

5th INTERNATIONAL DRY TOILET CONFERENCE 2015

Breaking new grounds in Dry sanitation: *Finding solutions to stigmatisation using past experiences*

By Emmanuel Mutamba, Green Living Movement (GLM), Lusaka, Zambia

ABSTRACT

A new dry sanitation project called Community Dry Sanitation Initiative (CSI) was launched in January 2014 in Monze district in Zambia by the Green Living Movement (GLM) a local partner with the Global Dry Toilets Association of Finland (GDTAF), the fourth such project in Zambia. Others had earlier been implemented in Masaiti and Lusaka districts from 2006 and 2011 respectively while the third one had been launched in Livingstone at the same time as the CSI.

Monze district lies in the southern part of Zambia, 198 km south of Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. It is a rapidly growing town mainly due to increased agricultural activities in its surrounding communities and increasing population of immigrants. The CSI Project site (*Freedom Compound*) is a growing unplanned settlement on the edge of Monze central business district. It has an estimate population of 7000 inhabitants. The state of the environment in Freedom Compound is in dire need of attention. The sanitation situation particularly poses serious threat to lives of the people. Shallow pit latrines are the common type of toilets found in *Freedom Compound* while water is accessed mainly from shallow wells. Like many similar unplanned settlements in sub-Sahara Africa and Zambia in particular, the adverse effects affect human health and social life for men, women the young and old. The local Government authority in Monze like other similar district authorities in Zambia is overwhelmed by a milliard of social demands including sanitation, water supply and waste management.

The CSI project focus is to improve the environment and sanitation situation through education, establishment of composting dry toilets and safe drinking water points. It is expected that the interventions would provide lasting solutions to the current and potential social and environmental health challenges the project area faces.

During the project lifespan dry toilets will be built in public places such as markets, Schools, health posts and churches. There will also be dry toilets built for individual families under a cost sharing plan.

This presentation attempts to collect experiences and lessons from past dry sanitation experiences which have informed solution-finding processes in the CSI project especially to deal with the aspect of stigmatisation.

It must be noted though that there are other factors such as illiteracy, religious beliefs and cultures that influence people's decisions to appreciate dry sanitation concept.

Key words: Sanitation, Stigmatisation, Lessons, Community, Participation

1.0 Introduction

Ecological sanitation is a relatively new concept in most parts of sub-sahara Africa. The first dry sanitation projects in Zambia and Swaziland were initiated in 2006 (Kaloko), 2008 (Madimba) and 2007 (Msunduza) respectively. In both countries the implementation of the projects were preceded by social surveys and sanitation situational assessments.

In the case of Kaloko, a rural area in the north of Zambia the survey established inadequacies in community access to proper sanitation. At least a third of the population used traditional pit-latrines for their toilets while shallow wells and streams were the main sources of drinking water.

The cases of Madimba in Zambia and Msunduza in Swaziland had some similar survey results, largely due to common social dynamics. They are both crowded settlements with limited municipal services; lacking in sewer systems, absence of proper sanitation and poor waste disposal systems. The consequences of poor sanitation manifested through high prevalence of diarrhoea diseases such as cholera, typhoid and dysentery.

The survey results established the need for alternative sanitation practices which provides solutions to identified sanitation and environmental challenges. Hence the initiation of Dry Sanitation Projects (DSP). Implementation of the projects faced several challenges. Although stigmatisation towards the dry toilets was a common challenge across all projects, there were other challenges specific to individual projects. This presentation discusses some of the challenges and interventions undertaken by the projects to encounter them. Further the presentation highlights how experiences and lessons learnt from the projects made reference to above were used to inform the planning and implementation of the Community Dry Sanitation Initiative (CSI) pilot project in Monze district in Zambia.

2.0 Lessons from Zambia Dry Sanitation Project (Kaloko Trust)

The Kaloko Trust catchment area is a rural community of 10,000 inhabitants. It located in Masaiti district, 250km north of Lusaka, the Zambian capital. The population is largely made up of peasant farmers. Due to reduction in their productive capacities in recent years, mainly due to high cost of agriculture inputs, especially conventional fertilisers, some community members have engaged in commercial charcoal production. The dry sanitation project expected to contribute to community sanitation and productivity solutions, mainly through the use of dry toilets, increased sources for safe drinking water and provision of cheaper fertilisers through composting dry toilet waste.

Key implementation challenges experienced were;

- **Stigmatisation;** nearly all community members initially rejected dry toilets. They felt that it was inconceivable that human excreta could be used for growing food crops meant for human consumption.
- **Health fears;** most communities members looked at the use of human waste for food production as a recipe for disease.
- **Inadequate knowledge and information on sanitation;** the dry sanitation concept, especially the dry toilet was new and hence brought about social discomfort among the highly conservative community.
- **Cultural and traditional beliefs;** people felt the idea of using human waste as a resource was un-African and an assault on their traditions and cultural values, some even called the practice 'satanic'. One community member commented:

“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.”

