



**SANITATION**  
FOR MILLIONS



**Left:** Pupils washing their hands with soap and clean water at a WASHaLOT hand washing station installed at their school.

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*Personal experiences of the integrated and inclusive WASH improvement in their schools have made a huge impact on how they experience and enjoy learning.*

## INTEGRATED AND INCLUSIVE WASH: MAKING SCHOOLS HEALTHIER!

There is much more to schools than a mix of dedicated teachers in classrooms and good school leadership. Access to safe sanitation and hygiene in schools has a significant impact on retention and completion rates, including children's wellbeing and their performance.

Facilities such as clean classrooms, dining hall, extracurricular activities (sports and recreation grounds), safe and well-maintained sanitary facilities that meet the needs of all learners, including girls and those with disabilities, all work together to form a healthy school.

In a series of interviews with pupils from some of the Sanitation for Millions intervention schools - Kibuli Demonstration School in Kampala and Arocha Primary School in Apac - they all gave the strong impression based on their personal experiences that indeed the integrated and inclusive WASH improvement in their schools has made a huge impact on how they experience and enjoy learning.

Jaffer Firdaus (15 years) from Kibuli in Kampala made a headline statement saying that "every visitor's first impression

*when they come to our school shall be our facilities, especially classrooms and toilets". In quick succession, she added, "It's every pupil's wish to be in a school, with clean toilets and bathrooms and here in our school, we are proud that we have such facilities'. 'Being comfortable", she has observed, "when you visit the toilets while attending class, is important and if the toilets are not clean, you will leave dirtier than when you went in".*

Rukia Mutaasa (14 years), Jaffer's friend and classmate, with a beaming smile added to the conversation, to show relief at the positive health transformation that is now enjoyed by the girls and boys alike in her school ever since the new toilets were put in place. "I think the old toilets were, the reason why many pupils especially girls had repeated issues of Urinary

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Tract Infections (UTIs) and diarrhoea”, she stated. She continued and said, “with the new facilities, I can say it’s more peaceful, quiet and comfortable and we don’t experience many cases of infections”.

Ms Grace Molly Akello, the Apac Municipal Education Officer in agreement complemented Rukia and said that “immediate and direct benefits of the integrated and inclusive WASH programme for both personal and collective school hygiene are now seen among pupils”. She further noted that “most girls especially those from poor families cannot afford sanitary pads and face challenges when they get their period. However, with the new WASH facilities where hand washing, clean toilets and fresh water for all pupils and reusable sanitary pads are readily available, we have seen a rapid drop in infections that troubled pupils during school terms. This has additionally solved issues such as absenteeism among pupils, especially girls in candidate classes”, Ms Akello acknowledged.

**“Honestly, our toilets at school make us attain the proper Three-Star WASH in School rating, they are so clean, and always smell fresh.”**

Arocha primary school in Apac town, today boasts of increased enrolment of pupils, which is strongly attributed to among other positive developments the new WASH facilities provided through support by the Sanitation for Millions project. Ms Aciro Evelyn Gloria, Arocha’s school Head Teacher talked of the school’s pride in having the ‘best hygiene’ in Apac, and whose grades among pupils have significantly received a huge boost with the new WASH facilities. However, Ms Aciro also spoke to the function of sustainability for the WASH facilities in terms of continued maintenance. “We now have the skills to make our soap and our matrion has the machinery and skills to locally produce reusable sanitary pads for the girls”, she noted.

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The young pupils from Kibuli primary school stated that WASH knowledge among their peers has improved because of their direct involvement in both the daily facilities usage at school as well as participation in daily hygiene related activities. “Every pupil in our school knows that when you go to the toilets, you have to leave them as clean and nice-looking as you found them. This makes the toilets always stay clean and fresh”, Aisha noted. “With running water to flush the toilets and the WASHaLOTs and soap all in place every time, our bodies and hands are always clean and germ-free. Honestly our toilets at school, makes us attain the proper Three-Star WASH in School rating (they are so clean, and always smell fresh), and when nature calls or when a girl gets her period in the middle of class lesson, everything she needs is readily available”, with a smile, Aisha made a confirmatory point.

This feeling of relief and confidence brought about by improved WASH facilities in schools is also shared by Okello Abraham (15 years) and Nancy Akello (14 years) both pupils in their candidate class at Arocha primary school, in Apac. While Abraham speaks confidently about the hygiene routines with consistent use of soap practised by his peers at school, Nancy recalls the old awkward days that remind her of friends who would drop away from class because of the absence of toilets and oth-

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**Left:** A disabled student at a Kampala school accessing a PWD toilet stance.

