Testing CLTS Approaches for Scalability

CLTS Learning Series:
Nepal Country Report

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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).

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CLTS	Community-led Total Sanitation
CO	Plan International Country Office
DDC	District Development Committee
DoLIDAR	Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads
DWASHCC	District WaSH Coordination Committee
DWSS	Department of Water Supply and Sewerage
GoN	Government of Nepal
JMP	WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoLD	Ministry of Local Development
MoUD	Ministry of Urban Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSHCC	National Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee
NSHSC	National Sanitation and Hygiene Steering Committee
ODF	Open Defecation Free
PU	Plan International Program Unit
RWASHCC	Regional WaSH Coordination Committee
TCAS	Testing CLTS Approaches for Scalability
UNC	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar
VDC	Village Development Committee
VWASHCC	VDC WaSH Coordination Committee
WaSH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WWASHCC	Ward WaSH Coordination Committee

Executive Summary

This report presents findings on Plan International's Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach in Nepal. 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: natural leaders, teachers, and local government. 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 Nepal's CLTS implementation approach by addressing the following research questions:

- What roles do local actors play in the CLTS implementation process in Nepal?

- What are enabling and constraining factors for successful implementation of CLTS?

- What implications does the involvement of local actors have for Plan International Nepal's CLTS implementation process?

In August 2013, a UNC researcher conducted 34 in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 63 policymakers, Plan International Nepal staff, other non-governmental organization (NGO) partners, district and local government, community facilitators and community leaders. Relevant organizational documents and national reports were also gathered. Thematic analysis was conducted using interview transcripts, field notes, and documents. Key findings and implications are summarized below:

Roles of local actors

The Government of Nepal (GoN) established the Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan in 2011, which gave local government bodies the authority to lead sanitation efforts. CLTS is one part of the local government's demand-led sanitation strategy, which may also include local financing mechanisms, penalties and sanctions. Plan International Nepal, who pioneered CLTS in the country, now play a supporting role. Institutional arrangements for sanitation are complex and decentralized. The main actors involved in CLTS activities presented in this report are Plan International Nepal, government actors, local NGOs (LNGOs) and community triggerers.

Within the government, water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) coordination committees (WASHCCs) have been established at the national, regional, district, village development committee (VDC), and ward levels[1]. VDCs are the basic unit for open defecation free (ODF) declaration.

The District WASHCC, which includes district government offices and NGOs, is responsible for assigning VDCs to their member organizations, including Plan International Nepal. The VDC WASHCC

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[1] The VDC is the lower administrative unit comprising nine wards.

is responsible for coordinating all sanitation efforts, including planning, triggering and follow-up.

Plan International Nepal's partner LNGOs lead triggering efforts in communities and train community triggerers and VWASHCC members on CLTS techniques. Community triggerers and Ward WASHCCs--which are composed of community leaders and community-based organizations--continue to mobilize communities and monitor progress towards ODF status. Whereas in other CLTS projects, such community leaders are identified as natural leaders after triggering, in Nepal they are pre-selected and triggered themselves before triggering communities. This simultaneously makes these leaders facilitators and local champions.

This report highlights factors that enable and constrain the ability of these local actors to implement CLTS in Plan International Nepal's program areas. A brief summary is presented below.

Enabling factors and implications for successful implementation of CLTS

- Plan International Nepal has helped build **government ownership** of demand-led sanitation, while continuing to play a vital supporting role. The GoN Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan established a strong and decentralized structure for implementation of sanitation activities, which has allowed CLTS and related approaches to be taken to scale.
- **Strategic plans** at the national, district, and VDC levels streamline activities by delegating specific responsibilities to NGOs and government departments. Plan International Nepal is able to **train and build the capacity** of LNGOs, local government, and community leaders to facilitate CLTS themselves. Because VDCs are assigned to different NGOs and government departments, there is also **less opportunity for overlap** of different implementation approaches in the same VDC.
- ODF targets at national, district, and VDC levels enable mass mobilization (referred to as "sector triggering") towards a clear goal. This can enable comparison of outcomes across different VDCs, districts, and regions of the country, regardless of which organization is implementing sanitation activities.
- In Plan International Nepal program areas, CLTS is practiced as a **community-driven process**. **Local actors** are trained and **empowered** to take charge of the CLTS process in all stages—from pre-triggering to follow-up. These community actors are also able to follow-up with households more frequently than NGOs. Furthermore, this approach **lowers resource costs** for Plan International Nepal and has the potential to create **local champions** for other community-based projects.
- CLTS practitioners have struggled to address the issue of increasing access to toilets for the ultra-poor. GoN has devised an innovative approach to address this gap by allowing local government to decide whether and how hardware support should be provided. This allows Plan International Nepal to implement CLTS in the manner it finds appropriate, while the local government can determine **alternative financing strategies for their most vulnerable populations**.

Constraining factors and implications for successful implementation of CLTS

- The GoN Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan **requires that all toilets be water-sealed** (or "improved" in the Nepali context), in order for a VDC to be declared ODF. This national ODF definition requires households to move up several rungs of the sanitation ladder in order to be ODF. Adherence to this definition may discourage the poor from building simpler latrines that they can afford at the time, and thereby delay progress toward ODF status.

- The government's target is to achieve 100% toilet coverage by 2017, which necessitates more **ambitious district ODF targets**. There are some indications that these targets may **pressure local government officials to accelerate the ODF movement** by using coercive strategies or by expanding the use of hardware subsidies, which **can compromise sustained behavior change** in some communities. If the local government is rushing to meet unrealistic targets, it may also make it more challenging for Plan International Nepal to influence gradual yet sustained outcomes in their program areas.

- The national government has developed an all-inclusive sanitation behavior change strategy based heavily on CLTS, but there is a fundamental **assumption that CLTS is a universally applicable approach**. Given Nepal's socio-economic, ethnic, and geographic diversity, Plan International Nepal should **consider targeting CLTS** to communities where it is most likely to succeed rather than applying it to all communities. Alternative approaches, such as sanitation marketing, may especially be required in the Terai (plains) communities that have had particularly slow progress in sanitation behavior change.

- Because Plan International Nepal's approach is truly community-led, it relies heavily on actors who may have limited capacity. For example, VWASHCC members and community triggerers are volunteers. Until VDC capacity is strengthened, **Plan International Nepal and their partner LNGOs will continue to play an important role in CLTS**. They can **particularly add value to post-triggering** activities by helping communities access and build appropriate sanitation options through **routine training sessions**.

- While local financing mechanisms in lieu of subsidies may enable the ultra-poor to build toilets, it appears that **VDC-driven sanctions** using sanitation ID cards are being used to fill the gap towards achieving 100% toilet coverage. Those without toilets or with unimproved toilets are threatened to be cut off from essential local government services, such as issuance of birth certificates and allowances. This strategy may increase toilet coverage, but may not lead to long-term behavior change. Plan International Nepal should continue to advocate for a careful review of these sanctions to ensure that gains made in sanitation are sustained, and that **sanctions respect civil rights while complying with local regulations and policies**.

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 August 2013, a UNC researcher collected data for the CLTS Learning Series in Nepal with support from Plan International Nepal. This report describes Plan International Nepal's 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 Nepal's CLTS approach. This report does not capture CLTS activities funded by other organizations, nor does it comprehensively cover the Government of Nepal's sanitation strategy. It is intended to serve as a case study describing the roles of local actors in Plan International Nepal's CLTS program areas.

2. Research Questions

The primary research questions this report addresses—through the perspective of Plan International Nepal's CLTS program—are:

- What roles do local actors—including natural leaders, teachers, and local government—play in the CLTS implementation process in Nepal?

- What are the enabling and constraining factors for successful implementation of CLTS?

- What implications does the involvement of local actors have for Plan International Nepal's CLTS implementation process?

3. Methods

Data collection consisted of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions 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 and district levels who could describe experiences with Plan International Nepal's CLTS approach. Sampling at the community level was largely based on the availability of key informants and was therefore a convenience sample. Interviews were conducted with the support of an independent Nepali-English interpreter who was

not affiliated with Plan International. These semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the author and a transcription company.

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 Ministry of Urban Development, Government of Nepal.

3.1. Study Participants

Thirty-four interviews were conducted with 63 respondents in August 2013 in the capital city, Kathmandu, and in three districts: Makwanpur, Banke, and Morang (Table 1). Additional informal interviews were also conducted with 23 community leaders, as well as with three other Plan International Nepal CLTS staff throughout the duration of data collection. These interviews are not included in Table 1 because they were not transcribed.

