



SANITATION FOR MILLIONS IN UGANDA

“Hausmeister” (Caretaker) Approach for Sustainable WASH Maintenance

Background

Successful water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in communities requires the requisite knowledge and skills to support the proper maintenance of sanitation facilities. Identified gaps such as the lack of easily accessible skilled technical personnel, to handle routine basic and advanced repairs in WASH infrastructure and explain why most institutions rely on outsourcing external private service providers or technicians. This puts public institutions such as schools and health care facilities in competition against big establishments like hotels and other private businesses that require the same services. The absence of dedicated technicians in public institutions thus escalates breakdowns that lead to a lack of functionality, disrepair and endless maintenance costs.

It is upon this background that the Sanitation for Millions programme has sought to transition public institutions into model centres for WASH, by implementing the Hausmeister concept. The Hausmeister training in Apac and Kampala is guided by a standardized 10-point technical measures training manual. So far 67 technicians (61 male & 6 females) have been trained as full-time caretakers responsible for 60 target institutions (schools, health care facilities and faith-based institutions). The trainees' selection criteria include handymen, security guards, facility plumbers, cleaners, or any other staff categories for the training and handholding/ follow-up thereafter.

Training and Tooling (Drivers of Success)

The project supports the construction and renovation of WASH infrastructure and insulates these investments using soft measures that improve target communities 'mindset change' and behaviours while ensuring that partners and stakeholders' engagements help to secure WASH budgeting, that in turn facilitates proper WASH operation and maintenance activities. The training targets staff at identified programme intervention institutions including handymen, security guards, facility plumbers, cleaners or any other interested personnel.

The Hausmeister hybrid training methodology creates an effective and efficient skilling approach that combines theory and practice through demonstrations and a hands-on approach. Topics of exploration in this training include basic and advanced sanitation and health, safety and hygiene, tools and equipment, basic masonry, carpentry and welding, operation and maintenance of water, hand washing and sanitation facilities.



Above: A practical training session on welding being demonstrated by one of the female trainees.



Above: A trained Hausmeister fixing a broken nozzle on the WASHaLOT handwash station.



Above: Toilet construction demonstrative session at a Household in Apac.

The training is highly interactive and makes use of participatory and learner-centred approaches to ensure that the caretakers use their acquired skills henceforth.

All trained Hausmeisters create action plans that support their respective infrastructure. The best performing caretakers are recognized as champions and qualify as Trainers of Trainees as a means to maintain internal capacities and create the peer to peer support for mentoring other Hausmeisters.

Peer trainers with excellent scores, get the opportunity to undergo an assessment by the Directorate of Industrial Training to obtain a worker's certification of highly skilled personnel and can provide a professional service worldwide.

Outcomes and Results

Target institutions have a trained Hausmeister, who readily handles maintenance and repairs as needed;

- WASH facilities in target institutions are well maintained with less costs of maintenance;
- Motivated and skilled caretakers/Hausmeisters, who work independently, ably address immediate technical challenges at the institutions and enjoy improved livelihoods due to their technical skills that attract better wages due to their life-long services;
- The uniqueness of the approach has attracted the interest of the Uganda National Directorate of Industrial Training to refine the training as well as local training centres that wish to implement the training programme along with its certification.



Above: Hausmeisters in Kampala receive toolboxes supplied under the partnership between KCCA and Sanitation for Millions.

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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Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany
Sanitation for Millions Uganda
Plot 128, Luthuli Avenue, Bugolobi
PO Box 10346
Kampala, Uganda
T +256 312 263069/70
E S4M@giz.de
I www.sanitationformillions.org

Authors John Bosco Oryema, Fred Nuwagaba, Vanessa Mugide, Irene Faith Alinga, Gladys Nantume, Joan Asiimwe

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Division Division 102: Water, sanitation, hygiene

Postal address of BMZ offices	BMZ Bonn Dahlmannstraße 4 53113 Bonn, Germany T +49 228 99 5 35 - 0 F +49 228 99 5 35 - 3500	BMZ Berlin Stresemannstraße 94 10963 Berlin, Germany T +49 30 18 535 - 0 F +49 30 18 535 - 2501
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poststelle@bmz.bund.de
www.bmz.de

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