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ECOSAN EXPERIENCE IN KANYIPA PRIMARY SCHOOL PADER DISTRICT ADILANG SUB-COUNTY ORINA PARISH, KANYIPA VILLAGE. CASE DOCUMENTATION

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Abstract

Kanyipa primary school is a grade four school that suffered from lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities for quite some time during the insurgency in Northern Uganda. The schoolchildren and teachers had no choice but to practice open defecation, which caused a very bad smell in and around school. This also resulted in low enrolment of pupils, especially of girls reaching puberty. The school then mobilised resources from parents and sunk a temporary pit latrine in an attempt to solve the problem of open defecation. In its struggle for more sanitation and hygiene facilities, the school was donated a four stance plastic Mobilet by AMREF, which was used by the school for two years. Later AMREF piloted ECOSAN in this school, which was rapidly adopted by the school management, school health club and pupils. This helped to reduce problems and led the school to set a demonstration plot for

proper utilisation of the ECOSAN by-products.

Background

Kanyipa primary school is located east of Pader district along Agago-Abim road, 12 km from Patongo town council. It has an enrolment of 370 pupils of which 188 are boys and 182 girls, 6 teachers, 2 female and 4 males. The school has 12 stances of latrine, of which 4 are ECOSAN toilets and 8 are traditional pit latrines. During the insurgency in Northern and Eastern Uganda, learning centres were schools located within the IDP camps. These had good security and displaced schools were allocated some rooms within these premises for lessons and/or other accommodation. In 2005, when Kanyipa school returned from the learning centre after the end of the insurgency, it had neither a stance of latrine nor a classroom structure. Lessons were conducted under trees and both teachers and pupils practiced open defecation due to the destruction of the old latrines. This practice became the order of the day, and the whole school became smelly. This prompted the head teacher to mobilise parents to sink a temporary pit latrine and to lobby for assistance from NGOs for the construction of pit latrines. AMREF visited the school and after witnessing the extent of the problem, it donated a four stance plastic Mobilet which was used by the school for four years.



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ECOSAN Initiative

ECOSAN was considered as a solution to the overwhelming challenges faced by the school, ranging from inadequate land for pit latrines to open defecation. AMREF hence first briefed the head teacher on how the ECOSAN technology works, its potential benefits to the school, and it gave the head teacher assurance of 100% funding for the project. The school was only requested to give a site for construction. The head teacher welcomed the initiative.

AMREF piloted a Urine Diversion Dry Toilet ECOSAN in this school in 2005. The construction began immediately and the work was completed within 6 months. However, the opening of the facility for use was delayed since school staff and pupils didn't know how to operate and maintain the facility. The ECOSAN toilet therefore stayed unused for two years and three months after finalisation of its construction

In 2008, AMREF organised training for teachers, the school health club and the school management committee on the use of ECOSAN, highlighting the essential requirements for proper use and maintenance of the facility. After this the facility was commissioned for use and the teachers were asked to teach pupils how to use the facility. The whole school was trained on how to use the ECOSAN facility

The facility was adopted and put in use by the school management, school health club and pupils who were allocated stances. Within this period, the facility helped to reduce a number of problems within the school such as the bad smell, a number of fly breeding sites, and pollution of surface and ground water, among others. Boys were allocated one stance, girls 2 stances and teachers 1 stance. All the pupils were asked to bring ash as per the designed schedule and to begin using the toilet. However, after 2 days of use there was misuse of the facility. The school decided to stop the use of the ECOSAN toilet by all and to reallocate it to only the higher class (P.6) and teachers: one stance was reallocated to P.6 boys, 2 stances to P.6 girls and 1 stance to teachers. The rest of the pupils were asked to use the traditional pit latrines. This decision was motivated by the thought that pupils from P.6 class would be able to properly manage the facility by ensuring a presence of ash, as well as proper use in terms of directing excreta in the right hole. This decision indeed allowed better management of the facility and created a learning point for the younger pupils. The ECOSAN toilets have so far been used for only 2 years, but some benefits have been realised, such as the limitation of pollution of the environment, protection of both surface and ground water, and a reduction



