



# **MAJI NA UFANISI**

*Pro poor water and environmental sanitation solutions in cities, small towns and rural areas*

## **YOUTH SPEARHEADING HYGIENE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION AWARENESS: KIAMBIU EXPERIENCE**

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**Title:** Youths Spearheading Hygiene and Environmental Sanitation Awareness – *The Kiambiu Experience*  
**Location:** Kiambiu informal settlement, Pumwani Division, Nairobi, Kenya  
**Initiator of the ‘best practice’:** Maji na Ufanisi in partnership with Kiambiu Youth Group

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**Introduction**

*Throughout the developing countries, water, sanitation and environmental conditions is a major issue especially in the informal settlements. In Nairobi, with a population of 3 million residents, 60% of the people live in slums. This is a devastating statistic bearing in mind that this population lacks basic access to water supply and environmental sanitation services and has led to various environmental problems and high poverty levels. To ameliorate this situation in one of the slums in Nairobi, Kiambiu Environmental Sanitation and Health Outreach, (KESHO), is an intervention that targets 1500 households with an average of 6 persons per household in Kiambiu settlement. The overall objective of the action is to contribute towards sustainable environment through effective environmental sanitation (potable water, proper SWM, adequate waste water drains, environmental awareness, health and hygiene). Cognizant of the fact that provision of infrastructure alone is not enough to improve health and the environment, Kiambiu Youth Group is concurrently spearheading environmental education and hygiene awareness. Effective promotion offered by the youth has reinforced positive attitude and behavioral change. This paper draws from the experiences of Kiambiu Youth Group and Maji Na Ufanisi (Water and Development), an NGO that has been influential in facilitating the improvement of the quality of life of the disadvantaged through participatory, innovative pro-poor water and environmental sanitation solutions.*

**Background of the initiators**

**Kiambiu Youth Group**

Kiambiu youth group is a registered self help group under the Ministry of Gender Sports Culture & Social Services in the Department of Social Services in Kenya .It was established in year 2000 after the successful merger of 2 youth Community Based Organisations working on Environmental management in Kiambiu, i.e. Kiambiu Youth Association and Kiambiu Youth Environmental Conservation Forum. The merger was primarily facilitated to address the pathetic Environmental pollution standards, Economic Empowerment of the youth, Social construction and the HIV/AIDS pandemic through behavioral change interventions. The youth group therefore aims at empowering the youth (boys and girls) who live in abject poverty for sustainable Economic, Social and Environmental maturity.

## **Maji na Ufanisi**

Maji na Ufanisi (MnU) is a membership based Kenyan Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) which arose out of the strategies and experiences of Water Aid (UK) in Kenya. It started operating in April 1998.

MnU has over nine years experience supporting Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to reach the neediest and most vulnerable groups in the urban informal settlements, small towns and rural areas. Currently, MnU is operating in three areas in Nairobi: Kiambiu, Kibera and Kangemi. MnU in partnership with Community Based Organisations (CBO's) in these areas have developed programs to establish basic Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES) solutions.

MnU's *mission is: To* improve the quality of life of the disadvantaged through participatory, innovative pro-poor water and environmental sanitation solutions. MnU uses Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES) approach in poor communities as a vehicle to rally those communities to address wider socio-economic issues. Experience has shown that, effective community mobilization can lead to genuine democracy, representative, fair leadership and responsible, collective management of community assets. This approach is based on the knowledge that ultimately, real development is in people and their ability to take increasing control over the resources and decisions that directly affect their lives.

## **Description of Kiambiu Settlement**

### **Geographical Location**

Kiambiu village is situated 4 km East of Nairobi's city center, in the Eastleigh location of Pumwani Division, Nairobi Province. The settlement is located between Nairobi River and the Eastleigh Air force base. It is estimated to have a population of over 40,000 people within an area size of 0.5km<sup>2</sup>.

### **Population**

Kiambiu Village is a multi -ethnic settlement. 51% of the slums' residents live in overcrowded conditions, with an average number of persons living in one room (<10ft by 10ft) standing at 3.4 (UN standards,> 2 persons constitutes overcrowding). This percentage has gone up, following migration of people from surrounding estates and rural areas to Kiambiu.

### **Basic Infrastructures**

#### **Water Supply:**

95% of residents use stand pipes. Many of these water supply points are located within unhygienic conditions which pose a health hazard to the users. Most of the water supply systems supplying the village use old plastic electric conduit casings, which pose environmental hazards to the water users due to frequent breakages and leakages and subsequently water contamination.

Contamination of drinking water often leads to increase in incidences of water borne diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, typhoid and dysentery. Compared with the adult population, the children are more affected with over a third of all child deaths attributable

to environmental causes. Women have to bear the added brunt of taking care of their sick children.

Moreover, the per capita water coverage is very low and the demand far outweighs the supply. Access to water is a major problem mainly as a result of the exorbitant prices that are charged by vendors, (Kshs 10-20 for a 20 Litre jerry can) depending on the distance. This compounded by the inadequacy and unreliability of the existing (and mainly illegal) water systems exacerbates the problem. Sadly, water kiosks are usually the only source of water for the poor residents, despite the high prices and poor quality of water caused by use of sub-standard pipelines.

During shortages or water rationing, the people pay high premiums for water whose source they are not sure of. This is because there are no storage facilities.

### **Sanitation:**

Over 75% of the residents lack sanitation facilities within their structures. The toilet ratio is 1:82 contrasted to 1:25 requirement by UN standards.