Table 1. Study participants

Stakeholder Type	No. of Interviews	No. of Respondents
National government	2	2
Plan International Nepal	1	1
Local NGO facilitators	5	11
Other NGOs	2	2
Local government (District and VDC)	11	13
Community leaders	13	34
Total	**34**	**63**

Table 2. Triggering and open defecation free (ODF) dates for VDCs included in the study

District	VDC	ODF Status	Date of triggering	Date of ODF attainment
Makwanpur	VDC 1	ODF	July 2010	June 2012
	VDC 2	ODF	May 2010	July 2012
Morang	VDC 3	ODF	Jan 2011	2012
	VDC 4	Not ODF	Early 2012	-
Banke	VDC 5	Not ODF	November 2007	-
	VDC 6	Almost ODF	September 2009	Declaration pending

Respondents represented the national, district, and Village Development Committee (VDC)[2] governments; Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WaSH) coordination committees; Plan International Nepal CO and field office staff; local NGO (LNGO) facilitators; other NGOs familiar with CLTS; and community leaders and triggerers. Two triggered VDCs were visited in each district. Table 2 lists triggering and open-defecation-free (ODF) dates for the six VDCs. Eight interviews were conducted in English, 21 interviews in Nepali, and the remaining in a combination of Hindi and local dialects.

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[2] The VDC is an administrative unit comprising nine wards and is the basic unit for ODF declaration.

3.2. Limitations

Boundaries of a qualitative study design

This study describes and analyzes the process of CLTS as implemented by Plan International Nepal 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 Nepal's activities.

Quantitative data on CLTS outcomes in Plan International Nepal's program areas cannot be directly correlated with findings from this study because of methodological differences. These data were provided by Plan International Nepal and were not independently verified. Therefore, while findings from this study may be compared to Plan International Nepal'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

Six VDCs were visited out of 105 VDCs in which Plan International Nepal works, so some variations in CLTS implementation may have been missed. CLTS is highly integrated into GoN's sanitation and ODF campaign activities. Therefore, it was not always possible to attribute a particular approach or outcome solely to Plan International Nepal.

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 all six VDCs were triggered one to three 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 Nepal 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 Nepal. 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 Nepal's sanitation policy and Plan International Nepal's 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 Nepal's projects: planning and pre-triggering, triggering,

and post-triggering.[3] 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 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 Nepal's CLTS approach. These factors emerged from analysis of the interview transcripts, and implications were developed by the author. Some of these enabling and constraining factors 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 Nepal's future CLTS activities. These implications may be useful to other CLTS practitioners working with a similar implementation approach in a similar context.

4.1. Nepal's sanitation policy

Nepal's sanitation policy is guided by the Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan, developed in 2011. The Master Plan established a decentralized system for sanitation programming, recognizing the "leadership of the local government bodies," setting the VDC and municipalities as the basic planning unit for sanitation (Steering Committee for National Sanitation Action 2011). The VDC is an administrative unit typically consisting of nine wards, each of which comprise many villages, also known in Nepal as clusters or *toles*.

The Department of Water Supply and Sewerage (DWSS) in the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD)[4] is primarily responsible for sanitation. MoUD works closely with other ministries, the primary partner being the Ministry of Local Development (MoLD), which houses the Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR). Two formalized mechanisms exist for coordinating sanitation planning at the national level:

- National Sanitation and Hygiene Steering Committee (NSHSC): coordinates with relevant ministries; reviews policies, plans, and budgets.

- National Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee (NSHCC): responsible for national planning of sanitation activities; implements decisions of NSHSC; supports regional and district coordination committees; monitors ODF performance; organizes ODF campaigns.

Similar WaSH coordination committees (WASHCCs) exist at the regional, district, VDC levels. The composition and roles of these coordination committees are discussed in Sections 4.2-4.5.

ODF status is the primary outcome for sanitation in the Master Plan. ODF is defined as the absence of open defecation and 100% access to improved sanitation for households and public institutions. An improved toilet is defined as one that has a "permanent structure up to the plinth/floor level from the point of view of durability and sustainability of structures" (Steering Committee 2011). This

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[3] For detailed information on CLTS, refer to the *Handbook on community-led total sanitation* (Kar et al. 2008).
[4] MoUD was renamed as the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development in 2015.

emphasis on improved sanitation—while designed to safeguard sustainability—poses a challenge for CLTS practitioners, who encourage people to build toilets with whatever resources are available to them (see Section 4.5 for details).

The government promotes a variety of behavior change approaches to achieve ODF status, including CLTS and School-led Total Sanitation (SLTS). According to the Master Plan, "any other innovative approach/campaign will be tied up with the joint plan of action of the respective VDC, municipality and district," so long as the approach does not focus on hardware subsidies (Steering Committee 2011). This strategy theoretically prevents the overlap of different implementation approaches in the same program areas, as all approaches have to be in line with the local government's action plan.

The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP), which estimates water and sanitation coverage using various national data sources, estimated Nepal's coverage of improved sanitation in 2015 at 56% (Figure 1). According to the JMP, rural coverage was 44%, with 38% practicing open defecation. The national census estimates that between 2000 and 2011, sanitation coverage doubled from 30% to 62% (Government of Nepal 2013). National targets aim for 80% toilet coverage by 2015 and universal toilet coverage by 2017 (Steering Committee 2011). The October 2013 ODF Status Update from GoN listed 10 ODF districts, 12 ODF municipalities, and 1042 ODF VDCs (WASH-RCNN 2013). By 2015, 22 districts, 63 municipalities, and 1564 VDCs were reportedly listed as ODF.[5]
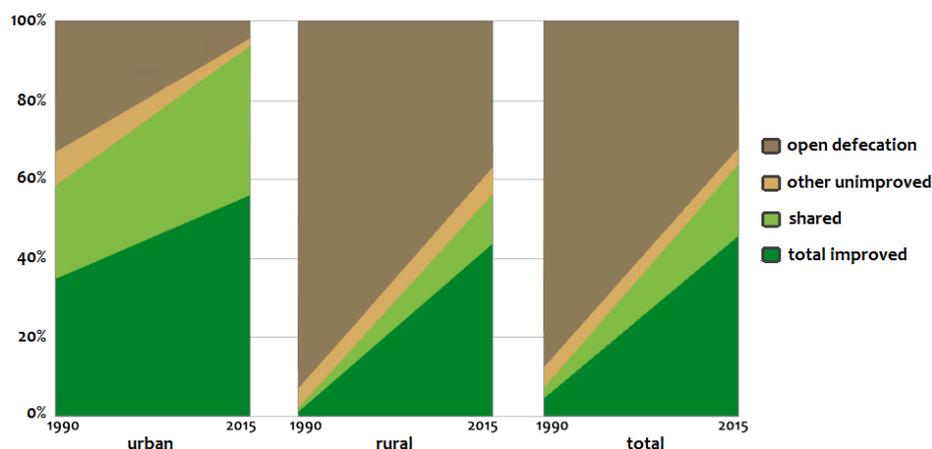
Figure 1. Urban, rural and total sanitation coverage in Nepal, 1990-2015 (Adapted from WHO/UNICEF 2015)

Overall, there appears to be strong buy-in from GoN for CLTS in Nepal. The government has the clear lead for sanitation programming in the country. However, a report by the National Planning Commission noted that despite this encouraging policy environment for sanitation, "implementation has proven to be a real challenge, primarily due to a lack of overall coordination and weak institutional capacity in terms of dedicated and trained staff [in the government]" (National Planning Commission 2013). These challenges did not appear to be prominent in the districts included in this study, but may be prevalent in other parts of the country.

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[5] Plan International Nepal, personal communication to author, June 11, 2015.

4.2. CLTS by Plan International Nepal

Plan International Nepal was one of the first organizations to pilot CLTS in 2004, along with WaterAid Nepal and Nepal Water for Health. CLTS was initially integrated into communities in which Plan International Nepal already had drinking water schemes. Small communities, called clusters or *toles,* within wards were triggered, and water and sanitation users' committees mobilized communities toward ODF status. An evaluation of their WaSH program in 2007, which at the time included hardware subsidies and CLTS, found that CLTS had been more effective at reducing open defecation (Plan Nepal 2007). Therefore, Plan International Nepal changed their sanitation strategy entirely to the CLTS model.

In 2011, the VDC became the basic unit of ODF declaration per the government's Master Plan. As Plan International Nepal was focusing on the cluster and ward level at the time, they had to scale-up their approach to comply with government guidelines. One Plan International Nepal staff member recalled that this transition was challenging because there was no clear strategy in place, and different organizations practiced different approaches within VDCs. As district level planning improved, there was clearer delineation of responsibilities, outlined in Section 4.3.

Plan International Nepal is now responsible for 105 VDCs out of 3972 VDCs in the country. They work in six of Nepal's 75 districts. At the time of this study, all their CLTS activities were funded through their child sponsorship budget and thus were not bound by project timelines.

Institutional arrangements

Institutional arrangements for sanitation, as detailed in the Master Plan, are complex and decentralized. Figure 2 is an institutional map of sanitation activities in Plan International Nepal program areas, as they are implemented within the government's sanitation and ODF campaign.

