



SANITATION FOR MILLIONS IN UGANDA

WASH in Health Care Facilities (HCFs)

‘Patients and health care providers deserve a user-friendly and healthy environment with good sanitation and hygiene’

Access to safe water and sanitation is a human right and safe hygiene is a basic prerequisite for the mitigation of health risks and pandemics. According to the Joint Monitoring Programme of the WHO and UNICEF, around 4.5 billion people worldwide still do not have access to safe sanitation. More than 1.5 billion people use services in hospitals and clinics lacking basic sanitation. 1 in 4 health care facilities lack basic water services, 1 in 5 does not have access to basic sanitation, 2 in 5 hospitals lack safe hand hygiene at the point of care and 2 in 5 lack a system to segregate and handle waste safely.

In constantly high traffic and populated healthcare facilities, both patients and healthcare workers need appropriate and user-friendly water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities. Sanitation for Millions in Apac and Kampala strengthens good hygiene practices, through a unique model that focuses on a ‘WASH needs-based’ combination of infrastructure, awareness and practice-oriented measures. This model responds to individual needs of the users of the HCFs, including women and girls, people with disabilities and other vulnerable population groups. With the use of operation and maintenance (O&M) protocols as well as knowledge and practice on infection prevention and control, the interventions of Sanitation for Millions equally emphasize the provision of sanitary facilities as well as products that patients and healthcare workers really need.

Interventions

Sanitation for Millions employs a combination of construction of toilets, handwashing stations and hospital waste management facilities to promote improved access to safe and equitable sanitation and hygiene. The hardware measures are accompanied with extensive awareness campaigns and training support to foster improved WASH knowledge and practices in healthcare with focus on infection prevention and control (IPC).

Sanitation for Millions of interventions in Kampala and Apac to date directly benefits over 800,000 people across 20 health care facilities (16 government aided and 4 private not-for-profit). The project has ensured that all HCFs facilities have standard gender disaggregated toilet blocks inclusive of separate male and female stances, washrooms/change rooms, stances for PWDs and incinerators to manage sanitary waste and other items that require safe disposal. Across the facilities over 40 hand washing facilities have been installed (29 dedicated Millions of Clean Hands (MoCH) stations and 11 WASHaLOTs).



Above: Waste segregation practices embraced at a health care facility in Lubaga Division, Kampala.



Above: Health Care worker washing hands with soap at the Millions of Clean Hands Stations (handwashing facility).



Above: A peer-peer exchange visit on inclusive and sustainable WASH practices at Health Centres.

Key determinants for improved WASH in HCFs

- Construction of gender and socially inclusive WASH facilities with functional Operation and Management measures and practices in place;
- Monitoring in terms of cleansing plans and hospital waste segregation;
- Functional and effective WASH/ IPC committees at HCFs.

Support strategy to achieve WASH in HCFs

- Use of baseline assessments to identify and address WASH gaps;
- Engagement of stakeholders on identified needs and mutually agreed actions;
- Construction of barrier-free sanitation and hygiene facilities according to local and international standards;
- Trainings based on application and contextualisation of WHO's tools like the Water and Sanitation for Health Facility improvement Tool (WASHFIT) and Infection Prevention and Control Assessment Framework (IPCAF);
- Establishment of appropriate and sustainable operation & maintenance mechanisms through ToTs;
- Promotion of hygiene and IPC practices through awareness creation and hygiene messaging (IEC materials).



Above: A Training on the linkage between healthcare-associated infections and WASH conditions with health care workers at Lubaga hospital.

Outcomes and Results

- Increased awareness of good hygiene and sanitation practices in HCFs (including toilet cleaning, and hand washing among others).
- Increased access to improved and barrier-free sanitation and hygiene facilities in HCFs;
- Improved operation and maintenance (O&M) mechanism for WASH facilities;
- A healthy facility that provides a care service through an enjoyable experience;
- HCFs have turned into hygiene education hubs for communities;
- Hospital staff practising WASH improvement and IPC committees revitalised.

Background

Sanitation for Millions is a global programme improving access to safe sanitation and hygiene with a focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. In Uganda, the programme has been under implementation since 2016 in Kampala City and the northern Uganda towns of Apac, Aduku and Ibuje (Apac Cluster). Sanitation for Millions builds female-friendly and inclusive sanitary facilities at schools, healthcare facilities and faith-based institutions, trains local professionals to operate and maintain them, and promotes safe hygiene practices through targeted campaigns and knowledge transfer. Furthermore, the project promotes the treatment and reuse of sanitary wastewater and faecal sludge through the elaboration of concepts and the construction of appropriate facilities. Sanitation for Millions strengthens the management capacities of institutional partners and municipal administrations in direct cooperation. To ensure the operation of the facilities in the long term, financing mechanisms are developed jointly with the local partner.

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