

# **4<sup>th</sup> International Dry Toilet Conference 22 – 25 August, 2012 Tampere, Finland**

## **Dry Toilets – Drivers for Community Participation: Experiences from Zambia and Swaziland**

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# **Introduction**

- **The need for decent and sustainable sanitation facilities cuts across many economically weak rural communities and densely populated settlements in urban and peri-urban Africa.**
- **Proper sanitation is even more desirable today than ever before due to overcrowding as a result of growing populations and the failure by many poor African states to provide critical social services to their citizens.**

# **Introduction cont.**

- **This presentation interrogates cultural, social, environmental and economic factors which influence communities and individuals to participate or not to participate in dry toilets projects.**
- **It also makes comparative analysis of the challenges related thereto between rural and urban situations based on learning and experiences gained from field visits, assessments, evaluations and interviews conducted in the project areas.**
- **It attempts to enrich our knowledge and provoke our thinking on what drives communities to participate in the dry sanitation projects.**
- **This is based on personal experiences.**

# **Dry Sanitation projects in Zambia and Swaziland**

- **The Global Dry Toilets Association of Finland (GDTF) has supported sanitation projects in Zambia and Swaziland since 2006.**
- **The Msunduza Dry Sanitation Project (MDSP) in Swaziland and Sustainable Sanitation Improvement Project (SSIP) in Zambia are being implemented in high density urban settlements, namely; Msunduza in Swaziland and Madimba in Zambia with the population of 16,000 and 6,000 respectively. The other project in Zambia; Zambia Sanitation Project (ZASP) is being implemented in the Kaloko Trust catchment area, a rural setting in the north of Zambia with a population of 10,000.**

# Location of Zambia and Swaziland



# The situation of sanitation in Zambia

- Zambia is one of Africa's least developed countries located in the Southern Africa Sub-continent.
- It has a population of 13 million (*2010 Census*). The population of Zambia is becoming increasingly urbanised with over 60% of the population now living in urban and peri-urban settlements.
- The majority of urban dwellers live in crowded high density and poorly planned areas. These areas are often associated with poor and inadequate sanitation.
- Outbreaks of diarrhoea diseases such as cholera, typhoid and dysentery are an annual occurrence.

## **The situation of sanitation in Zambia cont.**

- **According to the recent study carried out by the Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP), poor sanitation costs Zambia 946 Billion Zambian Kwacha (ZMK) each year (*US\$194 million*), equivalent to 1.3% of the national GDP. Of the 13 million Zambians, 4 million use unsanitary or shared latrines while 2.1 million Zambians have no latrine at all and defecate in the open.**

## **The situation of sanitation in Zambia cont.**

- **It is estimated that each person practicing open defecation spends almost 2.5 days a year finding a private location to defecate. This leads to loss in productive time (costing US\$7 million). This cost may be even under-estimated as those without toilets; particularly women will be obliged to find a private location**
- **To eliminate the practice, it would require construction of 420,000 toilets.**



## **The situation of sanitation in Zambia cont.**

- **Finding a private location for defecation or urination is even more time demanding in the crowded urban and peri-urban areas.**
- **Open defecation also has considerable social costs; Loss of dignity and privacy or risk of physical attack and sexual violence, especially against women and girls may not be easily valued in monetary units.**

## **The situation of sanitation in Zambia cont.**

- It is further estimated that US\$1 million dollars is lost each year due to productivity loss resulting from poor health associated with poor sanitation.**
- It includes time spent by the sick while accessing healthcare from clinics and hospitals.**
- Another cost accrues on time spent caring for young children suffering from sanitation-attributable diseases.**

## **The situation of sanitation in Zambia cont.**

- **The state of sanitation in Zambia presented above is a true reflection of the situation in most countries in Africa with varying figures. As it has been demonstrated, the most affected are also the poorest.**
- ***Poverty therefore becomes exacerbated by the vulnerability of the poor to sanitation-related illnesses as the cost of quality medication is often beyond their reach.***

# Community participation

- The concepts of participatory development revolve around a paradigm shift from *top – down* to *bottom – up* approach to development. It locks out imposition of interventions on local communities by decision makers (*Government, donors, NGOs*). It dwells on the belief that the involvement of the local people (*primary stakeholders*) for whose purpose development interventions were meant to benefit develops a sense of ownership among project members and enhances project chances of success and sustainability.
- This entails ensuring that target groups (community) are involved at all stages of the project processes from planning through implementation to evaluation. This approach is called “*genuine participation.*”

# Community participation cont.

- Research has shown that development interventions where genuine community participation has been attained have helped communities develop collective responsibilities towards management of their projects.
- Effective community participation also brings about some measure of success in decision-making processes, responsibility and accountability of community resources. It must be noted also that attaining genuine community participation requires effective Leadership.