At the national level, Plan International Nepal is an important non-governmental stakeholder in sanitation programming. They coordinate activities with ministries and other NGOs through the NSHCC. At the district level, the District WaSH Coordination Committee (DWASHCC) is the primary mechanism for coordinating and implementing sanitation activities. Plan International Nepal is a member of the DWASHCC, as are district government offices and other NGOs. The DWASHCC is chaired by the head of the District Development Committee (DDC), which is a central coordinating body for district government departments. The DWASHCC assigns VDCs to different district government departments and NGOs—both international and local—including Plan International Nepal. They also determine funding allocations to VDCs using a combination of funds from the government and from NGOs. In this manner, the district government attempts to lead and coordinate sanitation activities in an inclusive manner.

All VDCs have WaSH coordination committees (VWASHCCs) to implement sanitation activities, and many wards also informally form ward WaSH coordination committees (WWASHCCs). These committees comprise government and community leaders. Plan International Nepal and their partner LNGOs and CBOs participate in WASHCC meetings, but play a supporting role. The specific roles of each WASHCC are detailed in subsequent sections of the report.
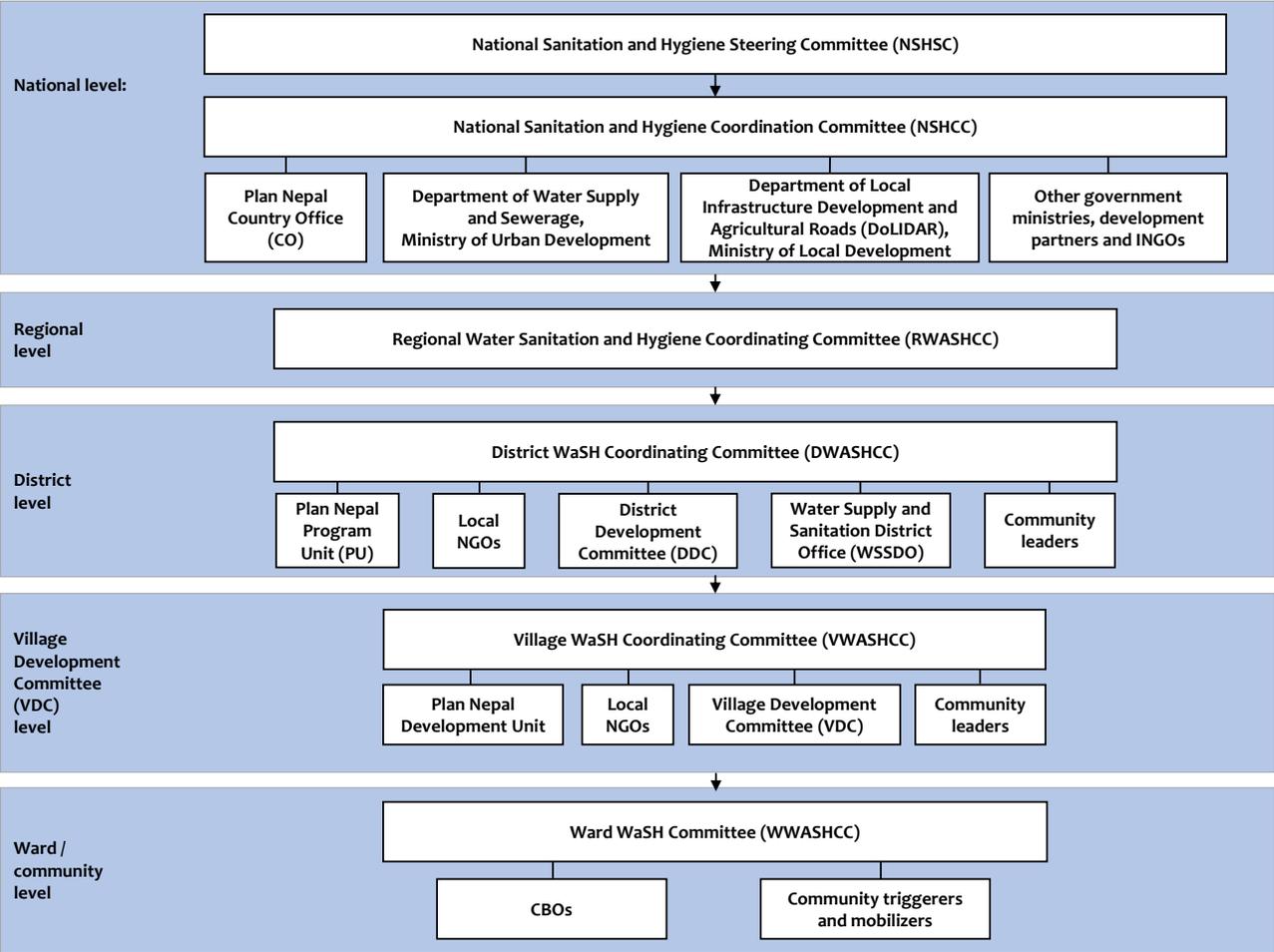
Figure 2. Institutional map of Plan International Nepal's CLTS approach

Available data on CLTS outcomes

Plan International Nepal districts are primarily located in the hills and Terai (plains) regions of Nepal. Before the implementation of the Master Plan in 2011, Plan International Nepal used to trigger selected clusters within wards in their program areas. In 2011, following a government declaration that VDCs would now be the basic unit for ODF declaration, Plan International Nepal became responsible for entire VDCs. Some clusters and wards within these VDCs had already been triggered, and some had also been declared as ODF by Plan International Nepal.

Table 3 highlights the most recent data obtained from Plan International Nepal's CLTS projects. As of 2014, they had implemented CLTS in 105 VDCs across six districts; three of these districts were visited as part of this study in 2013. Twenty-nine VDCs (28%) had been declared as ODF, with four VDCs nearly ODF. Average toilet coverage across all VDCs in six districts was 59% in November 2014. Baseline toilet coverage was available for 32 VDCs, which on average had 32% toilet coverage before triggering. However, baseline data were only available for ODF VDCs, which may possess different characteristics from the VDCs that have yet to be declared ODF. Endline toilet coverage varied across

districts, from 34% in Banke district (Terai region) to 100% in Makwanpur, the country's ninth ODF district (hilly region).

Dates of triggering events and ODF attainment were available for 41 VDCs, beginning as early as 2005. Of those, 16 VDCs had clusters and wards that had been triggered before 2011. Figure 3 presents time for ODF attainment only for the 25 VDCs where Plan International Nepal began triggering activities alongside or after the 2011 national ODF campaign, which shifted the focus to VDC-level outcomes. These averages provide a more accurate picture of the time taken to attain ODF status with respect to the approach described in this report. It took an average of 17 months to attain ODF status in these 25 VDCs, with a range of five to 45 months. This timeframe suggests that when aiming for ODF at the VDC level, significant time investment is required on the part of all implementers.

Table 3. Toilet coverage and ODF outcomes in Plan International Nepal's CLTS communities, 2014

Indicator	District						
	Makwanpur	**Banke**	**Morang**	**Rautahat**	**Sindhuli**	**Sunsari**	**Total**
ODF status	ODF	Not ODF	Not ODF	Not ODF	Not ODF	Not ODF	
No. of VDCs triggered by Plan International Nepal	13	23	25	25	13	6	105
Total no. of households (HH)	17635	34021	63538	34714	13990	7314	171212
Average no. of HH per VDC	1357	1620	2542	1389	1076	1219	1534
No. (%) of VDCs certified ODF	13 (100%)	3 (13%)	6 (24%)	1 (4%)	3 (23%)	3 (50%)	29 (28%)
Average toilet coverage before triggering (baseline)	39%	16%	41%	27%	41%	28%	32%
Average toilet coverage after triggering	100%	34%	49%	41%	53%	78%	59%

