

A photograph of a family of four standing in front of a structure made of green corrugated metal sheets. On the left is an older woman wearing a purple patterned top and a red and white patterned sarong. In the center is a younger woman holding a young child in a floral dress. On the right is a young man wearing a red and white striped shirt and black pants. They are all smiling at the camera.

Building One Toilet at a Time

One village's journey to improved sanitation for all

Save the Children



Community-Led Total Sanitation

About CLTS:

Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) is an innovative behavior change methodology used in countries around the world to mobilize communities to eliminate open defecation in rural areas in developing countries. NOURISH's CLTS approach is comprised of four main phases:

- **Pre-triggering**
- **Triggering:** organizing a community-wide meeting where facilitators conduct participatory exercises to motivate change community sanitation
- **Post-triggering:** conducting door-to-door follow-up visits to keep communities on track with the ODF status goal
- **Post-ODF activities**

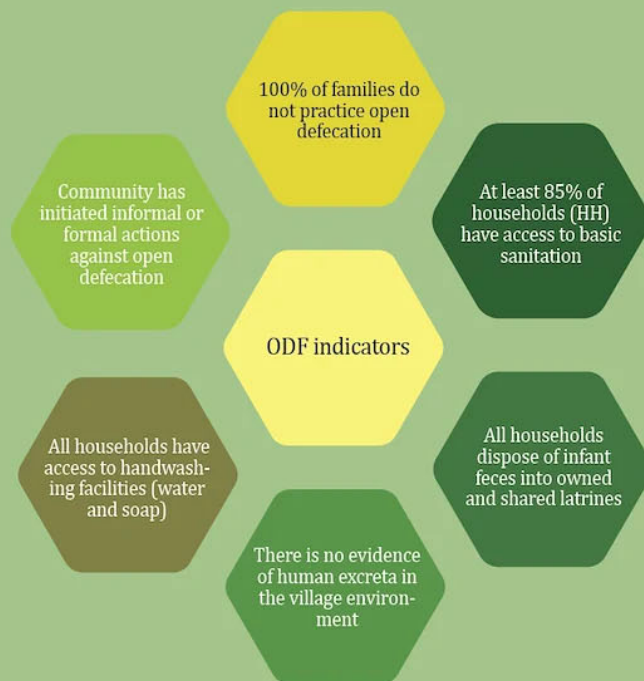
After achieving ODF status, the community and especially its leaders are encouraged to shift the focus to improving the quality of latrines and eliminate the practice of shared latrines.

ODF declaration process

To certify an Open Defecation Free village, an external committee is established to verify the ODF status of the village based on the indicators. The process of certification is described below:



ODF declaration indicators



Community-Led Total Sanitation Overview



There is much to celebrate in Sasasdom, a small, low-income village in Siem Reap province, Cambodia. Sasasdom is one of the 72 villages in Siem Reap that, with the support of the NOURISH project, has been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) by the Ministry of Rural Development. This achievement is thanks to fruitful collaboration between the NOURISH project and Siem Reap's Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD).

Sasasdom was selected as a target village for support under the NOURISH project in 2014 because of its low sanitation rates and noted poor hygiene practices amongst its population. An initial step in the CLTS triggering process is a community latrine mapping, led by community leaders with support from a PDRD official. Conducted in 2015, results showed that only 40% of families in Sasasdom had a toilet, and people were defecating in the bushes around the village. Additionally, observations from local leaders revealed that most villagers were not concerned about hygiene and sanitation, and they did not know about the negative impact that open defecation had on children's growth and development.

