

Challenges for the Implementation of Community Led Total Sanitation in Rural Malawi

Authors : Save Kumwenda, Khumbo Kalulu, Kondwani Chidziwisano, Limbani Kalumbi, Vincent Doyle, Bagrey Ngwira

Abstract : Introduction: The Malawi Government in partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations adopted Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) in 2008 as an approach in sanitation and hygiene promotion with an aim of declaring Malawi Open Defecation Free (ODF) by 2015. While there is a significant body of research into CLTS available in public domain, there is little research done on challenges faced in implementing CLTS in Malawi. Methods: A cross-sectional qualitative study was carried out in three districts of Ntcheu, Balaka, and Phalombe. Data was collected using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key informant interviews (KII) and analysed manually. Results: In total, 96 people took part in FGDs and 9 people in KII. It was shown that choice of leaders after triggering was commonly done by chiefs, facilitators, and VHC without following CLTS principles as opposed to identifying individuals who showed leadership skills. Despite capacity building initiatives involving District Coordinating Teams, lack of resources to undertake follow-ups contributed to failure to sustain ODF in the community. It was also found that while most respondents appreciating the need for no subsidies, the elderly and those with disabilities felt the need for external support because do not have money for buying strong logs, slabs for durable toilet floor and also to hire people to build latrines for them. Conclusion: Effective implementation of CLTS requires comprehensive consideration of various issues that may affect its success.

Keywords : open defecation, community-led, sanitation, faecal matter, hygiene, Malawi

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