Source: Plan International Nepal 2014

Note: Baseline data available for 32 ODF VDCs. Endline data available for 103 VDCs as of November 2014.
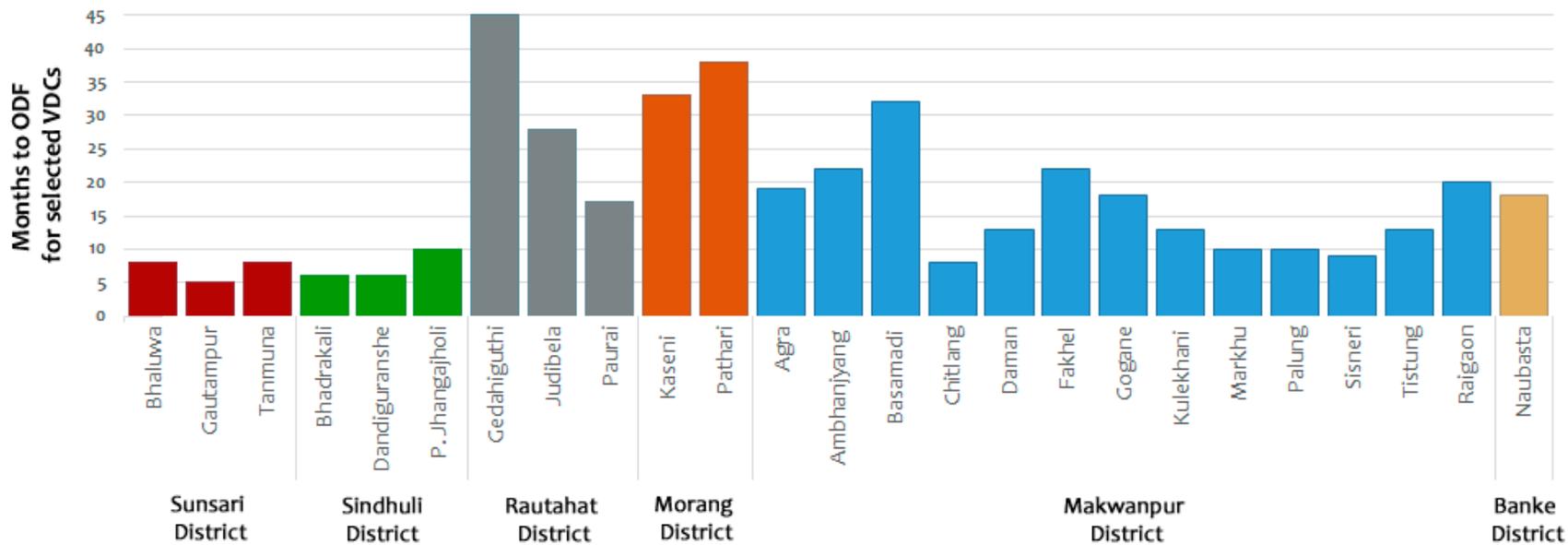
Figure 3. Months to ODF for VDCs triggered after 2010 in Plan International Nepal program areas
Note: Only VDCs triggered after the inception of the Master Plan are included. Data were available for 25 VDCs across six districts.

4.3. Roles of local actors: planning and pre-triggering stage

This section describes the roles of local actors as they relate to central themes that emerged from the case study during the planning and pre-triggering stages of CLTS. The roles are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Roles of local actors during planning and pre-triggering in Plan International Nepal's CLTS program

Actor	Role
National government	Financing; strategic planning and goal-setting
DDC and DWASHCC	
VDC and VWASHCC	Financing; strategic planning and goal-setting; training
Plan International Nepal	
Local NGO	Training
Community triggerers	
WWASHCC	Baseline surveys and community visits

Financial responsibility for CLTS

The national government and Plan International Nepal share financial responsibility for CLTS activities in Plan International Nepal's program areas. The national government has a dedicated budget for sanitation that is allocated to DDCs. The DWASHCC decides how to allocate these funds at the district level and to VDCs, who are expected to allot 20% of their total budget to sanitation. Many VDCs use the sanitation budget to support community triggerers or to provide hardware support to the ultra-poor for building toilets. Plan International Nepal's funding for CLTS in their VDCs is used towards trainings, triggering events, review meetings, joint monitoring, exposure and learning visits, travel and per diem allowances for follow-up, workshops, and communication materials.

External reports suggest that funding is a barrier to improving sanitation in Nepal. However, none of the implementers interviewed for this study described financial challenges relating to CLTS. A national government official believed that funding for sanitation was *"not a problem"* because resources were available from the government and external agencies. This official also cited a variety of local mechanisms available to those who need additional support to build toilets, such as savings and credit groups, or donations from community members. While these views do not confirm the absence of financial challenges in improving sanitation in Nepal, they are indicative of the widespread buy-in for CLTS and the ODF campaign.

Strategic planning and goal-setting

Plan International Nepal and government partners dedicate considerable time to planning implementation activities and involve multiple sectors. DWASHCCs assign VDCs to different government departments and international and local NGOs for implementing sanitation projects. For example, in Makwanpur district, Plan International Nepal was assigned 12 VDCs, the Water Supply and Sanitation Division Office (WSSDO) was assigned 18 VDCs, the District Development Office was assigned 12 VDCs, and the Nepal Red Cross Society was assigned one VDC. This planning process ensures that there is no overlap in approaches between VDCs in a given district.

Each VDC develops a strategic plan with targets and deadlines for ODF attainment. VDC strategic

plans inform the District Strategic Plan, which is used to guide activities of the district. It was reported that the WWASHCC conducts baseline surveys of toilet coverage in each ward to help VWASHCCs determine their strategic plan. Details of these surveys were not available to the researcher during the field visit.

The district strategic plans tend to set ambitious targets for toilet coverage. For example, Morang district initially aimed to achieve ODF status by 2015, but at a District Sanitation Conference in 2013, district officials decided to change the target to 2014. In 2014, only eight (12%) out of 65 VDCs in the district had been declared ODF (WASH-RCNN 2013). This type of target-setting makes it more challenging for Plan International Nepal to influence outcomes in their program areas since the local government is rushing to meet unrealistic targets. One Plan International Nepal staff member asked, *"Should we have a community [based] target or have the community run with our target?"* These targets may pressure local government officials to accelerate the CLTS process by using sanctions and enforcement or by expanding the use of hardware subsidies in order to meet their deadlines. According to one national government official: *"We have very little time because by 2017, we have to make the whole country ODF […] This is why we don't care about what is CLTS and what is SLTS and we don't distinguish. […] We are not waiting for 2017. We are declaring ODF by 2016, and one year will be required for any necessary modifications."* This approach may forego true behavior change in some communities, requiring more than just one year for necessary modifications.

Selection of community triggerers

In Plan International Nepal program areas, CLTS triggering is led by LNGOs with the support of community triggerers who are selected by VWASHCCs. The selection process varies by VDC, but two community triggerers are typically selected from each of the nine wards. Some VWASHCCs posted announcements in the media for applications for triggerers, whereas other VWASHCCs and WWASHCCs voted for existing community leaders to become triggerers during mass meetings. In all three districts visited for this study, community triggerers were typically high school graduates, and had to demonstrate some potential to lead their wards. All community triggerers interviewed were volunteers, but some reported receiving rewards. Their primarily role was to motivate their community members to stop open defecation after LNGOs trigger their communities.

Training

There are separate national guidelines for CLTS, SLTS, and the total sanitation movement. Plan International Nepal has organized various trainings since it began piloting CLTS. After the roll-out of the government's Master Plan in 2011, they helped organize trainings at the district level of DDCs, DWASHCCs, LNGOs, VDCs, VWASHCCs, and other stakeholders.

LNGOs partnering with Plan International Nepal are responsible for training community triggerers, other established community leaders, and CBO mobilizers at the VDC and ward levels. LNGOs interviewed in three districts all said that these trainings were organized upon the request of VWASHCCs, demonstrating local leadership of sanitation activities. One LNGO facilitator described the training process as one where *"we tried to create this fire, this tension in these triggerers about sanitation and hygiene."* Whereas in other CLTS projects, such community leaders are identified as

natural leaders after triggering, in Nepal, they are now pre-selected and triggered themselves before triggering communities.

These trainings are also used to gain the buy-in of VWASHCCs. An LNGO facilitator observed that after the training, the *"VWASHCC also understood that it was not the money that was important, but awareness that was more important. So after that they readily helped us in our work."* Training these community triggerers and VWASHCs allows Plan International Nepal and the government to build capacity at the village level for CLTS. Furthermore, by building the capacity of LNGOs as trainers, Plan International Nepal spreads the effect of their training beyond their program areas. For example, one LNGO reported that the DWASHCC has now asked the LNGO to train triggerers in other non-Plan International Nepal VDCs in the district as well.

Selection of communities for CLTS

The Master Plan supersedes strategies of individual organizations, and is inclusive of CLTS and other behavior change strategies that do not focus on hardware subsidies. CLTS has become a part of the local government's sanitation strategy, which may also include local financing mechanisms and sanctions.

Given the national ODF campaign and widespread triggering of communities, respondents were mostly convinced that CLTS was a universally applicable approach in Nepal, especially in rural communities.

However, most implementers interviewed in this study referred to differences in outcomes between the hilly districts and the Terai (plains) districts of Nepal, suggesting that sanitation behavior change is more challenging in the latter region. The hills are characterized by lower population density, whereas people from the Terai region, which borders India, tend to live in densely populated settlements. The Terai region has been historically neglected when compared to other parts of the country (Bennett 2008). According to government data from 2013, toilet coverage in the hilly region was 75%, whereas in the Terai region it was only 49% (National Planning Commission 2013). Field visits to Plan International Nepal's program areas in the hilly and Terai regions confirmed this disparity in coverage estimates. Respondents also frequently cited ethnic diversity as a challenge for implementing CLTS, especially amongst ethnic minorities in the Terai region. One LNGO facilitator working in the Terai region was candid about the challenge of CLTS:

"Those that are pretending to sleep, no matter how hard we try to wake them up, they will never wake up. So no matter how much PRA [participatory rural appraisal, or triggering] we do, how much training we give them, we can't wake them up. So we need a new approach. The CLTS approach is good, it's worked elsewhere, but in our Madhesi [Terai] belt, it has failed. That's my opinion."