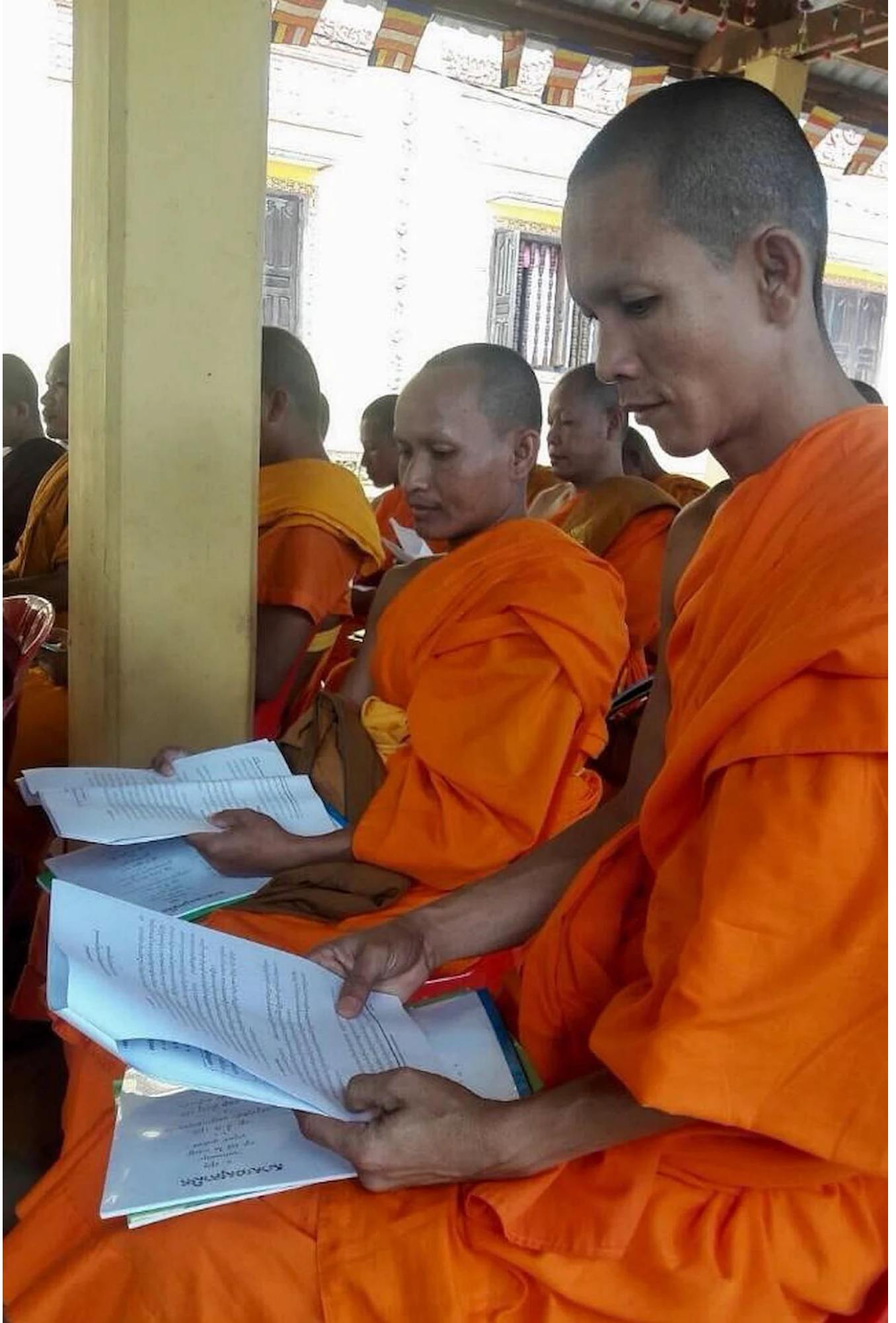
Due to the unsanitary conditions and exposure to bacteria that this practice created, diarrhea was reportedly common among Sasasdom's households, especially for small children, who were frequently falling ill. Families reported having to spend most of their income on healthcare and medicine. Even families with toilets were affected because flies would spread diseases from one house to another.

NOURISH's WASH Officer assisting government officials in facilitating internal verification of ODF status in Chroas Village, Siem Reap.



Change came to Sasasdom with the help of the CLTS initiatives led by the NOURISH project in 2015, in close collaboration with the PDRD. NOURISH trained local and government leaders extensively on how to facilitate an initial CLTS triggering event, conduct latrine mapping, and follow up door-to-door household visits to grow demand for safe sanitation practices.

