

Case Study: **Afghanistan**

#01 | January 2023

WARAS DISTRICT OF BAMYAN PROVINCE ACHIEVED OPEN DEFECATION FREE (ODF) STATUS



Construction of latrine after attending the sessions by the CLTS team in Joqul village in Waras district

■ Background

Waras is a mountainous district in the southern part of Bamyan province of Afghanistan. Its population is around 127,000 people (Waras District, 2022)¹. Based on population, Waras is the third largest district in Bamyan after Center and Yakawlang. There are 757 villages, 11 bazaars, 101 schools, and 31 health centers in the district.

¹ There were huge discrepancies in the number of populations stated by different entities. A CSO report of 2019 stated Waras population as 121,168 people, while Bamyan province Directorate of Economics stated its population 147,395 in the Bamyan Province Profile. In UNOCHA figures, Waras population was mentioned as 140,333 people. The figures mentioned in this case study were taken from Waras district authorities.

Access to improved sanitation services such as toilets and hand-washing facilities is essential to prevent the transmission of disease, malnutrition, stunted growth of children and sanitation-related morbidity and mortality, however, the sanitation coverage in this district was significantly low in the previous years. According to the Socio-Demographic and Economic Survey by the Central Statistics Organization (CSO) (2012), 38.9 percent of Waras population didn't have toilets. Therefore, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and Public Health (MoPH) to implement the Afghan-Context Community-Led Total Sanitation (AC CLTS) approach in Waras to enhance the sanitary situation and eliminate OD in this mountainous and poverty-stricken area of the Bamyan province. Over the past two years, the CLTS teams of MRRD, MoPH as well as Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) implemented the AC CLTS approach in different communities of the district, and ultimately, the entire district was recently transformed into an Open Defecation Free (ODF) district.

This case study focuses on the successful implementation of CLTS in Waras, the challenges the CLTS teams faced, and the lessons learned during the process.

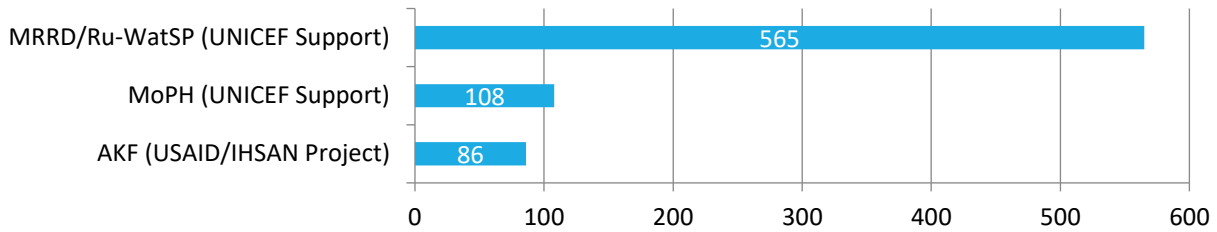


Strategy and implementation

With UNICEF's support, MRRD and MoPH, as well as the AKF, began the AC CLTS approach in different villages of Waras district in March 2018. The AC CLTS approach has been used by the Afghan WASH sector since 2010, and the National Rural WASH Policy (2016-2020) has endorsed it as the best option for eliminating OD and improving people's access to improved sanitation.

As illustrated in the table below, MRRD, MoPH and AKF, respectively, targeted 565, 108 and 86 communities for the CLTS implementation and OD elimination.