# The clash of cultures

- *“The dry toilets project is ill-conceived and out of step with our cultural and traditional values. It has no place in our society. The aspect of collecting human excreta is an alien practice which is at variance with our culture.”*
- These sentiments were uttered by a community leader at a sensitisation meeting in a Dry Toilet project area of Kaloko Trust in Zambia.
- Such sentiments were also common in Madimba and Msunduza projects which are located in crowded poor urban settlements in the Zambian and Swaziland capital cities of Lusaka and Mbabane respectively.

# Myths and rumours

- Myths and rumours are a common phenomena in the Zambian and Swazi societies like many other places in African.
- They have a significant bearing on project performance. In one evaluation interaction in Madimba, a community member commented;
- *“My family has been using the dry toilet since we arrived here three months ago. My Landlord introduced us to the toilet. At first we were skeptical because of what other people were telling us. For instance some one told us that dry toilets were introduced by Satanists. She said when the toilet was full the Satanists (NECOS) would come and collect the feaces for ritual use. But our Landlord explained to us that no one would collect the fecal matter. She said it would become compost and we could use it in our backyard gardens. Now my family likes the toilet because it does not smell, it is permanent, there are no flies and it is not a health hazard like the ordinary pit latrines in the community.”*

# **Drivers for community participation**

- Dry Sanitation projects in all the three project areas have seen increased interest and participation from local communities in recent times. The drivers for this which are discussed below are built around convincing arguments through compelling facts bordering on Health, environment, social and economic factors.



# **Evidence based awareness creation**

- **The Faecal contamination of the environment in Zambia causes an annual average of 3,200 cases of cholera affecting mainly communities in densely populated urban and peri-urban areas. The economic implications of a cholera outbreak go beyond the immediate health system response – There are also costs related to productivity loss and premature deaths, diverting expenditures from other essential services and losses in trade and tourism revenue.**

# **Evidence based awareness creation**

- In Msunduzu, it was observed that the physical environment (*undulating and rocky terrain*) posed a great cost to construction of pit-latrines. Most people still do not have even space on which to construct pit latrines one after the other. Some families thus resort to use of '*flying toilets*'\* at a high health and environmental cost. (*\*Family members defecate in a plastic bag and throw it out of the house*).
- In Madimba ( *which sits on a wetland*) pit latrines easily contaminate underground water. Most of the people in Madimba depend on open wells for their drinking water.

# Awareness and education

*Swaziland*



*Zambia*



# Source of cheap organic manure



# **Economic benefit**

- **The many years of practicing conventional agriculture, driven by the use of synthetic fertilizers have not adequately dealt with the challenge of food insecurity in many parts of Africa.**
- **One argument here is that Africa can feed itself and bring about economic prosperity for its millions of poverty stricken people if it can lower production costs in agriculture through use of low-input cost technologies.**
- **Dry toilets are a source of cheap organic fertiliser from composted faecal matter.**

# Access to accurate knowledge and information



# ‘Knowledge is power!’

- **Penjani Nyirenda**, a mother of one and a new tenant at a house with a dry toilet in Madimba is empowered. She comments;
- *“Many people in Madimba, some of them are even my friends do not want to use the toilet when they visit our home. I think they need to be educated. It is a difficult task but I think the project must find more effective and continuous awareness strategies because there are always new people coming into Madimba all the time and sometimes they get wrong information about the toilets. I think using the media like radio and T.V can be effective because the project will be reaching out to many people not only in Madimba but elsewhere. School children can also be taught about dry toilets and they are a good tool for educating society. The drama shows should not be a one-off event. Maybe the project can support formation of a local drama club to carry out awareness campaigns say every Saturday at public places like markets, community centres and schools so that even new people will also have a chance to learn about the toilets.”*

# ‘Passing on the stick’

Transferring project Leadership, ownership and management responsibilities to local communities enhances their involvement





# Practical interventions

Many have been inspired!



# Partnerships

- Creating partnerships has been one of the projects' stronger points. Swaziland the project has partnered with the Mbabane City Council and the Salvation Army. In Zambia the projects have worked with several state and non state actors including city and district councils, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), International Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and diplomats. The partnerships have helped increase the visibility of the projects, establishing useful linkages and accessibility to new ideas.

# Desire for modernity and dignity



# Conclusion

*Evelyn Mwila* is one of the community members in Kwesha village in the Kaloko Trust in Zambia, who has participated in sanitation education and construction of dry toilets after having initially dismissed the dry toilets concept as an assault on her cherished culture. She gives, perhaps a more befitting conclusion in her *wise* counsel. She says;

***“Dry toilets are a completely new concept to us, in fact a strange one. But those of us who have come to appreciate the health, environmental and economic benefits from it should provide leadership. We must share the knowledge, experiences and successes, we must spread the message to all inhabitants of the earth, in this way we shall save lives and make the earth a better place. Nothing good comes easy, we can triumph – any way I like dry toilets, after all they don’t even smell ... he! he! he!”***

**Till death do us part! Urine for LIFE!!**



**KIITOS!**