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TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE  
AND RESILIENT WASH SERVICES

## **Increasing household toilet investments through CLUES: lessons from Ashaiman Municipal Assembly, Ghana**

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*Community-Led Urban Environmental Sanitation (CLUES) is a planning approach piloted in Ghana as a sanitation demand creation and triggering method to increase household investment in toilet facilities. It is implemented by the Government of Ghana in Ashaiman Municipal Assembly with technical support from People's Dialogue on Human Settlements and funding from UNICEF-Ghana. This paper provides results from the implementation process. Within a year of actual implementation, over 800 households in Ashaiman's largely informal settlements expressed interest in sanitation investment with over 300 already with complete functional toilets.*

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### **Introduction**

Achieving sustainable and more resilient services forms the core of the 2030 sustainable development goals (SDGs) especially for WASH targets (UN, 2016). While several approaches are being implemented to achieve SDGs, more comprehensive and population tailored interventions and planning processes are fundamental for effective promotion, adoption, use and sustainability of environmental sanitation and other health-related services (Luthi et al., 2011; Sherpa et al., 2013). Community-Led Urban Environmental Sanitation (CLUES) is one of the approaches being piloted in Ghana's urban areas as a sanitation demand creation and triggering method to increase household investments in toilet facilities. CLUES is being piloted alongside other approaches such as community-led total sanitation (CLTS) – adapted to suit urban and peri-urban settings as well as community development for health (CDH) also to draw lessons to inform Ghana's Urban Sanitation Strategy (GUSS). The implementation of CLUES in Ashaiman Municipal Assembly is done with support from People's Dialogue on Human Settlements, funded by UNICEF-Ghana. The planning approach targets improvement of environmental sanitation infrastructure and other-related services in urban informal/unplanned, and peri-urban settlements with emphasis on active participation and involvement of all stakeholders (Luthi et al., 2011). CLUES pilot implementation in Ghana involved building the capacities of the institutions (Ashaiman Municipal Assembly and People's Dialogue) on the approach and its application, as well as localization at community level to trigger household sanitation demand and investments.

### **Methodology**

Community-Led Urban Environmental Sanitation (CLUES) is a comprehensive behavioural participatory planning approach aimed at sustainable implementation of environmental sanitation services in marginalized urban and peri-urban communities. The planning approach builds on a framework that balances human needs with those of the environment to support human dignity and a healthy life. It has seven planning steps (See Table 1) that are supplemented with an enabling environment and cross-cutting tasks (Luthi et al., 2011).

| <b>Planning steps</b>                                  | <b>Descriptions</b>  |
|--|--|
| 1. Ignition and sanitation demand creation             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community mobilization and triggering events</li> </ul>   |
| 2. Launch of the planning process                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involves all key stakeholders to understand the CLUES in perspective of environmental sanitation challenges, agreement on interventions, protocol and responsibilities</li> </ul> |
| 3. Detailed assessment of current situation            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct needs assessment to provide facts to inform the process and decisions</li> </ul>  |
| 4. Prioritization of community problems and validation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of findings from detailed assessment and stakeholders' approval to guide prioritization process</li> </ul>   |
| 5. Identification of service options                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selection of feasible and cost-effective technological options</li> </ul>   |
| 6. Development of action plans                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involves stakeholders' development of locally and specific implementable action plans by community, local authorities or private sector</li> </ul>                                |
| 7. Implementation of the action plans                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transformation of developed plans into implementable work packages inclusive of operation and maintenance.</li> </ul>   |

(Adapted from Lüthi et al.; 2011)

Implementation of CLUES in Ghana's Ashaiman Municipal Assembly (ASHMA) by the Government in collaboration with UNICEF started with building the capacities of the Assembly and the Civil Society Organization (People's Dialogue) to lead and own the process (Table 2). These were taken through training on the conventional planning steps inclusive of the enabling environment and cross-cutting tasks. By the nature of the program, aimed at triggering households to invest in toilets, most steps of CLUES were localized by integration into the first step on ignition and demand creation messaging (Table 3). This was combined with a series of persuasive follow-ups to lure households to invest in own toilet facilities. Further discussions on selection of appropriate and cost-effective toilet options as well as development of actions plans and devising financing mechanisms for toilet investments were done at household level during persuasive follow-ups. Analysis is provided on its contribution in improving toilet coverage. A consultant was hired by UNICEF to build institutional capacities and roll-out community triggering activities for household sanitation prioritization and investments.

