pressing concern is the history and overlap of subsidy projects, which interferes with the CLTS approach in triggered communities. Better communication between district government officers, as well as between Plan International Laos and other NGOs with subsidy projects, will help mitigate some of the challenges associated with post-triggering.

### ODF verification

At the time of this study, there was no standardized definition or verification criteria for ODF in Lao PDR. Plan International Laos and its partners were working to develop a definition that could be used by all organizations and adopted by the government as an official indicator for sanitation. As stated earlier, Plan International Laos has a strong monitoring system, from baseline surveys to monthly and quarterly monitoring of progress in communities. Plan International Laos measures ODF by first assessing 100% access to latrines, and then by 80% fulfillment of other indicators listed in Table 2, including self-reports of latrine use and handwashing, safe water practices, and the presence of a CLTS Committee. Once a community is ready to be declared ODF, the DWT invites other district government staff to verify the status, and the district governor officially declares the community as ODF. An ODF ceremony is held in the community, where the district governor presents the community with a certificate. Plan International Laos also gives communities monetary rewards of 37 US (300,000 LAK) and non-monetary rewards, such as water storage containers, wastebaskets, and ODF signs. These rewards are presented at the community level and not to individual households.

### Enabling and constraining factors for successful post-triggering

Table 13 lists the most frequently cited enabling and constraining factors in post-triggering that are relevant to the role of local actors. The enabling factors allow Plan International Laos to conduct CLTS activities more effectively, whereas the constraining factors pose a challenge to CLTS implementation. Alongside each factor is a brief discussion of its implications for Plan International Laos' CLTS approach.

**Table 13. Enabling and constraining factors for successful post-triggering**

<b>Enabling Factor</b>	<b>Relevant Local Actors</b>	<b>Implication for Plan International Laos</b>
Frequent follow-up visits to some communities	Plan International Laos DWT	Leaders in all four communities in this study noted frequent visits from CLTS facilitators. This indicates that despite numerous challenges, Plan International Laos and DWTs attempt routine follow-up in some communities to maintain their presence and encourage communities to change.
Extensive monitoring system	Plan International Laos DWT CLTS Committee	Plan International Laos' monitoring system allows information to be transmitted to the Plan CO in a timely manner with sufficient detail for CLTS staff to suggest and implement changes if needed.

Trained CLTS Committees in communities	Plan International Laos DWT CLTS Committee	A structured follow-up process that includes training CLTS Committees on hygiene and sanitation messages decentralizes follow-up to the community level. Therefore, even though routine follow-up by facilitators may not always be possible, communities are able to self-monitor and keep track of information to submit to the DWT.
<b>Constraining Factor</b>	<b>Relevant Local Actors</b>	<b>Implication for Plan International Laos</b>
Limited capacity of DWT for uniform follow-up activities in all triggered communities	DWT Plan International Laos Local government	Plan International Laos risks lowering the frequency and quality of post-triggering activities because of small DWTs. DWT members already prioritize follow-up in communities that are nearing ODF, which can adversely affect results between different triggered communities, especially those that are very remote.
History of hardware subsidies	Communities DWT Plan International Laos	Communities' expectation that external support agencies will provide some form of financial or material support does not allow Plan International Laos to effectively implement CLTS. Communities are often willing to wait for another organization to bring latrines. The history of subsidies also creates a preference for pour-flush latrines, which means Plan International Laos and DWTs cannot successfully advocate for low-cost latrine options.
Ongoing subsidy projects in CLTS communities	Communities DWT Plan International Laos	Lack of coordination at the district level between the DWT/Plan International Laos and district government staff who may be distributing latrine materials confuses communities about who is giving them subsidies. This makes it hard to know whether CLTS is truly being practiced with or without subsidies. It also means that Plan International Laos cannot control whether subsidies are offered to CLTS communities, confounding the outcomes of CLTS.
Weak latrine hardware supply chain in Lao PDR	Communities DWT Plan International Laos	Even if triggering is successful, follow-through for communities can be a challenge because of the weak supply chain for latrine hardware, leading to higher cost of latrines. Plan International Laos may need to help build the supply chain, both in terms of developing and increasing access to low-cost products, in order to see sustainable gains from CLTS activities.

## 5. Conclusions and Implications

Findings from this study illustrated the roles of local actors in Plan International Laos' CLTS implementation process, highlighted enabling and constraining factors toward successful implementation, and discussed implications of these factors for Plan International Laos' CLTS approach. This section summarizes seven key conclusions from this study and their related implications. These implications may be useful to other CLTS practitioners working with a similar implementation approach in a similar context.