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in smell emanating from the facility. Another important part of the initiative is the strategy devised by the school for utilising the by-products from the ECOSAN toilets. As one of the strategies, the school thought of citrus growing and wrote to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), a NGO that provides support to farmers in the areas requesting orange seedlings; these would be fertilised by the ECOSAN by-products. The LWF then responded by providing 104 orange seedlings. These were planted in a school demonstration plot and up to now, 84 of the seedlings have survived and are doing well. The school intends to apply the ECOSAN by-products to these orange seedlings immediately after the compost is ready. The school hopes to be in a position in the near future to supply oranges of high quality, hence increasing its sources of income, and to be an example in the sub county, as well as the district at large, of what can be attained through the use of ECOSAN by-products.

Major Drivers

The following were the major drivers of the process:

- The school health club (SHC) played a critical role in promoting proper use and maintenance of the facility, by educating other pupils on use and ensuring that ash is collected on time as per the designed roster.

- Regular inspections by the Patron SHC and sanitation teachers on the use of the ECOSAN, checking for cleanliness, presence of ash, possible urine pipe blockages, etc., and providing the necessary corrective measures.
- Training by AMREF after ECOSAN construction on its use and its by-products, and the support from the Lutheran World Federation, which provided orange seedlings for planting on the demonstration plot.
- Guaranteed interest from pupils to collect ash. This was because pupils were taught that human excreta .i.e. faeces and urine, are not just faeces and urine but rather resources that could support growth and productivities of crops. Hence they were motivated to become involved and realise the significance of human excreta.

Resources Involved

AMREF provided 100% funding for the project that is valued at about 15 million Uganda shillings. The school gave a piece of land for construction valued at about 200,000/= Uganda shillings.

Successes

The following are the successes brought by the use of the ECOSAN toilets:



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- Orientation of teachers and health club in sanitation has greatly improved the level of hygiene in the school.
- Reduced open defecation in and around the school has greatly improved the school environment and the attendance of pupils, especially girls. For example in 2008, prior to the commission of the ECOSAN toilet and construction of other traditional latrines, the number of girls enrolled was 94 in the whole school; this increased to 182 in 2011 (record from Head teacher- 2008-2011).
- It has promoted the safe disposal of human excreta in the school.
- Training of both pupils and teachers has created awareness on the operation and maintenance of the facility. This is shown by the absence of defecation or urination in the wrong holes. As urine is not mixed with faeces, the ECOSAN toilets do not smell so much.

Challenges

The school also faces a number of challenges when using the ECOSAN. They include:

- Misuse of the ECOSAN when the pupils fail to bring ashes.
- The local community misuse the facilities after the school is closed,

such as late in the evening, on weekends and holidays.

- Poor choice of the site, with water logging around the ECOSAN toilets making it difficult to access the toilets when it rains.
- Poor workmanship has resulted in a crack in the chamber.
- When young pupils use the facility incorrectly (poor positioning hence defecating in the drainage point for urine) the drainage pipe gets clogged.
- Newly transferred children also do not know how the facility works and need to be taught.

Lessons Learnt

Children developed much interest in using the UDDT ECOSAN compared to other toilet types such as ordinary pit latrines. They said about the ECOSAN toilets that:

- They are not smelly if properly managed.
- They are friendly in a way that their squat holes are a little smaller hence reducing chances of falling in the pit.
- They do not attract flies.

The following are some of the lessons learnt:

- Children are reluctant to use the ash as a result of cultural beliefs. They believe that when ash is applied on someone's faeces, the person will die.



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Development Cooperation

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- There is a need to avail the school with promotional charts on the use of ECOSAN.
- No child is supposed to use ECOSAN without ashes. There is a need for frequent orientation of newcomers.
- There is a need to train another class level (P.5) to use the ECOSAN especially in term III of every year.
- In a bid to protect underground water there is a need for communities to embrace the idea of ECOSAN.
- ECOSAN is suitable for residential houses in an urban setting where there is not enough space for pit latrine construction.

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