

Gendered construction of eco-toilets by the private sector in South Africa: The case of Moretele Local Municipality

Dick de Jong, IRC, the Netherlands
May 2010

Jan Habig is a civil engineer in South Africa. He is showing a group of civil society people from Southern African countries around in a new sanitation programme in Moretele Local Municipality in North West Province, a 90-minute drive out of Pretoria. Mr. Habig is here as project manager for G.R. Makopo CC Construction that won a contract for the Cyferskuils Basic Sanitation Phase 2 project, involving 1,000 Amalooloo toilets. The company falls under the Upcoming Black Economic Empowerment Companies



Figure 1 The eco-toilet model has a ventpipe against bad smells. Photo: Dick de Jong, IRC

De Jong: How does this work out here?

“There are three local contractors involved with 10 teams of two women and four men each. They are paid 130 Rand [13 Euro] each per structure. On average a team does 2 ½ structure per day. There is 88,000 Rand (USD 10,355 in 2010) in the budget for training of which 30,000 was used to train 20 local people for five days in brick laying. Other trainings still to come are:

- orientation training for 10 Community Liaison Officers;
- orientation course for a Project Steering Committee that has been appointed, but is not yet operational;
- a basic street-by-street short hygiene course for households that includes explanations how to operate and maintain the toilets, including not throwing rubbish in the toilet, not using newspapers and showing how the raking of the faeces goes when the pit is full”.

Programme to increase income from 250,000 Rand (a little over 29000 USD) to the next level. The first toilets were put up three weeks ago. Mr. Habig advises the company on tender documents and cash flow programmes and checks the quality of work. He also has international health and safety accreditation. In an interview on the site with IRC’s Dick de Jong he explained how decentralization of this sanitation programme works.

Dick de Jong: How is this programme funded?

Jan Habig: “This programme is funded from the central Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) that comes through local municipalities. This comes with conditions. One third of the construction of the toilets has to be given to local contractors. It is part of a bigger programme of 4,000 new toilets in this area.”



Figure 2 Jan Habig (Photo: Dick de Jong, IRC)



Figure 3 The pit under the slab is 2 meters deep.
Photo: Dick de Jong, IRC

Mr. Habig said that the total MIG budget for this phase of 1,000 Amalooloo toilets is 9 million Rand, or 9,000 Rand per toilet. He mentioned that he has done 2,500 of these Amalooloo toilets in 2006 in Ivory Park in Pretoria. In all, he has helped construction of 7,500 urine diversion and dry toilets¹. He refers to another company producing toilets with the brand name Sanix, by Madibeng Water Services. He prefers this one over the Amalooloo, because it is a waterless dehydration/evaporation toilet system that has been tried, tested and evaluated in the field since February 1993.

Costs build-up

The field visit gave some insight in the cost build-up of the Amalooloo toilets:

- The cost for bottom and upper structure from the Beltram factory is 3,100 Rand per toilet. This also includes delivery costs in a radius of 250 km from the factory, a base slab and a cover slab over the 2,050 meter long pit, stainless steel door, the complete handwash facility with a pedestal and separator, toilet cleaning equipment, vent pipe and an ecological manifold system.
- The company can also provide a basic VIP toilet that only includes a pedestal and vent pipe for a price of approximately R2 400.00 for the top structure.
- The tender price for the contractor was 7,100 Rand per toilet.
- the MIG budget of 9,000 Rand per toilet includes 880 Rand per toilet for training.

The Water Information Network South Africa (WIN-SA) co-organized this field trip as part of its workshop at the Roode Plaat training centre of the Department of Water Affairs, 25 minutes out of Pretoria, from 17 to 21 May 2010. It brought together 20 directors and project managers from SADC civil society organizations from Botswana, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and from various provinces in South Africa.

¹ See for more on urine-diversion composting latrines, an extensive WELL Inquiry Service answer of 2005 that is still the most comprehensive overview at <http://www.irc.nl/page/22831>