### Plan International Laos' coordination with other partners on the national stage

Plan International Laos, Nam Saat, and other NGOs with CLTS projects in Lao PDR all appeared to have a good working relationship. This was evident through joint CLTS trainings, workshops to standardize the CLTS training manual by combining materials across organizations, and workshops to develop a national ODF definition. However, Plan International Laos had less coordination with other NGOs with latrine subsidy projects in its working areas, which meant that there was overlap of subsidized and non-subsidized approaches within communities or in neighboring communities.

### Need for harmonized national sanitation policy

The National Plan of Action for Rural Water Supply Sanitation and various government decrees relating to sanitation need to be harmonized to avoid the confusion in communities resulting from overlapping approaches. This responsibility rests with the national government, as does the responsibility to communicate clear policies to provincial and district governments. It will be challenging for organizations to successfully broaden the scope of CLTS and other sanitation activities in a harmonized manner until the national government commits to these two actions.

### Prerequisites for local government-driven CLTS

Working with local government to facilitate and follow up on CLTS helps integrate CLTS into government activities. However, local government facilitators tend to have limited experience with participatory approaches; this study revealed that CLTS in Lao PDR does not emphasize techniques that trigger disgust or shame in communities, and triggering tends to be conducted in a **more educational and less participatory manner**. Therefore, before Plan International Laos is able to transfer responsibility of CLTS to the local government and scale CLTS to more communities, it needs to focus on **building DWT capacity and facilitation skills**. Capacity can be developed by conducting more trainings that **focus on participatory facilitation skills** and by increasing the size of DWTs. Formal agreements between the local government and Plan International Laos would eliminate some logistical concerns and ideally increase buy-in from the local government for CLTS.

### Need for more national level facilitator trainings

Increasing the number and quality of trainings will require **developing more CLTS master trainers** in Lao PDR. Plan International Laos can address the training shortage in its program areas by training more of its own staff as master trainers. These internal trainers can conduct more intensive trainings with local government facilitators in a manner aligned with Plan International Laos' approach.

### **Community selection criteria dependent on local government approval**

Although CLTS facilitators were aware of community selection criteria, the overriding determinant was whether selected communities were in the district government's list of target communities for development. Therefore, communities that were triggered may not have always been appropriate for CLTS. Plan International Laos can analyze their baseline surveys to decide what types of communities to select in future rounds of triggering and use these data to justify their criteria to the district government, so that only those communities that are appropriate for CLTS are triggered.

### **Prioritizing communities that are more receptive to CLTS**

Because they were unable to ensure routine follow-up visits to all communities, CLTS facilitators reported different approaches to prioritizing follow-up in communities. The primary approach was to focus on communities that are nearing ODF so that they could be declared sooner than communities that were less interested. This approach appears to have led to a wide gap in latrine coverage outcomes between ODF and non-ODF communities. It would be more resource-efficient for Plan International Laos to target communities that are more likely to be receptive to CLTS at the onset rather than trigger less appropriate communities and not provide them sufficient follow-up visits. The current practice can bias outcomes between different triggered communities.

### **Latrine subsidies**

Lao PDR's long history of latrine subsidies inevitably influences Plan International Laos' chance of success with the CLTS approach. More coordination is needed at the district level between the following actors: Plan International Laos, the DWT, other NGOs with subsidy projects, and other district government staff implementing government-based subsidy projects. Currently, communities are confused about which government office or project is bringing latrine subsidies to their communities, often insisting that it is Plan International Laos providing subsidies. This creates an expectation from communities that Plan International Laos and DWTs will provide subsidies and makes it hard to accurately assess Plan International Laos' implementation of its sanitation program.

### **Access to the supply chain**

The weak supply chain in Lao PDR, combined with people's preference for expensive pour-flush latrines—influenced by a history of latrine subsidies—may be slowing down progress towards attaining ODF in many communities in Plan International Laos' program areas. Plan International Laos should consider incorporating market-based approaches to extend the supply chain to remote communities in order to accelerate progress towards ODF.

### **Defining and measuring success**

Although there was no national ODF definition at the time of this study, Plan International Laos and other NGOs with CLTS projects were attempting to develop a unified ODF definition and indicators. Plan International Laos has already invested time and resources into its progress monitoring system, which gathers data on hygiene, water, and sanitation in communities on a quarterly basis. This type of decentralized monitoring system, which involves CLTS Committees and district government, reveals Plan International Laos' desire to build an evidence base for CLTS activities. The system can be used at the national level to standardize monitoring of sanitation data across projects.