The differences in outcomes based on geographic and socio-cultural differences across regions suggest that it may not be possible to apply CLTS universally. Plan International Nepal should consider more systematic targeting of CLTS to communities where it is more likely to be successful rather than applying it to all communities. Alternative approaches may especially be required in Terai districts that have seen slow progress in sanitation behavior change.

Enabling and constraining factors for successful planning and pre-triggering

Table 5 summarizes the most frequently cited enabling and constraining factors for planning and pre-triggering activities that are relevant to the role of local actors. The enabling factors allow Plan International Nepal 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 Nepal's CLTS approach.

Table 5. Enabling and constraining factors for successful planning and pre-triggering of CLTS activities

Enabling Factor	Relevant Local Actors	Implication for Plan International Nepal
National government has a policy and budget for CLTS	Plan International Nepal National government DDCs / VDCs LNGOs	The national ODF campaign establishes a conducive environment for CLTS. It allows Plan International Nepal to build the capacity of local government and communities to implement CLTS.
Strong planning and coordination at local level	Plan International Nepal National government DDCs / VDCs Local WASHCCs	The development of strategic plans and ODF targets at the VDC and district level enables mass mobilization towards a clear goal. The distribution of VDCs to different organizations also prevents overlap of different implementation approaches.
Community triggerers selected and trained for CLTS activities	Plan International Nepal LNGOs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	This approach effectively uses local actors to trigger behavior change and potentially create local champions for other community-led projects. Furthermore, it lowers human resource costs for Plan International Nepal.
Constraining Factor	**Relevant Local Actors**	**Implication for Plan International Nepal**
Ambitious government targets for ODF status	Plan International Nepal National government DDCs / VDCs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	The goal of achieving 100% national toilet coverage by 2017, along with more ambitious local ODF goals, might pressure local government to use sanctions or expand use of hardware subsidies. Such target-setting may leave out true behavior change in some communities, and makes it more challenging for Plan International Nepal to influence outcomes.
VDC as the basic unit for ODF declaration	Plan International Nepal National government DDCs / VDCs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	The large scale of ODF declaration requires adequate capacity within VDCs to trigger all wards and mobilize a mass campaign. While the idea is for Plan International Nepal to play a supporting role, capacity shortfalls in VDC government forces them and partner LNGOs to play an intensive role in CLTS to ensure progress.

| Perception that CLTS is a universally applicable approach | Plan International Nepal LNGOs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers | Given the socio-economic, ethnic, and geographic variation in Nepal, Plan International Nepal should consider targeting to communities where it is more likely to be successful rather than treating it as a universally applicable approach. For example, alternative approaches may be required in Terai communities that have seen little to no progress in sanitation behavior change even after the initiation of the ODF campaign. |

4.4. 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 6. The overall strategy advocated by the government is one of total saturation of sanitation behavior change messages to all stakeholders. As a result, there appeared to be no clear delineation between the triggering and post-triggering stages. We attempt to separate these stages in Section 4.4 and 4.5 to highlight particular characteristics of each phase.

Table 6. Roles of local actors in triggering in Plan International Nepal's CLTS program

Actor	Role
Local NGO	Facilitate triggering
Community triggerers	Help facilitate triggering by mobilizing communities
CBOs	
Plan International Nepal	Provide oversight; not routinely present for triggering
VDC and VWASHCC	May help facilitate triggering
National government	Conduct "sector triggering"
DDC and DWASHCC	
Other community leaders, political parties, media, child clubs	Continually trigger communities and households

Community triggering

In Plan International Nepal program areas, LNGOs are responsible for facilitating triggering with the support of community triggerers and CBOs, who help mobilize residents of wards to attend triggering events. Triggering is still conducted at the ward level, but some implementers reported that it was not necessary for all nine wards in each VDC to be officially triggered using CLTS tools. The idea is that sanitation messages will spread throughout the VDC through a combination of triggering events, media campaigns, and the efforts of community triggerers.

Community triggerers are responsible for door-to-door campaigning and follow-up to spread sanitation behavior change messages to remaining members of their wards who may not have attended a triggering event. Triggerers reported using a combination of shaming and pride-inducing techniques to convince their fellow community members to build toilets.

Despite having the support of community triggerers, LNGO facilitators acknowledged that they were overburdened. In all three districts that were visited, LNGO facilitators were each responsible for five to seven VDCs. In Plan International Nepal program areas, VDCs on average have 1,534 households divided into nine wards. LNGO facilitators are responsible for training and triggering all their assigned VDCs. This means that facilitators cannot easily trigger entire VDCs, and have to rely on community triggerers and local WASHCCs for a majority of activities in this phase.

Adherence to triggering tools

Triggering in Plan International Nepal's program areas comprises the steps established in international CLTS guidelines and practiced around the world. The steps most commonly cited by respondents in this study were the transect walk or "walk of shame," village mapping, shit calculation, medical analysis, and discussion of disease transmission.

The two triggering events observed as part of this study also reflected the aforementioned steps. These meetings were conducted in two Terai districts by two different LNGOs. In both events, it was observed that facilitators insisted strongly on community members' continued participation. For example, if some community members were too disgusted to stay in place during the transect walk or the water bottle demonstration, facilitators physically pressed them to stay at the event. This persistence by facilitators reveals the sincerity with which they conduct triggering events. However, Plan International Nepal will need to more strongly emphasize to LNGOs the need to respect people's privacy and comfort during triggering events.

Although LNGO facilitators appeared to enthusiastically conduct triggering events, they also perceived the need to adhere to triggering tools, and noted this as a challenge. One group of LNGO facilitators working in a Terai district felt that they were unable to attempt new approaches to triggering communities that were not responsive to the CLTS message. This LNGO felt that Plan International Nepal did not provide them with enough funding to attempt alternative approaches based on the socio-cultural context of each community. When prompted for examples, the LNGO facilitators were unable to provide specific new tools they wanted to test in challenging communities. Despite their inability to provide details, these facilitators highlight an important need for targeting CLTS in communities that are likely to be more responsive to the message.

"Sector triggering"

In addition to triggering communities, government officials often spoke of triggering other sectors of society. A former government official involved with developing the Master Plan called this process *"sector triggering,"* declaring that, *"all who defecate are stakeholders."* Sector triggering occurs at the district level. National government officials trigger groups of 50-60 participants from the government, media, political parties, and social service organizations to highlight the importance of achieving ODF status in their districts. In a number of districts, sanitation conferences were also held by national and district level government officials to trigger larger groups of 300-600 stakeholders. According to the former national government official, *"Sector triggering and community triggering are complementary. Sector triggering creates an enabling environment, so that local administrators are convinced [about achieving ODF status]."* In this manner, those in influential positions in the district

are triggered by the government, while Plan International Nepal and their LNGO partners focus on triggering communities.

Enabling and constraining factors for successful triggering

Table 7 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 Nepal 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 Nepal's CLTS approach.

Table 7. Enabling and constraining factors for successful triggering

Enabling Factor	Relevant Local Actors	Implication for Plan International Nepal
Locally led triggering of communities	Plan International Nepal LNGOs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	Using LNGOs, CBOs, and community triggerers to trigger communities lowers the resource requirements for Plan International Nepal and builds local capacity for CLTS.
"Sector triggering" on CLTS and ODF goals	Plan International Nepal LNGOs DDCs / VDCs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	This government approach creates a conducive environment for Plan International Nepal, LNGOs, local government, and community volunteers to trigger communities, since the government is simultaneously generating support from other sectors of civil society.
Constraining Factor	**Relevant Local Actors**	**Implication for Plan International Nepal**
Facilitators' persistence during triggering events	Plan International Nepal LNGOs Community triggerers	Facilitators' enthusiastic attempts to retain their audience during triggering needs to be reviewed. Plan International Nepal will need to more strongly emphasize to LNGOs that people's privacy and comfort must be respected during triggering events.
Overextended LNGO facilitators	Plan International Nepal LNGOs Community triggerers	With each LNGO facilitator responsible for five to seven VDCs (7000 to 10,000 households), their ability to actively trigger communities is limited. Plan International Nepal could increase the number of LNGO facilitators so that they can play a more active role in triggering communities alongside community triggerers.

4.5. 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 8.