| <b>Approach</b> | <b>Total trained</b> |        | <b>Government agency</b>             |       | <b>Civil Society Organisation</b> |       |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------|--------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|-------|
|                 | Male                 | Female | Ashaiman Municipal Assembly officers | Total | People's Dialogue                 | Total |
| CLUES           | 58                   | 35     |                                      | 74    |                                   | 19    |

- A total of 93 Ashaiman Municipal Assembly Officers / leaders, and civil society organization officers (People's Dialogue) received training on CLUES to effectively streamline the approach in sanitation demand and triggering activities. The first part of the trainings was workshop-based to understand the definitions and concepts, pre-conditions and assumptions of the enabling environment, planning steps and the crosscutting tasks. The second part involved how to best engage the community during sanitation demand creation and triggering events.

- Additionally, seven of the Environmental Officers – an officer from each of the zonal offices together with three officers from People’s Dialogue under went further training as facilitators of CLUES and manuals provided to them.
- The trained officers form the core of Zonal Environmental Health teams who with support from People’s Dialogue lead the triggering activities and persuasive follow-ups for households to translate toilet demand into actual investments.

As part of the third step on detailed assessment of the current situation, a baseline survey was conducted to understand the sanitation situation in Ashaiman. The survey was a cross-sectional design and included 4,746 respondents – representing same number of houses and 25,140 households. The program covers seven zonal councils with 21 communities. Each of the communities were subdivided into clusters to ease the triggering process and follow ups. The baseline provided a benchmark to track the effects of CLUES on increasing household toilet investments in the communities. ASHMA is part of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) with a first growing population (Mazeau et al., 2013). The Assembly is largely dominated by slum settlements and situated on a highwater table.