## 6. References

- Bird, Kate. 2009. 'Voluntary' Migration in Lao People's Democratic Republic. Policy Brief No 3. Overseas Development Institute. <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/3379.pdf>
- Colin, Jeremy. 2012. *Lao PDR - Findings from hygiene and sanitation financing study in Lao PDR*. Water and sanitation program. Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2012/10/16900829/lao-pdr-findings-hygiene-sanitation-financing-study-lao-pdr>
- Kar, Kamal. 2005. *Practical Guide to Triggering Community-Led Total Sanitation*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. [http://www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/sites/communityledtotalsanitation.org/files/Guidelines\\_for\\_triggering\\_CLTS\\_o.pdf](http://www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/sites/communityledtotalsanitation.org/files/Guidelines_for_triggering_CLTS_o.pdf).
- Kar, Kamal, and Robert Chambers. 2008. *Handbook on community-led total sanitation*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. <http://www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/sites/communityledtotalsanitation.org/files/media/cltshandbook.pdf>.
- Lao People's Democratic Republic. 2004. *National Strategy for the Rural Water Supply and Environmental Health Sector*.
- Lao People's Democratic Republic Ministry of Health. 2011. *The Seventh Five- Year Health Sector Development Plan (2011-2015)*.
- Lao People's Democratic Republic Ministry of Health. 2012. *National Plan of Action for Rural Water Supply Sanitation and Hygiene*.
- Messerli, Peter, Heinemann, Andreas, Epprecht, Michael, et al. 2008. *Socio-economic ATLAS of the Lao PDR: an analysis based on the 2005 Population and Housing Census*. Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, Department of Statistics of the Ministry of Planning and Investment, Lao National Mekong Committee Secretariat. <http://www.laoatlas.net/>.
- Pedi, Danielle, Hahn, Michael, Nanthavong, Khamphao, and Somphao Bounnaphol. 2012. *Development and Marketing of Affordable Technology Options for Sanitation in Lao PDR: Field Research Report*. International Development Enterprises (iDE). [www.sanitationmarketing.com/\\_literature\\_162623/Laos-iDE\\_WSP-Laos](http://www.sanitationmarketing.com/_literature_162623/Laos-iDE_WSP-Laos)
- Plan International Laos. 2013. Star progress summaries FY13 Q4. [data file] May 12, 2013.
- WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation. "Data Resources and Estimates." Accessed June 30, 2014. <http://www.wssinfo.org/data-estimates/introduction/>.

## 7. Annex 1 – Summary of enabling and constraining factors

Stage	Enabling Factor	Local Actors	Implication
<b>Planning</b>	Good working relationship between organizations implementing CLTS	National government Plan International Laos Other NGOs	Strong coordination with other NGOs with CLTS experience has meant that Plan International Laos can consolidate resources and develop national guidelines and training manuals with these partners. This working relationship can enable future comparisons of CLTS outcomes across programs, so long as they are implemented in a harmonized manner.
<b>Planning</b>	A core group of national master trainers, including those from the government	National government Plan International Laos Other NGOs	As Plan International Laos expands its CLTS activities, it can utilize these trainers and build the capacity of the government. Having government trainers also allows Plan International Laos to start realizing its goal of transferring CLTS responsibilities to the government.
<b>Pre-Triggering</b>	Extensive baseline surveys	Plan International Laos DWTs	These surveys enable Plan International Laos to clearly assess changes in communities after triggering. Analysis of these data, along with consultations with DWTs, can help Plan International Laos decide what types of communities to select in future rounds of triggering. If Plan International Laos' list of communities does not match the district government's list, data from baseline surveys can help Plan International Laos justify why different communities should be selected.
<b>Triggering</b>	Working with district government staff to trigger communities	Plan International Laos DWT	Allows CLTS to slowly be integrated into the governmental system rather than solely being an NGO program.
<b>Post-Triggering</b>	Frequent follow-up visits to some communities	Plan International Laos DWT	Leaders in all four communities in this study noted frequent visits from CLTS facilitators. This indicates that despite numerous challenges, Plan International Laos and DWTs attempt routine follow-up in some communities to maintain their presence and encourage communities to change.

