



Animal-Inclusive Community Led Total Sanitation (A-CLTS) project in Mali

Duration: 2020–2022

The challenge

Relatively few water, sanitation, and/or hygiene (WASH) programmes place a strong emphasis on livestock management and animal waste, in part because scientists have hypothesized that human feces are more important reservoirs for pathogenic bacteria that most commonly cause diarrhea. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), 'domestic animals such as poultry, cattle, sheep and pigs generate 85% of the world's animal fecal waste, proportionally a far greater amount than the contribution by the human population.' Insufficient separation of animal feces from human domestic environments, common in low-income countries, can lead to fecal-oral transmission of zoonotic pathogens through direct contact with humans and/or fecal contamination of fingers, food and water sources. Humans can be exposed to pathogens from poorly managed animal feces, particularly in communities where animals live close to humans. Exposure to livestock is also an important risk factor for child diarrhea.

There is growing evidence that reducing morbidity—and in particular, sub-clinical environmental enteropathy—may be at least as effective in improving children's nutritional status as changes in children's diets. A recent USAID-supported study highlighted the need for further research to identify the most effective WASH interventions in reducing children's exposure to fecal pathogens beyond the standard approaches of latrines, handwashing with soap and treatment of water for household use.

How are we addressing the problem?

The overarching goal of this project is to improve the health status of community members in rural, underserved areas of Mali through improved sanitation and hygiene practices. The proposed project will work in 20 selected villages of the Ségou region in Mali to pilot an innovative WASH model that builds upon the approach through the addition of animal waste management strategies. This project will be implemented in two phases. In Phase 1, the study team will conduct formative research to inform the development of an Animal Inclusive-Community Total Led Sanitation (A-CLTS) program tailored for delivery in the Ségou region of Mali. The formative research will include a scoping review, exploratory qualitative research, identification of candidate intervention components, ex-ante rapid evaluation of candidate solutions using stakeholder feedback and adjustment of behavior change indicators prior to intervention delivery. In Phase 2, a pre/post study design will be used to measure selected behavioural change outcomes before and after introducing the intervention.

What are the expected outcomes?

Through this pilot, the project will document the A-CLTS behavior change strategies that have the greatest potential to improve household and child health outcomes. Evaluation and documentation of project outputs will contribute to the body of knowledge about improved WASH and CLTS approaches in Mali, which we anticipate will have broader applicability to Africa.



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Photos

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Patron: Professor Peter C Doherty AC, FAA, FRS

Animal scientist, Nobel Prize Laureate for Physiology or Medicine—1996

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