Leader-led total sanitation

Making dignity affordable to poor communities in Burkina Faso

Introduction

Every day, in many villages across Burkina Faso, extreme poverty robs people of their dignity. Women, children and elderly people have no choice but to walk kilometres just to go to the toilet. Where people are suffering from water-related diarrhoeal diseases, the lack of toilets close to home becomes even more of a problem.

To address this crisis, WaterAid Burkina Faso has piloted an innovative approach called leader-led total sanitation. This report provides information on the approach and shares some of our experiences in implementing the approach. It also serves as a guidance manual for other country programmes or organisations wishing to use leader-led total sanitation to accelerate sanitation coverage.

“Before, we had to go to the toilet in the bushes. As soon as we had finished, the pigs rushed into it. They would always trample the dirt back into the village and our homes. Also when women had diarrhoea they couldn’t get far from home and had to go to the toilet in front of everyone else. It was embarrassing. Having latrines here has not only helped our health, it has restored our dignity and our pride.”

Marie Edith Kinda, Séguedin village
The sanitation challenge in Burkina Faso

Sanitation coverage in Burkina Faso is critically low. According to a study carried out by the general directorate in charge of sanitation in 2010, only 3% of the total population has access to adequate sanitation and 70% practises open defecation.

These statistics led to the Government increasing the priority given to sanitation, as it had previously estimated the percentage with access to be 10% and based its plan for reaching the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) sanitation target on this number. At the Sanitation and Water for All High-Level Meeting in Washington, DC, in April 2010, the Government re-affirmed its commitment to address the sanitation crisis. In June 2010, the Head of State launched a national sanitation campaign with the objective of building 54,000 latrines every year in order to reach the MDG sanitation target in 2015.

However, this high-level political commitment has not been followed by the necessary action, and the country is off-track to meet the MDG sanitation target. There is an urgent need to review the strategy currently being taken and find ways to put into operation the national sanitation campaign.

An innovative approach to a big challenge

Leader-led total sanitation (LLTS) was initiated by WaterAid Burkina Faso in an attempt to find new approaches to accelerate access to sanitation. The main objectives of the approach are to end open defecation and instil good hygiene practices in children and adults, enabling Burkina Faso to achieve the MDG sanitation target. LLTS is an innovative local fundraising initiative that complements community-led total sanitation (CLTS). It is a simple approach, based on the willingness of a leader to be a sanitation change agent in their community or another community of their choice where there is a need. The leader must commit their own resources to provide latrines for people and families in need, making sanitation, and therefore dignity, affordable to them.

Steps in the development of leader-led total sanitation

- **Partnership development:** WaterAid Burkina Faso shared the idea of LLTS with a partner from the journalists’ network. The network welcomed the idea and together we discussed the approach, finalised the concept note and developed an action plan with clear roles and responsibilities.

- **Identification of leaders:** One step in the action plan was to identify leaders with the potential to become sanitation change agents in their villages. 71 leaders were selected from a variety of backgrounds (including artists, ministers, businessmen, parliamentarians and footballers) and from across the country.
• **Sanitation surveys in the villages of identified leaders:** Surveys were carried out in the villages of the 71 leaders. Data was collected on the number of people, households and private latrines, the main health issues, and the location of defecation sites. Testimonies were also recorded from families in the villages.

• **Treatment of data:** From the data collected, we were able to calculate the degree of latrine coverage in the village, the percentage of households with access to latrines, the percentage of people practising open defecation, and the proportion of households using ‘improved’ latrines.

• **Production of a report:** Using these findings, we produced a report. We allocated a sheet per leader, outlining details of their village including the sanitation situation, short testimonies of their community members, and what is required for the village to improve access to sanitation. The report contained sections on the sanitation situation at the regional and national level, the rationale for LLTS, the call for community leaders, and the cost and advantages of a leader making a commitment to improve sanitation in their village.

• **Lobbying actions:** Once the report was finished, we carried out lobbying actions towards the leaders and the high-level decision-makers at the ministry in charge of sanitation as well as the Prime Minister. Quickly, and beyond our expectation, the initiative was adopted by the minister in charge of sanitation and then by the Prime Minister, who requested that each minister, regardless of their sector of activity, commit to build at least ten latrines in their own village to set an example.

• **Meeting with the donor group:** The initiative was presented to the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) donor group in Burkina Faso, which includes Danida (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark), SIDA (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), the World Bank, the French Development Agency, UNICEF, GIZ (the German agency for international cooperation), KfW (German international development bank) and the European Union (EU). The initiative was unanimously well received and expected to be taken up by all sanitation stakeholders to boost the sanitation sub-sector. The donor group recommended that WaterAid develop an LLTS operational guide for use by stakeholders and leaders.