Targeted Communities by Organizations

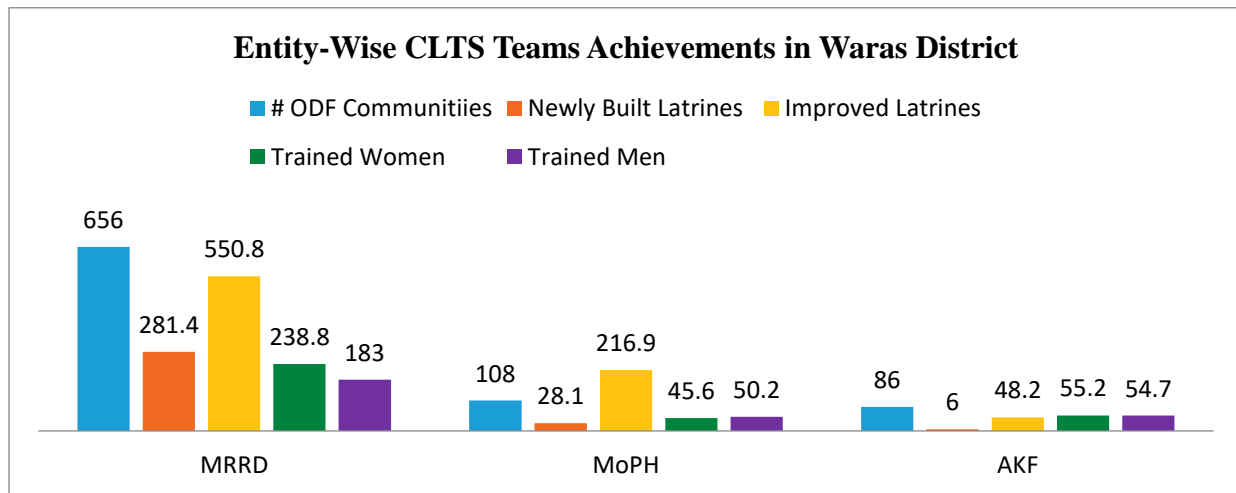


After targeting the communities, the CLTS teams continued their sessions, which consisted of instilling a feeling of shame, shock, and disgust in the communities; establishing CLTS male and female committees; conducting hygiene and sanitation trainings and follow-up meetings; and convincing all the residents of 759 communities to eliminate OD, own and use latrines, and wash their hands with water and soap within two years.

On November 7, 2022, the Waras district was officially declared the 8th ODF district in Bamyan after Kahmard, Panjab, Saighan, Shiber, Yakwlang, and Yakwlang no. 2 districts.

Progress and results

As a result of the CLTS implementation by MRRD, MoPH, and the AKF, the unhealthy practice of OD was eliminated from 759 communities in the Waras district. Besides, the CLTS teams conducted hygiene and sanitation trainings for over 3,390 women (FHAGs) and over 2870 men (Community Elders). The triggering sessions, training workshops, and follow-up visits of the CLTS teams culminated in the construction of 3,160 latrines and the improvement of 8,159 traditional latrines in the district. The contribution of each entity is illustrated in the following chart.



Note: Newly Built Latrines, Improved Latrines, Trained Women and Men to multiplied by 10.

To ensure that the unsavoury practice of OD is completely eradicated from the Waras district, MRRD and MoPH CLTS teams, in collaboration with local government authorities, launched community cleanup campaigns (Hashar) in various Waras bazaars.

■ Challenges

While implementing the CLTS, the team faced the following challenges:

- A hard-to reach context, with far-flung and scattered villages and long cold season
- A poverty-stricken and uneducated population, with very less information about hygiene and sanitation.
- Lack of roads in some areas and telecommunication which made coordination efforts difficult.
- Community expectation for subsidies
- Drought

■ Lessons learned and way forward

The following are some of the lessons learned:

- **Gaining Local Authority and People Support:** CLTS will be implemented very successfully if the local authority and influencers' support are gained right at the beginning of the program.
- **Organizing a CLTS Workshop for Relevant District Authorities:** District authorities cooperate well after they fully understand the goals and objectives of the CLTS approach and the manner in which it is implemented.
- **Conducting Hygiene and Sanitation Campaigns:** Organizing hygiene and sanitation campaigns in collaboration with local authorities results in collective action to improve sanitation in bazaars.
- **Better Communication Skills and Effective Implementation of All Phases of CLTS:** Facilitators must have excellent communication skills in order to easily persuade communities to take action. Besides, all the phases outlined by the CLTS protocol, and the implementation manual shall be implemented accordingly so that relapses are avoided.

BOX 1 Human interest story

“After understanding the importance of hygiene and sanitation in a CLTS training, a family in Joqul village in Waras district of Bamyan province sells one of their luxury items to build a latrine and end the unpleasant practice of open defecation (OD).”

Joqul is a village in the Waras district of Bamyan province. It is located in the west of the district and is home to 31 households and around 168 people. Surrounded by rocky mountains, most of the village’s residents are peasants and laborers. As in the other villages of Waras district, residents of this village also didn’t have latrines and used to defecate in the nearby open areas of their residential area.

With UNICEF’s support, the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Program (Ru-WatSP) of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) began the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach in Joqul village in August 2021.

Among the villagers who attended the CLTS triggering phase and the succeeding sanitation and hygiene training by the CLTS teams was Mohammad Sarwar, aged 38. Following his participation in the triggering session of the CLTS approach, Mr. Sarwar understood that OD was a frightful practice and caused lots of illnesses, including diarrhea and others, and decided to build a latrine near his house.

"As I returned home, I discussed the negative impacts and harms of OD with my family and decided to build a latrine," he stated. However, he couldn’t afford to hire a mason to help him in the construction of the toilet, as he was badly off. He narrates, "As I talked to my mother, she told me that there was a ‘Barak Coat’—a handcrafted coat made of sheep and lamb wool—at home, and I can sell it to make enough money to build a latrine."

Finally, Mr. Sarwar has sold the Barak Coat for 4,200 AFN (around 50 USD) and constructed a latrine for his household. "If I knew that OD was causing this much sickness in children, I would have constructed the latrines earlier," Mr. Sarwar concluded. Similar to Mr. Sarwar, almost all the villagers have improved toilets in Joqul village in Wara district of Bamyan province and no longer excrete in the open.

Related links:

[Piloting the implementation of Water Safety Plans through CLTS teams in Afghanistan](#)
[Integrating Sanitation and Hygiene to Support Polio Eradication in Afghanistan’s Slums](#)
[How toilets are saving lives and money in Afghanistan](#)

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