Table 8. Roles of local actors in post-triggering activities in Plan International Nepal's CLTS program

Actor	Role
VWASHCC	Oversee monitoring; provide technical support and link to supply-chain; determine mechanisms of financial support to ultra-poor; verify and declare ODF wards
DWASHCC	Verify and declare ODF VDCs; provide technical support when requested
RWASHCC	Verify and declare ODF districts; oversee monitoring
National government	
Local NGO	Provide technical support and link to supply-chain; participate in ODF verification
Plan International Nepal	
Community triggers	Persuade communities to change hygiene and sanitation behaviour; monitor communities and routinely collect data
WWASHCC	

Monitoring progress in communities

The nature and frequency of follow-up activities are determined by VWASHCCs, who reported different timetables for follow-up: some made monthly visits to different wards, whereas others only conducted visits when a ward was ready to be verified as ODF. Plan International Nepal and LNGOs participate in monthly VWASHCC meetings and visit communities as needed, if requested to do so by local actors.

At the ward level, community triggerers are responsible for following up regularly with households to convince them to change their behavior by building and using toilets. They reported visiting households on a daily or weekly basis. Community triggerers and the WWASHCC reported progress in their wards on a monthly basis to the VWASHCC, LNGO and Plan International Nepal. Along with other community leaders and the WWASHCC, these local actors may all be considered as "natural leaders," who are typically used in CLTS programs to motivate community members in the post-triggering phase. The primary difference is that these pre-selected natural leaders are trained in CLTS triggering techniques, simultaneously making them facilitators and local champions.

According to interviews with community triggerers, if they face too much objection from community members during their follow-up visits, they ask members of the WWASHCC—who have more influence in the community—to make household visits with them. In the same manner, the WWASHCC sometimes requests the LNGO to visit the community for follow-up activities, although this is not part of the LNGO's mandate. Interviews with LNGOs working with Plan International Nepal revealed that although their primary role is to train community triggerers and lead CLTS facilitation, they wanted to play a more involved role in follow-up activities as well. Given that they reported already being overburdened, it is unlikely that the same LNGO facilitators will have the capacity to train, facilitate, and follow-up with communities. Nevertheless, this suggests that there is untapped potential for involving a greater number of LNGOs to support routine follow-up in communities, especially in regions with slower progress, or where VDCs and VWASHCCs are overburdened themselves.

Providing technical support

LNGOs in all three districts have conducted community-level trainings on how to build toilets, but only if they received a request from VWASHCCs. The trainings are usually small-scale and can involve advising households with elderly or sick people on how to build simple latrines or guiding communities on how to pool funds to hire a mason to build toilets. One LNGO facilitator wanted to provide more routine practical trainings to communities after triggering, but according to this respondent, post-triggering trainings were not in their work plan. The only role they felt they could play was to strengthen the VWASHCC when requested to do so.

These mini-trainings highlight the potential for Plan International Nepal to play a greater role in post-triggering activities by helping communities access and build appropriate sanitation options. For example, there is potential for sanitation marketing approaches to succeed—as evidenced by some VDCs being able to sell discounted toilet material to residents—but Plan International Nepal has yet to explore these options.

It is possible that Plan International Nepal adheres strongly to the CLTS message that communities must determine how to build toilets by themselves. They may also receive conflicting messages from the government on their expected role in sanitation. For example, one district government official believed that NGOs are best at providing *"sensitization"* or awareness to communities, whereas the government's strength lies in infrastructure. Therefore, this official thought that Plan International Nepal and other NGOs should focus only on *"software."* On the other hand, other local government officials wanted Plan International Nepal to play an even greater role in the sanitation and ODF campaign, ideally by providing more funding to families to build toilets. It is possible that because of these conflicting expectations, Plan International Nepal tends to focus more on triggering, while the local government leads follow-up activities.

Financing sanitation hardware

Reported hardware costs ranged from 1500 rupees (USD 15) for a simple pit latrine, to 5000 rupees (USD 50) for a toilet with a ring, a water-sealed pan, and temporary superstructure, all the way to 15,000 rupees (USD 150) for a permanent toilet with a superstructure.

The Master Plan acknowledged that "provision of financial support is crucial especially to ensure the access of socially disadvantaged communities to sanitation facilities," as long as it is locally managed (Steering Committee 2011). Therefore, the VWASHCC has the authority to decide whether and how subsidies should be provided to the ultra-poor within their jurisdiction.

Almost all respondents in this study eventually remarked that some form of subsidy was appropriate or necessary for the ultra-poor. A Plan International Nepal representative said that subsidies do not conflict with CLTS as long as the community (or VWASHCC) decides how to allocate their resources. In this context, subsidies were referred to in various forms: some called them *"innovative financing mechanisms,"* others called them *"incentives,"* and yet others called them *"rewards."* A district government officer viewed them as motivational tools: *"It's important to motivate and reward the poorest of the poor to get to ODF. Even the [wealthier] community people themselves say that these people have to be rewarded. [They say,] 'We can do it by ourselves because it's a matter of prestige, it's*

a matter of hygiene, but then the really poor should be given rewards.'"

It appeared that these subsidies were usually provided in the final phase of the campaign to those who could not afford to build toilets. A variety of mechanisms were used as a form of subsidy, and all were locally-decided and financed. A few examples include:

- Wealthier members of the community were asked to make financial contributions for poorer members' toilets instead of donating to temples

- The community forest users' committee provided free wood for construction of toilets to the poor

- A VDC used part of its 20% budget for sanitation towards hardware subsidies for the poor by providing discounted rings and pans

Only a few respondents were strongly against the use of subsidies. One LNGO facilitator said, *"The people have been supported by so many revolutions—political revolutions—so the people are strong enough. They are capable, so facilitate them. Money will not help. It's all about awareness."*

CLTS practitioners have struggled to address the issue of increasing access to toilets for the ultra-poor. The national government has devised an innovative approach to address this gap by allowing the VWASHCC to decide whether and how hardware support should be provided through these locally financed and managed mechanisms. International CLTS guidelines do leave open the possibility that community members can decide to support each other financially without it being considered a subsidy (Kar 2008). However, with the VDC as the basic unit for ODF verification in Nepal, these community decisions have now been scaled up to the VDC government. This innovation allows Plan International Nepal to implement CLTS in the manner it finds appropriate, while the local government can determine alternative financing strategies for toilet construction in communities. The challenge remains of ensuring that subsidies are targeted accurately to disadvantaged sections of the population, and that subsidies indeed promote behavior change.

Sanctions for non-compliance

All six VDCs visited during this study reported issuing sanitation cards—or mentioned plans to do so—as a means of compelling households to build toilets. Those who have built permanent toilets get a white card; those who have built temporary latrines get a yellow card; and those who have not yet built a latrine or toilet by a given date are issued red cards. Those with red or yellow cards are threatened to be cut off from essential services that they are entitled to as residents of a VDC, such as declaration of citizenship, birth certificates, and allowances.

Based on interviews with local government officials, this form of sanction was viewed as highly effective. Each VDC claimed that they had developed this strategy on their own, but it was implemented in an identical manner in all VDCs visited in this study, suggesting that this is a widespread practice. However, this strategy is still informal in nature, as there is no law or guideline authorizing VDCs to withhold services based on sanitation status. Most respondents who discussed the sanitation cards emphasized that it was either simply a threat and had yet to be enforced, or that it was only intended for the final few households that refused to build toilets. It is possible that this

process does not exist in all districts. However, open defecation is being recognized as a social crime nationwide, and some districts are officially recommending the distribution of sanitation cards to VDC and municipality residents, with penalties for non-compliance (Ministry of Urban Development 2014; "First cleanliness conference" 2014).

There was disagreement in the non-government sector over the appropriateness of this approach. One national-level NGO representative felt that the *"VDC authority has hijacked CLTS"* and this was not a sustainable approach. However, a local CBO member in the Terai region rationalized enforcement by suggesting that it was appropriate to use these tactics to meet ambitious targets, and that sustainability could be dealt with in the post-ODF phase. LNGO facilitators in all three districts also debated the merits of such sanctions. One LNGO facilitator noted that in their ODF VDCs, progress only occurred once the VDC threatened to stop providing services to those without toilets. In another district, an LNGO facilitator felt that enforcement *"promotes and strengthens CLTS."* In the third district, an LNGO facilitator suggested that there will always be those in any group who will not conform to community norms, so VDC sanitation cards were intended to deal with them. On the other hand, another LNGO facilitator questioned the morality of the approach: *"People would be deprived of their rights. It may help CLTS, but it shouldn't be done."* Ultimately, all facilitators agreed that VWASHCC had the ultimate authority to decide the nature of sanctions.

While other public health interventions have successfully used sanctions and enforcement (e.g. seatbelt and helmet laws), this approach of threatening to withhold services with sanitation cards needs to be considered carefully by GoN and Plan International Nepal to ensure that gains made in sanitation are in fact sustained. For example, interviews with some community leaders, especially child club leaders, indicated that some people had built toilets just to get access to the sanitation card but were still practicing open defecation. Any sanctions associated with sanitation cards must comply with local regulations and policies, but also respect civil rights.