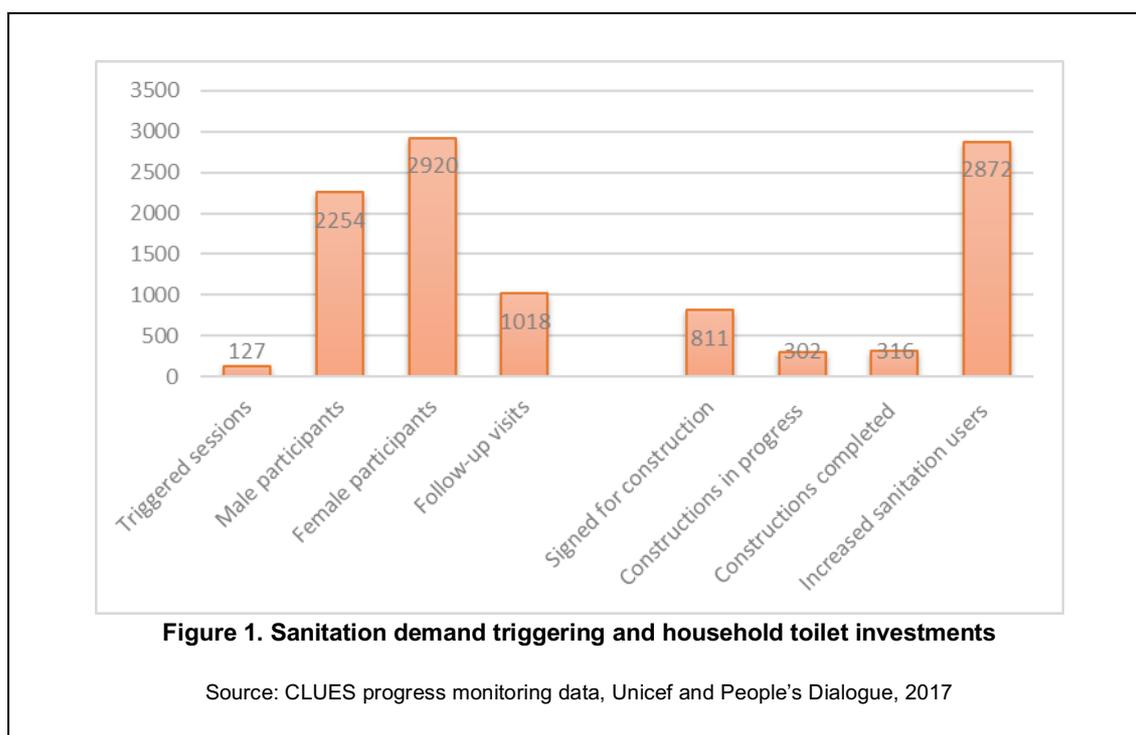
| <b>Sanitation demand creation and triggering</b>             | <b>Activities</b>  |
|--|--|
| Pre-triggering workshop activities (community sensitization) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transect walks by CSO, Assembly Environmental Officers and at times elected Honourable members and Zonal council leader(s) in communities to understand the general environmental sanitation situation, identification of social networks and opinion leaders or champions, as well as arranging for a triggering workshop. Arranging for workshops takes up to three days of information giving and announcements throughout the target community or clusters about the planned workshop, inclusive of the agenda, date and workshop venue.</li> </ul>   |
| Triggering and sanitation demand creation workshops          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General sensitization on best environmental sanitation (toilets, solid waste management, right use of gutters) and hygiene practices – with associated effect on health, productivity, mortality and morbidity, and social well-being,</li> <li>• Education on empirical facts from baselines and reports as relates to open defecation and poor sanitation practices at the community, assembly and national level,</li> <li>• Information on sanitation byelaws, associated penalties and enforcement plans,</li> <li>• Emphasis on importance to investment in household sanitation facilities,</li> <li>• Education on the different toilet technological options, associated costs, and funding modalities,</li> <li>• participants’ mapping exercises to indicate locations of community boundaries, toilet facilities and open defecation spots,</li> <li>• Cost calculation of expenses on public toilets – excluding their reliability at times or cleanliness to guarantee user safety, and</li> <li>• Interaction sessions with the community on their perceived environmental sanitation situation, challenges as well as remedial modalities.</li> <li>• Nomination of community volunteers to further community engagements.</li> </ul> |
| Post-triggering and demand creation                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Series of persuasive follow-ups on participants who express interest to invest in toilets.</li> <li>• Guided planning on toilet invest options, technology selection and investment modalities.</li> </ul>  |

## Results and discussion

Obtainable facts from the baseline conducted as part of CLUES’ third planning step indicated that of the 4,746 respondents that participated in the survey, more than half (57.9%) were males and mostly landlords or

household heads. Only 38.2% of the respondents had private household toilets. The majority of those without access to private facilities reported to use public toilets – on a pay-per-use basis, of which 51.8% expressed intention to invest in own toilets. The dependence on shared or public toilets has exponentially been increasing in Ghana’s urban areas since 1990 (WHO/UNICEF, 2015). This is also evidenced in findings from a study on use on shared sanitation coverage in Ashaiman (Ghana) and Kampala’s (Uganda) informal settlements (Mazeau et al., 2013). On average, facility users paid 50 Pesewas for each toilet visit. Depending on the size of households, some respondents spend more than 3,000 Ghana Cedis per year on public toilets which are often unhygienic. This was realized by participants during cost calculations on public toilet expenses which was part of the triggering workshop sessions. During triggering meetings, participants got to learn that the amount of money households spend on public toilets in a year is enough or even more to enable them to invest in own toilets. The analysis from the baseline conducted also indicated that while sanitation byelaws exist with penalties for households without sanitation facilities and approved fecal containment septic tanks, only 34 percent of the respondents were knowledgeable of the bye laws. This signifies the need to have such byelaws widely disseminated, localized to the population and fully implemented to ensure compliance. While most of the studied residents had no access to own public toilets, it was also observed that some residents with own private facilities flashed fecal waste to the gutters and some using bathe rooms to release waste to the gutters. It is common to find many gutters choked with fecal waste. This puts the residents at risk of contracting varied infections and disease outbreak stemming from the polluted environment.

