



Putting the Value in Evaluation: Sanitation Studies from Africa

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Lack of access to improved water supply and sanitation facilities is a significant issue, recognized globally in 2000 by inclusion in the millennium development goals (MDGs), and in 2010 when the United Nations recognized them as human rights. Sanitation access has lagged behind water, particularly in Africa and Asia. There are approximately 2.5 billion people without access to improved sanitation, while the MDG for water was met in 2012. There are large expenditures on sanitation by governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and multilateral organizations such as the World Bank in response to this issue. Many approaches to improving sanitation exist, but surprisingly little evidence for which approaches work best, and how cost-effectiveness varies across countries.

In the last 15 years, an approach called “Community Led Total Sanitation” (CLTS) which focuses on awareness and behavior change emerged in Bangladesh, and was quickly adopted in varying forms by governments and NGOs in 57 other countries across Asia and Africa. This approach has gone to scale rapidly, despite little to no rigorous evidence. UNC is partnered with the NGO Plan International, funded by the Gates Foundation, to characterize how CLTS is implemented in 13 countries, then to pilot and evaluate specific variations of the approach in Ghana, Kenya, and Ethiopia. In each country, a different study was designed in collaboration with a range of stakeholders from that country. Each study was designed to be relevant to a variety of stakeholders, while maintaining a rigorous research design. These studies have yielded results of immediate interest to governments and NGOs. This presentation will focus on how we arrived at each research question and study design, challenges in implementing three unique projects, some preliminary findings, and of course a few travel stories.