Rewards for ODF
Interviews with community-level stakeholders as well as implementers revealed that rewards were sometimes given to villages that became ODF, as well as to community triggerers for successfully converting their respective wards into ODF communities.

Some VDCs were not informed in advance about rewards. One DWASHCC decided to give VDCs 20,000 rupees (US 200) upon achieving ODF status instead of providing subsidies. Examples of smaller in-kind rewards to households included towels, soaps, buckets, and mugs. For example, rewards were sometimes given to the first, best, or poorest household that built a toilet in a ward or a VDC. Other rewards were sometimes announced in advance. In one VDC, it was reported that the first ward to become ODF would be given 22,000 rupees (USD 220), and all other wards would receive 5000 rupees (USD 50) once they became ODF. However, this policy backfired in another VDC; a CBO member explained that rewards were announced to some wards and not to others, and this *"politicization of the campaign"* halted progress in remaining wards that were offended for not being offered rewards. Plan International Nepal can advocate for consistency in these reward mechanisms it is program areas to avoid such issues.

Community triggerers were described as volunteers, but some VDC and VWASHCC members reported providing them with travel allowances and per diem, with one local government official claiming that triggerers also received 5000 rupees (USD 50) rewards for achieving ODF status. These claims were not substantiated by community triggerers, who emphasized the voluntary nature of their work. Community triggerers in one VDC did report receiving 100 rupees (USD 1) per household that they convinced to build a toilet, but they decided to pool these rewards together for community needs. Others described increased respect in the community as the only reward. It was unclear from these self-reports whether and how much compensation community triggerers received for their efforts. Nevertheless, interviews with all community triggerers revealed a strong desire on their part to serve as change agents in their own communities, regardless of tangible incentives.

ODF definition

According to the Master Plan, ODF status is defined as the absence of openly exposed feces in a community (additional criteria listed in Table 9). Most respondents that were interviewed said it was not necessary for each household to have a toilet, and that sharing toilets was acceptable to be considered ODF.

The main challenge with the national ODF definition is the requirement that toilets should be water-sealed and permanent up to the base level. CLTS facilitators encourage the end of open defecation without preference for type of toilet, but simple pit latrines are not counted by the government towards ODF status. This stringent definition can delay the ODF verification process and may weaken the momentum in a community that believes they are ODF. For example, one VDC in a Terai district achieved 100% toilet coverage in May 2013, but not all toilets were water-sealed; as of July 2014, this VDC was still not officially declared as ODF by the DWASHCC. When interviewed, the VDC Secretary found the national ODF definition to be immoral:

Table 9. National ODF definition, Government of Nepal

	Indicators for ODF status
Required	No open defecation in the designated area at any given time.
	All households have access to improved sanitation facilities with full use, operation and maintenance.
	All schools, institutions or offices within the designated areas have toilet facilities.
Encouraged	Soap and soap box available for hand washing in all households.
	General environmental cleanliness including management of animal, solid and liquid wastes prevalent in the designated area.

Source: Steering Committee, 2011

 "So as per directives of government and as per what we perceive, it's different. […] When the government sent out the directives, I feel that it was more urban-centered. For example, if somebody has a water-sealed toilet, the person must be of good means. But most of the people in this village are daily wage workers. So it's immoral for us to demand water-sealed toilets from those communities."

The current national definition requires households to move up several rungs of the sanitation ladder

in order to be declared as ODF. Instead, ODF status could serve as a tool to motivate communities to gradually improve their sanitation and hygiene status and behaviors toward total sanitation beginning with the end of open defecation.

ODF verification and certification

Once individual wards are ready to be declared ODF, WWASHCCs request VWASHCCs to send monitoring teams to verify their ODF status. When all nine wards in a VDC have been verified as ODF, the VWASHCC requests the DWASHCC to verify and certify the entire VDC as ODF. The DWASHCC monitoring team has the primary responsibility for ODF verification and certification. This team comprises representatives from the district government, NGOs and other stakeholders, who submit their recommendation to the DWASHCC. When an entire district is ready to be certified as ODF, RWASHCCs verify their status in a similar manner. Plan International Nepal participates in the verification process as part of the WASHCCs' monitoring teams.

At the time of this study, nine districts in Nepal had been declared ODF, including one district visited as part of this study, which was declared ODF in July 2013. In this district, Plan International Nepal and the district government reported that a post-ODF strategic plan was being developed, which would take into account upgrading toilet facilities, promoting handwashing, ensuring access to sanitation in public settings, and overall environmental sanitation. The plan was still being developed at the time of this report, but indicates a commitment to trying to sustain progress after ODF status has been achieved.

Despite the presence of this verification process, a Plan International Nepal staff member noted that it had yet to be standardized and practiced uniformly throughout the country. This staff member noted a number of concerns with ODF verification. The Master Plan states that "the criteria to assess ODF will be set by D-WASH-CC" (Master Plan 2011), so there is no national ODF verification and certification protocol for all districts to follow. This also means that there are no criteria for the number of households and wards that must be observed during the visit to declare a VDC as ODF. Furthermore, there is no standardization in the composition of verification teams; Plan International Nepal indicated "concern over the credibility and authenticity" of declarations in some VDCs because the same WASHCC is responsible for implementing CLTS and verifying ODF status.

These concerns, combined with the government's ambitious ODF targets, may lead to inconsistencies in ODF declaration across the country, especially since local government officials may feel pressured to accelerate the ODF process through enforcement and expanded hardware subsidies in order to meet their deadlines.

Enabling and constraining factors for successful post-triggering

Table 10 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 Nepal 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 Nepal's CLTS approach.

Table 10. Enabling and constraining factors for successful post-triggering

Enabling Factor	Relevant Local Actors	Implication for Plan International Nepal
Community-led follow-up	Plan International Nepal LNGOs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	VWASHCC leadership of post-triggering activities lowers resource requirements for Plan International Nepal and LNGOs. Community triggerers and WWASHCC members can also follow-up with households more frequently than LNGOs.
Localized decision making for financing mechanisms/ subsidies	Plan International Nepal National government DDCs / VDCs Local WASHCCs	The government's innovative method to reconcile no-subsidy and subsidy approaches allows Plan International Nepal to implement CLTS in the manner it finds appropriate, while the local government can determine alternative financing strategies for vulnerable populations. This could lead to a lack of consistency between VDCs, but reflects the reality of a context-specific decision-making process.
Constraining Factor	**Relevant Local Actors**	**Implication for Plan International Nepal**
Follow-up relies on local government and community capacity	Plan International Nepal LNGOs VDCs VWASHCCs Community triggerers	Community-based actors are likely to have limited capacity for follow-up, especially since most are volunteers. Plan International Nepal can play a more prominent role in post-triggering by funding more LNGO facilitators to enable more intensive follow-up. They can also organize more systematic trainings on toilet construction. Growing local capacity to build affordable and high-quality toilets can be strengthened by exploring sanitation marketing.
VDC-sponsored sanctions using sanitation cards	Plan International Nepal LNGOs VDCs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	This strategy may lead to full toilet coverage but may not lead to long-term behavior change. Plan International Nepal should continue to advocate for a careful review of sanctions to ensure that they respect civil rights and comply with local regulations and policies. They should also assess whether gains made in sanitation are sustained through sanctions.
National ODF definition requires water-sealed toilets	National government Plan International Nepal LNGOs DDCs / VDCs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	CLTS facilitators do not advocate for a particular toilet type to end open defecation. Therefore, the approach does not guarantee that households will build toilets that meet the national definition even if they have stopped open defecation. Adherence to this definition for ODF verification may discourage the poor from building pit latrines and may also prevent facilitators from recommending a variety of latrine options as a way to stop open defecation, thereby delaying the ODF process.
ODF verification process and indicators not standardized	National government Plan International Nepal LNGOs DDCs / VDCs RWASHCCs Local WASHCCs	Although the government has an ODF verification process, there is no standardized protocol for certification nor the composition of verification teams. This may lead to inconsistencies in ODF declaration across the country and raise questions on the accuracy of ODF status of VDCs.

5. Conclusions and Implications

This study illustrated the roles of local actors in Plan International Nepal's CLTS implementation process, highlighted enabling and constraining factors for successful implementation, and discussed implications of these factors for Plan International Nepal's CLTS approach. There are seven key conclusions and implications that may be useful to practitioners working with demand-led sanitation approaches in similar settings.

Local-government led CLTS

Plan International Nepal has successfully helped build government ownership of demand-led sanitation, while continuing to play a vital supporting role. The Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan established a strong and decentralized structure for implementation of sanitation activities, which has allowed CLTS and related approaches to be taken to scale.