- **High monetary expectations from the project;** some communities saw the project as a source of employment rather than a source of knowledge and skill
- **Inadequate project management and leadership skills;** community mobilisation and leadership skills were inadequate among most community members.
- **High cost of toilet construction;** construction cost of dry toilets was unaffordable to most local people (*US\$1200 for a standard dry toilet model*)

Interventions undertaken to counter the experienced challenges were;

- ✓ **Sustained sensitisation and education;** through community awareness meetings, drama performances, brochures, posters and documentaries
- ✓ **Products of research;** on dry sanitation to allay health fears community members associated the use of dry toilet urine and composted manure with disease.
- ✓ **Conducting workshops;** on leadership, conflict management and project management skills
- ✓ **Conducting exposure tours;** helped community members appreciate how similar concepts have worked elsewhere. Project members also hosted visitors to the project.
- ✓ **Establishment of income generating activities;** livestock production, orchard establishment, commercial organic gardening etc. Enhanced income and raised sense of belonging.
- ✓ **Designing a cheaper dry toilet model;** at a cost of *us\$600*. Increased possibilities for many households to own a dry toilet.
- ✓ **Installation of water pumps and establishment of water committees;** increased sources of safe drinking water, encouraged community members to actively participate in the project.
- ✓ **Engagement with traditional leaders;** who are the custodians of local traditions and cultures
- ✓ **Effective monitoring and evaluation;** ensured sustained interaction between project managers and community implementers. This helped enhance shared learning and acceptability.
- ✓ **Establishment of Dry Sanitation Central Committee;** an umbrella organisation to which community sanitation clubs affiliated was responsible for coordinating and supervising sanitation groups.



Improved sources of drinking water in Kaloko, Zambia

3.0 Lessons from the Sustainable Sanitation Improvement Project (SSIP), Madimba

The Sustainable Sanitation Improvement Project (SSIP) was implemented between 2008 and 2013 in Madimba, a high density peri-urban settlement in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. It has a population of 6,000.

During the implementation period the project faced several challenges. The project responded to such challenges with interventions that generated new ideas and approaches to enhance possibilities of achieving project objectives. Some of the challenges experienced by the project and responded to were;

- **Stigmatization;** mainly towards use of dry toilet waste.
- **Unplanned and crowded** – made planning for toilet construction, water supply, waste collection and toilet construction difficult.
- **Low income levels among community members;** (the majority live below the UN poverty line of US\$1,25) low participation as people were more concerned about their livelihood earning.
- **High tenancy turn-over;** created an information and knowledge challenge for new tenants who had little or no knowledge about dry toilets.
- **Inadequate knowledge;** in the community on the concept of dry sanitation

To counter these challenges the following interventions were undertaken;

- **Training of builders;** who were skilled in identifying suitable toilet construction sites
- **Established Community Based Enterprises (CBEs);** CBEs increased community capacity to raise income for improved livelihoods. They included block making, commercial water kiosks, and solid waste collection services.
- **Establishment of back yard gardens;** for education, income generation and as outlet for dry toilet composited manure.
- **Establishment of water committees;** to oversee the operations of water kiosks.
- **Undertaking education and sensitization events;** through door to door educational visits, community theatre and media.
- **Engagement with Local Government authorities;** to strengthen cooperation between the project and government.



Door to door educational visits played an important role in providing accurate information in Madimba, Zambia

4.0 Lessons from Msunduzi Dry Sanitation Project (Msunduzi)

Msunduzi is a crowded township located on the north-eastern periphery of Mbabane, the capital city of the Kingdom of Swaziland. The Msunduzi Dry Sanitation Project was implemented in Msunduzi between 2007 and 2014. The project was promoted by Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS) in cooperation with Global Dry Toilets Association of Finland (GDTAF).