Photo © Vanessa Mugide - GIZ Sanitation for Millions



er facilities for the girls. *“None of my friends today has to go home or even break off, now that we have bathrooms, where girls during menstruation can wash and freshen up three times a day. The changing room has emergency sanitary pads and spare uniforms in case they are needed and this is a good feeling for us the girls”, she said. “Our new facilities at school are a one-stop point, where emergency sanitary pads, fresh running water and access to an incinerator for disposing of used menstrual pads, are all in the same place. It only takes you 5 minutes away from your class lesson to clean up, change, or freshen up and you get back in class before anyone notices, you are gone”.* Jaffer from Kibuli Demonstration School in Kampala compliments Nancy’s account in Apac and qualifies the point that the challenges faced by girls in schools where female-friendly WASH facilities are absent remain enormous, with negative impacts that compromise their learning opportunities.



**Above:** A student at a Kampala school fetching clean water.

Photo © Fenon Events

Mr Sebidde Abdulbust, the teacher in charge of sanitation and hygiene at Kibuli Demonstration School further clarifies that *“these excellent sanitation facilities supported by Sanitation for Millions have aided our beneficiary schools to maintain and retain all the learners. If anything, we have recorded an increase in school enrolment and you cannot underestimate how the sanitation facilities have aided the development of this school”.*

Ms Akello, the Education Officer in Apac, equally expressed the significance of the programme and how it has helped to galvanize strong partnership with stakeholders to promote awareness and sensitization on WASH. This is why parents are encouraged to participate with contributions of 1,000 shillings per term for each pupil, to ensure that WASH investments and maintenance budgets are sustained. *“Such contributions go a long way toward achieving the town council’s decision to promote and adopt a uniform Toilets Making the Grade (TMG ) model\* across all schools (both public and private), as part of the WASH culture within schools”.* She echoed similar sentiments that the national Ministry of Education and Sports has announced to adopt and promote the all-inclusive and integrated WASH model in schools as well as national scale up the “Toilets Making the Grade School competition” across schools in Uganda.

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**Below:** A school maintenance worker disposes of MHM products into an incinerator. **Right:** A school changing room for girls equipped with spare uniforms and sanitary pads.

Photo © Vanessa Mugide - GIZ Sanitation for Millions



\*for more information on TMG please download [WinS Models that Work](https://bit.ly/3RH5LjR) (https://bit.ly/3RH5LjR) or visit [www.germantoilet.org/en/schools/toilets-making-the-grade-competition/](http://www.germantoilet.org/en/schools/toilets-making-the-grade-competition/)



**Right: Stakeholders inspecting a newly built toilet facility for handover at a school in Lubaga Division, Kampala.**

Photo ©Vanessa Mugide - GIZ Sanitation for Millions

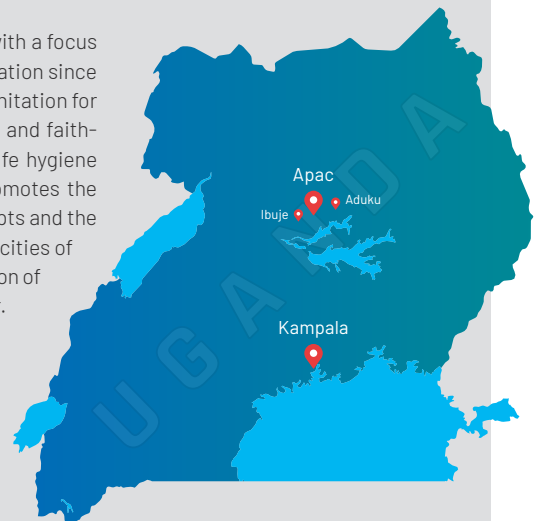
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The lesson that can be taken from these conversations about WASH in schools is that positive learner experiences when attending classes at a school require a conducive environment. The all-inclusive, integrated and female-friendly WASH facilities are essential to improve the environment for learners while attending school and this critical need will require stakeholders to make WASH in schools a reality so that all pupils can enjoy learning and thrive.

## 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 Ijuje (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.

Sanitation for Millions was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development in 2016. With the BMZ as the lead donor, Sanitation for Millions has received additional funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Water Unite, the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Inter-American Development Bank, and share GmbH. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH executes the global programme in close cooperation with local partners in Colombia, Jordan, Pakistan, and Uganda.



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