Strong strategic planning and ambitious targets

The development of strategic plans at the national, district, and VDC levels streamlines activities by delineating specific responsibilities to NGOs and government departments. ODF targets at each level also enable mass mobilization towards a clear goal. However, the government's ODF target of achieving 100% toilet coverage by 2017, which requires more ambitious district ODF targets, might pressure local government officials to accelerate the total sanitation movement by using sanctions or by expanding hardware subsidies. This type of target-setting may forego true behavior change in some communities. If the local government is rushing to meet unrealistic targets, it may also make it more challenging for Plan International Nepal to influence gradual yet sustained outcomes in their program areas.

Defining and measuring success

The Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan establishes a national ODF definition, which is measured by household and institutional toilet coverage. This definition can be used to compare and track progress across the country regardless of which organization is implementing sanitation activities. However, the ODF verification process is not standardized and can lead to inconsistencies between VDCs. Furthermore, the emphasis on "improved sanitation," which requires water-sealed toilets, requires households to move up several rungs of the sanitation ladder in order to be declared as ODF. Adherence to this definition may discourage the poor from building simpler latrines in an effort to stop open defecation; it may also prevent facilitators from recommending a variety of latrine options along the sanitation ladder, thereby delaying the ODF process. Instead, ODF status could serve as a tool to motivate communities to gradually improve their sanitation and hygiene status and behaviors toward total sanitation beginning with the end of open defecation.

Targeting CLTS to most appropriate communities

The national government has developed an all-inclusive sanitation behavior change strategy based heavily on CLTS, but this leads to a fundamental assumption that CLTS is a universally applicable approach. Given Nepal's socio-economic, ethnic, and geographic diversity, Plan International Nepal should consider targeting CLTS to communities where it is more likely to be successful rather than

applying it to all communities. Alternative approaches may especially be required in Terai (plains) communities that have seen slow progress in sanitation behavior change.

Potential for greater NGO involvement in post-triggering

In Plan International Nepal program areas, CLTS is practiced as a community-based and led process. Local actors are trained and empowered to take charge of the CLTS process in all stages. This approach also lowers resource costs for Plan International Nepal and has the potential to create local champions for other community-based projects. Furthermore, community actors are able to follow-up with households more frequently than NGOs. However, this bottom-up approach also relies heavily on actors who may have limited capacity, mostly working as volunteers. Until VDC capacity is strengthened, Plan International Nepal and their partner LNGOs will continue to play an important role in CLTS. They can particularly add value to post-triggering activities by helping communities access and build appropriate sanitation options through routine training sessions.

Locally designated subsidies and financing mechanisms

CLTS practitioners have struggled to address the issue of increasing access to toilets for the ultra-poor. The national government has devised an innovative approach to address this gap by allowing local government to decide whether and how hardware support should be provided. While this could lead to a lack of consistency between VDCs, it reflects the reality of a context-specific decision-making process. This approach allows Plan International Nepal to implement CLTS in the manner it finds appropriate, while the local government can determine alternative financing strategies for their most vulnerable populations.

Local government enforcement of toilet construction

While local financing mechanisms may enable the ultra-poor to build toilets, it appears that VDC-driven sanctions using sanitation ID cards are being used to fill the gap towards achieving 100% toilet coverage. Those without toilets or with unimproved toilets are threatened to be cut off from essential local government services, such as issuance of birth certificates and allowances. This strategy may increase toilet coverage, but may not lead to long-term behavior change. Plan International Nepal should continue to advocate for a careful review of these sanctions to ensure that gains made in sanitation are sustained, and that sanctions respect civil rights while complying with local regulations and policies.

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7. Annex 1 – Summary of enabling and constraining factors

Stage	Enabling Factor	Local Actors	Implication
Planning / Pre-Triggering	National government has a policy and budget for CLTS	Plan International Nepal National government DDCs / VDCs LNGOs	The national ODF campaign establishes a conducive environment for CLTS. It allows Plan International Nepal to build the capacity of local government and communities to implement CLTS.
Planning / Pre-Triggering	Strong planning and coordination at local level	Plan International Nepal National government DDCs / VDCs Local WASHCCs	The development of strategic plans and ODF targets at the VDC and district level enables mass mobilization towards a clear goal. The distribution of VDCs to different organizations also prevents overlap of different implementation approaches.
Planning / Pre-Triggering	Community triggerers selected and trained for CLTS activities	Plan International Nepal LNGOs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	This approach effectively uses local actors to trigger behavior change and potentially create local champions for other community-led projects. Furthermore, it lowers human resource costs for Plan International Nepal.
Triggering	Locally led triggering of communities	Plan International Nepal LNGOs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	Using LNGOs, CBOs, and community triggerers to trigger communities lowers the resource requirements for Plan International Nepal and builds local capacity for CLTS.
Triggering	"Sector triggering" on CLTS and ODF goals	Plan International Nepal LNGOs DDCs / VDCs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	This government approach creates a conducive environment for Plan International Nepal, LNGOs, local government, and community volunteers to trigger communities, since the government is simultaneously generating support from other sectors of civil society.
Post-Triggering	Community-led follow-up	Plan International Nepal LNGOs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	VWASHCC leadership of post-triggering activities lowers resource requirements for Plan International Nepal and LNGOs. Community triggerers and WWASHCC members can also follow-up with households more frequently than LNGOs.
Post-Triggering	Localized decision making for financing mechanisms/ subsidies	Plan International Nepal National government DDCs / VDCs Local WASHCCs	The government's innovative method to reconcile no-subsidy and subsidy approaches allows Plan International Nepal to implement CLTS in the manner it finds appropriate, while the local government can determine

alternative financing strategies for vulnerable populations. This could lead to a lack of consistency between VDCs, but reflects the reality of a context-specific decision-making process.

Stage	Constraining Factor	Local Actors	Implication
Planning / Pre-Triggering	Ambitious government targets for ODF status	Plan International Nepal National government DDCs / VDCs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	The goal of achieving 100% national toilet coverage by 2017, along with more ambitious local ODF goals, might pressure local government to use sanctions or expand use of hardware subsidies. Such target-setting may leave out true behavior change in some communities, and makes it more challenging for Plan International Nepal to influence outcomes.
Planning / Pre-Triggering	VDC as the basic unit for ODF declaration	Plan International Nepal National government DDCs / VDCs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	The large scale of ODF declaration requires adequate capacity within VDCs to trigger all wards and mobilize a mass campaign. While the idea is for Plan International Nepal to play a supporting role, capacity shortfalls in VDC government forces them and partner LNGOs to play an intensive role in CLTS to ensure progress.
Triggering	Facilitators' persistence during triggering events	Plan International Nepal LNGOs Community triggerers	Facilitators' enthusiastic attempts to retain their audience during triggering needs to be reviewed. Plan International Nepal will need to more strongly emphasize to LNGOs that people's privacy and comfort must be respected during triggering events.
Triggering	Overextended LNGO facilitators	Plan International Nepal LNGOs Community triggerers	With each LNGO facilitator responsible for five to seven VDCs (7000 to 10,000 households), their ability to actively trigger communities is limited. Plan International Nepal could increase the number of LNGO facilitators so that they can play a more active role in triggering communities alongside community triggerers.
Post-Triggering	Follow-up relies on local government and community capacity	Plan International Nepal LNGOs VDCs VWASHCCs Community triggerers	Community-based actors are likely to have limited capacity for follow-up, especially since most are volunteers. Plan International Nepal can play a more prominent role in post-triggering

			by funding more LNGO facilitators to enable more intensive follow-up. They can also organize more systematic trainings on toilet construction. Growing local capacity to build affordable and high-quality toilets can be strengthened by exploring sanitation marketing.
Post-Triggering	VDC-sponsored sanctions using sanitation cards	Plan International Nepal LNGOs VDCs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	This strategy may lead to full toilet coverage but may not lead to long-term behavior change. Plan International Nepal should continue to advocate for a careful review of sanctions to ensure that they respect civil rights and comply with local regulations and policies. They should also assess whether gains made in sanitation are sustained through sanctions.
Post-Triggering	National ODF definition requires water-sealed toilets	National government Plan International Nepal LNGOs DDCs / VDCs Local WASHCCs Community triggerers	CLTS facilitators do not advocate for a particular toilet type to end open defecation. Therefore, the approach does not guarantee that households will build toilets that meet the national definition even if they have stopped open defecation. Adherence to this definition for ODF verification may discourage the poor from building pit latrines and may also prevent facilitators from recommending a variety of latrine options as a way to stop open defecation, thereby delaying the ODF process.
Post-Triggering	ODF verification process and indicators not standardized	National government Plan International Nepal LNGOs DDCs / VDCs RWASHCCs Local WASHCCs	Although the government has an ODF verification process, there is no standardized protocol for certification nor the composition of verification teams. This may lead to inconsistencies in ODF declaration across the country and raise questions on the accuracy of ODF status of VDCs.