That same year local authorities, with support from the PDRD, facilitated an initial CLTS triggering event in Sasasdom to encourage demand for household toilets. The purpose was to gather the community together to raise awareness about the health risks of open defecation that can create social stigma, discuss the importance of investing money toward a latrine purchase, and to introduce the action plan for the village to be declared ODF. After this initial triggering, communities then made a commitment to improve key behaviors such as disposing of infant feces properly, washing hands with soap, and using latrines - either sharing their neighbor's or building their own.



Religious leaders were also involved in the CLTS process; monks in Siem Reap participated in a training of trainers about generating demand of sanitation.

CLTS triggering proved effective thanks to the hard work of community leaders with support from PDRD and NOURISH staff. Soon, people in Sasasdom recognized the importance of good sanitation and hygiene practices and felt motivated to build their own toilets. Furthermore, community leaders were mobilized to conduct door-to-door visits to encourage families to continue the good hygiene practices they had committed to, and to provide support for obtaining a latrine by promoting and facilitating family discussions on why and how to invest for latrines. Sasasdom was on its way to ODF status!

Yet some families continued to struggle. In some cases, adults had to migrate to work in other countries leaving only the elderly, disabled, or widows at home to take care of the children. Since there was no one to help build toilets, some of these families continued to practice open defecation. The threshold to be declared ODF is high, requiring at least 85% of households using individual toilets, so despite the great progress and community commitment, the aspiration of making this village ODF was at one point a very distant reality.



A WASH SME explaining the benefits of owning water filters and latrines at a NOURISH village fair in Siem Reap.

In addition to adult migration, another barrier preventing families from building latrines was that some households simply could not afford the cost. In order to make affordable toilets a reality for all households, NOURISH linked local government and PDRD officials with local Small Medium Enterprise suppliers to find alternate cost-effective solutions to delivering and assembling latrines, such as setting up payment installments for the latrine, or linking beneficiaries to microfinance institutions for a sanitation loan with low or zero interest rates. Despite the initial difficulties of reaching ODF status, local village authorities, including the village chief Mrs. Khuon Hort, were determined and refused to give up until ODF was achieved.



The PDRD decided to help build six super structures for toilets of the remaining households by working side-by-side with village volunteers using bamboo, wood, plastic sheets, and thatch easily available in the village. Mr. Moa Lak, a District Officer from the PDRD, felt that *"this was the best solution, and I was glad to help the vulnerable families get access to toilet facilities."*

And this solution worked. By mid-2017, every home in Sasasdom had a toilet and was using it. The village of Sasasdom achieved their goal of being declared an ODF village and became a role model

for other nearby villages to aspire to.



Two generations of NOURISH beneficiaries look on as their latrine is being built in Siem Reap province.

The community felt a huge sense of accomplishment. One resident, who lived alone with her baby while her husband worked abroad, expressed gratitude towards NOURISH and PDRD for their support saying: *“If there was no PDRD support, I would still be practicing open defecation.”*



Latrine superstructures, from start to finish.

I am happy that now my village is declared Open Defecation Free and my people live in good sanitation and hygiene. We would not have made it without the support from PDRD”. - Mrs. Khuon Hort, Sasasdom’s village chief.



A celebration of a NOURISH target village being formally declared ODF.

NOURISH Sanitation Results

CLTS Triggering



12,866 participants
378 villages



6 communes declared ODF



187 villages declared ODF

Sanitation Mapping



Training of Village Sanitation Committees



1,890 members trained

Post-CLTS triggering



378 villages
17,949 participants

Monthly Door-to-door Household Visits



Latrine Vouchers
2,539 Redeemed



140 Quarterly meetings

Religious Leaders



187 Trained

School Community WASH training



90 school principals
82 teachers

Internal Verification



External Verification



Celebration



Local government and Community Agent CLTS Training



1,396 Participants

22,356

Latrines built bringing sanitation to 103,133 people

71%

Increase in households using improved latrines

54%

Increase in households safely disposing of child feces

Related Documents

1. [NOURISH WASH Voucher Study 2019](#)

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