



Mulanje Total Sanitation Project

Plan Malawi



Chiefs meeting reviewing and strategizing on implementation of ODF action plan - Mimoso ADC, Traditional Authority Mambwa

Project objectives & approaches:

The project goal is to promote health and wellbeing of communities in the whole of Mulanje by improving sanitation use and hygiene behaviour by 2017. Key strategies include;

- Government support and strengthening
- Engagement of traditional leaders and structures
- Non-subsidised sanitation and hygiene approaches
- Dialogue Circles to promote social inclusion

To date, 263 of the 546 villages (3 TAs) in the District have been verified ODF and an additional 350,000+ people now have access to improved sanitation. District latrine coverage has improved from 69% to 97% along with handwashing coverage improving 4% to 56%. Government staff are facilitating sessions to promote social inclusion resulting in engagement of people with disabilities in the pursuit of District ODF and community mobilisation to support latrine access for people with disability.

Lessons learnt

1. **Coordination and collaboration is critical for ODF achievement:** coordinated and collaborative efforts between traditional and government structures, capitalising on robust systems and strong leadership, enabled ODF achievement at scale. Some of the key factors identified by a range of stakeholders as contributing to ODF achievement include; clear goals and problem identification, benchmarking of achievements to leverage the pride of leaders, empowerment and engagement of everyone with the responsibility to contribute and particularly, accountability mechanisms and their enforcement.
2. **Engaging all achieves a better outcome:** action research was a critical step in developing an effective methodology for social inclusion activities. Subsequently, all health surveillance assistants were trained on gender and social inclusion and with renewed knowledge and confidence, have embraced the concept and conducted dialogue circles in all villages for the past two years. This has strengthened the engagement of people with disabilities (and other vulnerable groups), to ensure their voices are heard in the implementation of community WASH activities and resulted in community mobilisation to improve latrine access for individuals with specific needs.

Sustainability

Institutional strengthening through:

- **Implementing through existing structures** – utilising village and government structures for project implementation and monitoring has embedded knowledge and systems within existing local structures that have means and commitment to maintaining support to project achievements.
- **Establishing lines of accountability** – by establishing and encouraging enforcement of accountability structures between traditional structures (eg. village development committees) and government (eg. District Coordinating Team [DCT]) and within their independent structures, the priority for sanitation and hygiene will be maintained. The influence of National ODF Task Force in partnership with DCT will drive this.
- **Improved budgeting/planning** – support to DCT to budget and plan for post-project activities using actual costs and plans from project implementation.

We are proud of:

Attainment of ODF status in TA Mthiramanja was rapid and vibrant, becoming the first ODF TA in Mulanje District after being the worst performing TA, without an ODF village, in July 2016. The significant efforts and collaboration of change agents was critical in achieving ODF status in December 2016.

A challenge

Despite promoting a locally made and very low cost latrine, many households remain reluctant to pay for sanitation and prefer to construct themselves. This has limited latrine sales for masons and resulted in most masons diversifying into other sanitation and hygiene products such as drop-hole covers and handwashing facilities, selling over 5,000 to date.



TA Mthiramanja raises the ODF certificate received from Ministry Official during official celebrations.



L: Chimwemwe Kasich (M&E Officer)
R: Thoko Kallane (WASH Program Manager)

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