<b>Post-Triggering</b>	Extensive monitoring system	Plan International Laos DWT CLTS Committee	Plan International Laos' monitoring system allows information to be transmitted to the Plan CO in a timely manner with sufficient detail for CLTS staff to suggest and implement changes if needed.
<b>Post-Triggering</b>	Trained CLTS Committees in communities	Plan International Laos DWT CLTS Committee	A structured follow-up process that includes training CLTS Committees on hygiene and sanitation messages decentralizes follow-up to the community level. Therefore, even though routine follow-up by facilitators may not always be possible, communities are able to self-monitor and keep track of information to submit to the DWT.
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Constraining Factor</b>	<b>Local Actors</b>	<b>Implication</b>
<b>Planning</b>	Insufficient number of CLTS trainers	National government Plan International Laos DWT	For Plan International Laos, this means that new DWT members or Plan staff who were unable to participate in trainings must learn on the job, potentially affecting their ability to effectively trigger communities.
<b>Planning</b>	No MoU for CLTS between Plan International Laos and provincial government	National government Plan International Laos Local government DWT	The lack of an official agreement makes it difficult for Plan International Laos to get local government buy-in for CLTS. It also leads to a perception that this is a Plan project and not the responsibility of the government.
<b>Pre-Triggering</b>	Time required for pre-triggering	Plan International Laos DWTs	Although extensive baseline surveys provide valuable programmatic data for Plan International Laos, the length of these surveys place an extra burden on DWTs, who are already struggling to allocate enough time for CLTS activities. Plan International Laos can maintain the quality of these surveys without increasing pressure on DWTs by adding more members to the DWTs and ensuring that an agreement is signed with the provincial government that details the time commitment required from DWTs for all CLTS activities.
<b>Triggering</b>	Variable quality of facilitation	Plan International Laos DWT	Insufficient capacity, training, and time of DWT staff may adversely affect CLTS outcomes in Plan International Laos'

			program areas. Because triggerings are facilitated as a group, expanding the size of the DWT into multiple groups, while ensuring that at least a few members in each group have the necessary skills to succeed as facilitators may improve the quality of triggering.
<b>Triggering</b>	Lack of buy-in from DWT on CLTS approach	Plan International Laos DWT	DWT members' expectation that Plan International Laos should support communities, or that communities need to be educated reveals a lack of buy-in for this approach in the local government. Therefore, CLTS may not be implemented as a truly participatory, self-analytical behavior change approach.
<b>Triggering</b>	Reluctance to use strong techniques to elicit shame or disgust	Plan International Laos DWT Communities	By adapting or omitting some core CLTS triggering steps, Plan International Laos risks slowing progress toward ODF communities. Communities may not be sufficiently "triggered" to internalize the need for behavior change.
<b>Triggering</b>	Language barriers between facilitators and communities	Plan International Laos DWT Communities	Triggering may not occur effectively because communities with ethnic minorities that speak non-Lao languages and dialects do not get the full message. Plan International Laos should either consider prevalence of Lao language fluency as part of its community selection criteria or consider training local leaders on CLTS triggering to address this challenge.
<b>Post-Triggering</b>	Limited capacity of DWT for uniform follow-up activities in all triggered communities	DWT Plan International Laos Local government	Plan International Laos risks lowering the frequency and quality of post-triggering activities because of small DWTs. DWT members already prioritize follow-up in communities that are nearing ODF, which can adversely affect results between different triggered communities, especially those that are very remote.
<b>Post-Triggering</b>	History of hardware subsidies	Communities DWT Plan International Laos	Communities' expectation that external support agencies will provide some form of financial or material support does not allow Plan International Laos to effectively implement CLTS. Communities are often willing to wait for another organization to bring latrines.

			<p>The history of subsidies also creates a preference for pour-flush latrines, which means Plan International Laos and DWTs cannot successfully advocate for low-cost latrine options.</p>
<p><b>Post-Triggering</b></p>	<p>Ongoing subsidy projects in CLTS communities</p>	<p>Communities DWT Plan International Laos</p>	<p>Lack of coordination at the district level between the DWT/Plan International Laos and district government staff who may be distributing latrine materials confuses communities about who is giving them subsidies. This makes it hard to know whether CLTS is truly being practiced with or without subsidies. It also means that Plan International Laos cannot control whether subsidies are offered to CLTS communities, confounding the outcomes of CLTS.</p>
<p><b>Post-Triggering</b></p>	<p>Weak latrine hardware supply chain in Lao PDR</p>	<p>Communities DWT Plan International Laos</p>	<p>Even if triggering is successful, follow-through for communities can be a challenge because of the weak supply chain for latrine hardware, leading to higher cost of latrines. Plan International Laos may need to help build the supply chain, both in terms of developing and increasing access to low-cost products, in order to see sustainable gains from CLTS activities.</p>