The implementation of CLUES in Ghana’s Ashaiman Municipal Assembly started late 2016 with most actual activities starting in 2017. This paper focuses on the progress within January to December 2017. During this period, a total of 5,174 community members were reached through triggering meetings (Figure 1). Of the 811 household respondents that expressed interest to invest in toilets, 316 had their toilets completed while 302 had them under construction.



As indicated in Figure 1, the implementation of CLUES involved a series of community triggering and persuasive follow-ups to have residents appreciate the importance of investment in own household toilets. The triggering sessions aimed at attracting mainly household heads responsible for sanitation decisions. Female participants were the majority during the triggering meetings. During the triggering meetings and follow-up sessions, participants were taken through household CLUES planning process – supplemented with behavioral change stimulating techniques such as; presenting facts on circumstances and possibilities for contracting diseases, illustrating scenarios on open defecation and other unhygienic environmental practices and associated effects and assessment of costs and benefits through a cost-benefit-analysis on public sanitation

expenses (See Table 3). The resulting effect of this mixed approach in the increasing number of residents gaining access to using own sanitation facilities.

### Lessons and implications

- Localization of CLUES to a typical informal settlement setting like in Ashaiman has showed promising results with the increasing number of people investing in household sanitation following the use as a behavioural approach in community triggering and sanitation demand creation.
- Ignition and demand creation step proved most fundamental in this project where its focus was stimulating household investments in toilets. The content, messaging, and mode of delivery of the messages during community triggering meetings proved stimulated ques to behaviour change (decision-making to invest in toilets).
- Persuasive follow-ups were an added post-triggering element that proved important in influencing translation of toilet intentions into investment planning and ultimate construction of household toilets. This forms part of the development of action plans and their implementation.
- Modification of CLUES implementation steps. While CLUES is a seven-step systematic process of community engagement, four main steps were important in Ashaiman. There were ignition and demand creation, launch of the planning process, detailed assessment of current situation and development of toilet investment plans and construction. The other steps such as prioritization of the community problems and validation and identification of service options formed part of the ignition and demand creation step.
- The development and implementation of plans on toilet investment in this project was at an individual/household level as opposed to community level. Most important in this step are persuasive follow-ups to facilitate toilet investment planning, further technological option decision-making, discussion of associated costs, toilet construction and monitoring construction until it is completed and ready to be used.
- Exemplary leadership. The presence of some exemplary Assembly leaders in some communities contributed to increased household investments in toilets compared to communities where electoral leaders lacked sanitation facilities themselves.
- Implementation of sanitation byelaws are fundamental in complementing CLUES behavioural change communication approach for property owners to invest in sanitation facilities.
- Dedication and commitment of program implementation teams and overall supervision and activity coordination is important in ensuring successful achievement of the program objectives.
- Availability of minimum equipment such as computers in each of the Zonal Environmental Officers or at least in the Environmental Health Department Office is important to enhance documentation and timely production and processing of reports and other documents. None of the Zonal Offices or even Department has a functional computer in Ashaiman.
- Ashaiman Municipal Assembly lacked a clear demarcation of communities in the Electoral areas as well as their corresponding populations. This is important for any planning initiative, as well as tracking developments in the communities.

In conclusion, evidence from this pilot program shows that CLUES is a novel approach to stimulate household toilet investments especially if localized and tailored to the target populations. The approach has potential to be more effective if complemented with enforcement of sanitation byelaws. Important is also the commitment and dedication of the environmental service providers.

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### Notes

This paper is prepared from the work participated in as UNICEF-Ghana CLUES consultant. It is co-authored by colleagues from implementing agencies (Ashaiman Municipal Assembly and People's Dialogue). The views reflected in this paper represent authors perspective and not necessarily those of the involved funding and implementation agencies (Government of Ghana, Ashaiman Municipal Assembly, UNICEF-Ghana and People's Dialogue).

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