• **Organisation of sanitation telethon:** The ‘Sanithon’ was a gala night, co-organised by WaterAid, the ministry in charge of sanitation and the journalists’ network, to fundraise for sanitation and call for new leaders to commit to improve access to sanitation. In a single night, 101 leaders committed to support their communities to improve their sanitation, as well as 45 ministries and institutions. Enough money was raised to build 1,566 latrines in various villages.

• **Donation mapping:** Following the Sanithon, we made a map of the donations pledged per region and developed a monitoring plan to ensure the money raised is translated into actions. The following graph shows the spread of latrines funded per region.
Roles played by stakeholders

Ministry in charge of water and sanitation
The leader-led total sanitation approach was officially adopted by the Government during a board meeting on 29 February 2012. It is now the responsibility of the ministry in charge of water and sanitation which aims to scale it up all over the country and beyond. The directorate in charge of sanitation is working with the regional directorates and mayors to scale up the approach at regional, provincial and local level to accelerate sanitation coverage.

Journalists’ network on water and sanitation
The role of the network is to ensure all commitments are translated into action. Their role is to track progress, document success and inspire more leaders to commit their own resources to sanitation.

WaterAid
LLTS is integrated into our partners’ work. We support the leaders who have made commitments in the areas where we work, through training masons and hygiene volunteers. In the areas where WaterAid is not currently working, we encourage volunteer students from the school of engineering, 2IE, to support the implementation of the leaders’ commitments.

Beyond these roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, a technical unit has been set up to overlook the technical aspect of LLTS and lead on monitoring and evaluation. This technical unit is made up of members from the directorate of water and sanitation, the journalists’ network and WaterAid, and it reports on a regular basis to the minister in charge of water and sanitation.
An approach with big potential for change

The Government of Burkina Faso has adopted leader-led total sanitation, recognising the potential it has to accelerate sanitation coverage and ensure the MDG sanitation target is achieved. Specific benefits include:

- **A cross-sector approach** – LLTS calls upon leaders, regardless of their background, to invest in improvements to sanitation access.
- **A local fundraising medium** – The approach calls upon leaders to invest their money in sanitation by offering a latrine to a family or many families in their village or a village of their choice.
- **Accelerating progress towards the MDG target** – Considering that every village has at least one leader, by mobilising them all, the country can achieve the MDG sanitation target by 2015.

The challenges

The cost of the donation for a latrine did not take into account the costs linked to behaviour change activities. In the areas where we work, we can take this into account, but in the non-WaterAid villages, we need to encourage those responsible for sanitation improvements to consider it.

The leadership in the ministry in charge of water and sanitation changed following the legislative and municipal elections, and we need to ensure the new leadership continues the vision for LLTS.

“Before everyone had to go to the toilet in nature. The flies used to go into the faeces and come in to the houses. They brought dirtiness and illness. Now the latrines are so close to our houses that even if you are ill you can use the latrines to go to the toilet. We feel better because our dignity is preserved.”

Sophie Zongo, Bayandi Palogo village
Committed leaders

Carime Igo
Carime Igo is the first leader to put his commitment into action. He is a Burkinabe architect living in Marseille, France. Carime committed to LLTS in March at the World Water Forum in Marseille, where we shared the idea with him. One month later, Carime returned to his native village of Tayia, in the district of Gonboussou, to support a latrine construction campaign with the full involvement of the community. In Tayia, 95% of the population practises open defecation.

On 9 April, he gathered the men, women and children of his community together to publically commit himself to help them improve their access to sanitation. This commitment was witnessed by journalists, national and local authorities, and other leaders invited to the ceremony. He shared with the community his joy at being able to contribute to improving the dignity of his fellow men and especially women.

The Prime Minister
Following the Government’s adoption of LLTS, the Prime Minister called upon all ministers from his government to build at least ten latrines in their native village to promote the approach. It was the first time in Burkina Faso’s history that a Prime Minister had called for household latrine construction.

On 23 June 2012, the Prime Minister launched a latrine construction campaign in his native village of Pouni, in west central Burkina Faso. By so doing, His Excellency, Luc Adolph Tiao, committed to personally finance the construction of 30 latrines and support behaviour change activities in his community.

He said that, “Sanitation issue needs to be seriously tackled. The statistics are frightening; 70% of Burkinabe citizens are practising open defecation.” Following his speech, other leaders from Pouni village who came to witness his commitment, decided to supply the village with an additional 40 latrines.
People living with disabilities, like this young woman from Yake, often have difficulty accessing traditional latrines. Latrines can be adapted to meet their needs and ensure universal access.

Written by Aline Ouedraogo/Napon, Head of Policy and Campaigns, WaterAid Burkina Faso

March 2013

This document should be cited as WaterAid (2013) Leader-led total sanitation. WaterAid, Burkina Faso