Earlier in 2004 a baseline study was undertaken in Msunduzi to establish the sanitation situation. The study established that the community of Msunduzi lacked access to adequate sanitation solutions. The study further established that there was low hygiene awareness. The need therefore for the dry sanitation project in Msunduzi was found inevitable. Project goals included;

- Improvement in sanitation hygiene
- Increased composting
- Home gardening
- Improvement in state of the environment
- Enhancement of the status of the female gender

During implementation the project experienced the following challenges;

- ***Stigmatisation towards the dry toilet***
- ***Poor community participation***
- ***High community expectation of monetary gain***
- ***Poor community attitude towards sanitation***
- ***Inadequate sustainability mechanism***
- ***Inadequate leadership and project management skills in the community***
- ***Internal community conflict***
- ***Project politicisation***
- ***Vandalism***
- ***Tenancy turn-over***

Interventions undertaken by the project to counter challenges experienced included the following;

- ✓ ***Formation of sanitation education group (Sanitation Experts);*** to mobilise and educate community on sanitation and environmental health.
- ✓ ***Sanitation education;*** including door to door sensitisation
- ✓ ***Inclusion of the local authority (City council) and local leadership (Central Committee) actively in project decision-making, planning and implementation;*** to increase stakeholder cooperation
- ✓ ***Leadership and conflict management skills training;*** increased project management
- ✓ ***Resource mobilisation training;*** to increase continuity and sustainability possibilities
- ✓ ***Engagement of community police;*** to protect sanitation infrastructure
- ✓ ***Establishment of Msunduzi Environmental Association (umbrella organisation for subzone environmental/sanitation groups in Msunduzi).*** Aim of the association is to activate community on sanitation and environmental health.



Sanitation education helped improve community attitudes towards sanitation in Swaziland

5.0 Implementing the Community Dry Sanitation Initiative (CSI) Project in Monze district, Zambia

The CSI project is being implemented in *Freedom Compound*, a growing unplanned settlement on the edge of Monze central business district. It has an estimate population of 7000 inhabitants. Monze lies 200km south of Zambia's capital city, Lusaka.

The project focus is to improve the environment and sanitation situation through education, establishment of composting dry toilets and provision of safe drinking water. It is expected that the interventions would provide lasting solutions to the current and potential social and environmental health challenges the project area faces. The project planning and implementation approach is largely influenced by experiences gained and lessons learnt from the past similar projects discussed earlier.

The project is planned for a two year pilot phase (2014 – 2015) and for a possible 3 year (2016 – 2018) second phase depending on the results from the pilot (experimental) phase. Implementation started in January 2014. During the project lifespan dry toilets will be built in public places such as markets, Schools, health posts and churches. There will also be dry toilets built for individual families under a cost sharing plan. Education and sensitisation on the dry sanitation concept will be another key deliverable for the project.

6.0 Project undertakings based on lessons Learnt from past projects

From the start of the CSI in January 2014 the following activities were incorporated in the project plan, largely influenced by lessons learnt from previous projects;

- i. Awareness; information and sensitisation meetings were held with several key stakeholders starting with the District Administration. The District Secretary (*the top Civil Servant in the district*) was engaged at the inception of the project. Others educated about the dry sanitation concept included general community members in the project area, church leaders and schools (*Teachers and pupils*). Awareness and education conducted through radio, booklets, brochures (*in local language*), research material, campaign materials (*T-shirts, Caps*). This is expected to alley stigmatisation and improve project acceptability.
- ii. Establishment of a Local Steering Committee (LSC); This ensured that from inception the project assumed local ownership
- iii. Stakeholder involvement; key stakeholders were incorporated in the LSC to assume diversity of representation. They included traditional leaders, District Water, Sanitation and Health (D-WASH) unit, civil society, church, women groups, youth groups
- iv. Partnerships; with business enterprises (*Southern Water and Sewerage Company*). A joint water supply project started through fee paying Kiosks. SWASCO gets 60% while the project (CSI) gets 40% of the collected water fees. This undertaking is expected to increase possibilities of project continuity and sustainability.



The project aims at improving the sanitation situation in Monze district, Zambia

References

- i. Akatama, L (ed-2008), Experiences of Dry Sanitation in Southern Africa
- ii. Bandari, B, (2013), Napalese Farmers go Organic with Human Waste
- iii. Heikkila, J (ed-2013), Dry Sanitation Projects in Swaziland and Zambia – Final review of experiences from Msunduza, Kaloko and Madimba
- iv. Huuhtanen, S and Laukkanen, A, (2009), A guide to Sanitation and Hygiene
- v. Surendra, K etl (2007), Agriculture and Food Chemistry: Use of Human Urine Fertiliser in Cultivation of Cabbage (*Brassica oleracea*) - Impacts on Chemical, Microbial, and Flavour Quality

Autobiography: Emmanuel Mutamba



Mr. Emmanuel Mutamba is a Zambian citizen aged 47. He is a trainer and Social Worker. He is the Team Leader and founder member of the Green Living Movement (GLM). GLM is a Zambian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) established in 2000. Its core business is to contribute to poverty reduction through promotion of food and income security among local communities in Zambia and beyond through the use of sustainable land-use practices. GLM is also registered in Swaziland and Finland. He has participated in management, monitoring and evaluation, coordination and capacity development of five Dry sanitation projects in Zambia and Swaziland.