The pit latrines, albeit scarce, constitute the major mode of excreta disposal given the fact that there are hardly any conventional sewerage systems. Most of these toilet facilities are commercialized and the poor people generally pay a high premium to access them, yet they are poorly built and poorly maintained. Besides eroding the dignity and self-respect of residents, the sharing of one toilet by so many people heavily contributes to many health, environmental and economic problems in the slum. Most latrines are located close to the neighboring Nairobi River, and once full drain into the river creating a high potential for river water pollution.

More fundamentally, lack of secure land tenure implies that 'landlords' cannot invest in any meaningful sanitation or water facility and therefore live the tenants who make up about 80% to sort themselves out.

### **Drainage**

Drainage systems for both storm and waste water are none existent. The few open and unlined earth drains in front and behind people's structures are littered with filth- human waste and solid waste. The condition poses a health hazard to the community.

### **Social and Housing Infrastructure**

The residents lack land tenure and thereby do not enjoy basic government infrastructure like schools and dispensaries or necessities like roads, electricity, garbage collection and sewer systems. This is however changing as the Kenya Power & Lighting Company (KPLC), the sole provider of electricity is now making head way into the informal settlement.

### **Waste Management**

Currently, the city of Nairobi generates in excess of 1600 metric tonnes of refuse per day (JICA 2000). Unfortunately, the City Council of Nairobi's solid waste collection is less than 30 % of the total daily production. That notwithstanding, collection by the city council is preferentially carried out in the business premises within the city center and up market areas. Therefore all the solid waste generated in the informal settlements is disposed off indiscriminately in small heaps along the roads, in open spaces and in the

open drains along the railway lines. Additionally, some of the waste generated in the up market areas is collected by private developers and disposed off in open dumps in the informal settlements. For this reason the informal settlements bear more than their own burden of solid waste. As a result, preventable diseases influenced by poor environments such as diarrhoea, lower respiratory infections, unintentional injuries and malaria are common in the slum.

### **Social institutions**

The village lacks effective social institutions that would facilitate education for the Children, household economies, industry, political empowerment, and promote leadership and positive value systems. This coupled with low community cohesion and sometimes tribalism and poor governance have resulted in fear, victimization, high poverty levels, suspicion and tension in the lives of the residents of the Kiambiu slum.

### **Description of the initiative**

Kiambiu Youth Group environmental sanitation initiative has been implemented through the following phases:

- **Organization and Mobilization**

Initial mobilization of the group was done through activities such as: clean-up exercises, sports, advocacy and awareness creation around issues of water and environmental sanitation.

### **Participatory Urban Appraisal (PUA)**

Organization and mobilization was followed by Participatory Urban Appraisal (PUA) workshops facilitated by MnU, during which the youth identified and prioritized water, drains and toilets as their primary concerns.

- **Group formation**

Initially there existed two youth groups in Kiambiu Village that dealt with environmental issues. Kiambiu Youth Association and Kiambiu Youth Environmental Conservation Forum Youth Group. The two groups successfully merged in the year 2000 to form the Kiambiu Youth Group. The group aimed at addressing the identified water, sanitation and environmental challenges and other problems affecting the youth and Kiambiu community as a whole.

Subsequently, Kiambiu Youth Group developed its constitution; a process facilitated by Maji Na Ufanisi using logical capacity building modules. The group has a leadership structure comprising an executive committee: (Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and the Organizing Secretary), in addition, there exist various project management committees.

To date the group has 140 members aged between 17- 35 years and carries out the following activities:

- Community clean –up campaigns

- Construction of drains
- Provision of water and sanitation facilities
- Tree planting/ small - scale agro- forestry
- Community – based solid waste management
- Sporting activities
- Capacity building: training in information technology and entrepreneurship
- Peer education and business mentoring and
- Children’s club support.
- **Training Activities**

Training activities have been on going in stages and the trainings done so far include:

- Operation & Management. Participatory hygiene and sanitation Transformation (PHAST)
- Leadership
- First- Aid
- Project management and

### **Major drivers of the process and change**

- **Kiambiu youth Group**

Kiambiu Youth Group members are the most important drivers of change since they initiated the process, organized themselves and continue to advocate hygiene behavior promotion. Maji na Ufanisi has successfully facilitated hygiene and sanitation education which has enabled the youth to become trainers of trainers in the community. More emphasis has been put on educating the community on the disadvantages of open defecation and “flying toilets”, a major cause of oral- fecal transmission of water, sanitation and environmental related illnesses. Awareness creation is mainly through the door to door methodology which is done using local languages which in this case is “Kiswahili and Sheng”. This way, more community members are reached .The fact that the youth members undertake the training evokes better response from the community members since as they say, “ni watoto wetu”.

The youth also use theatre (plays and skits) as a tool during clean ups, sports days and chief’s Baraza in promoting hygiene and sanitation practices.

To mark environmental land mark days such as: The world environment day, world water day and the world toilet day, the youth join other stakeholders such as National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), Forest department and the local government in hygiene promotion and environmental solid waste management campaigns.

...In addition to hygiene and sanitation education, the youth promote existence of communal facilities in water and sanitation. This has been done through cleaning and maintenance of existing drainage system in partnership with Kiambiu Usafi Group a CBO that works in partnership with Maji Na Ufanisi. Since the existing facilities are inadequate, the youth have gone a step further, and with assistance from Maji na Ufanisi, have fundraised for an extra sanitation block and improved drains. Plans are under way to improve a 400 meter drain. This is expected to further hygiene and sanitation promotion, facilitate income generation and provide competition to existing providers.

The issue of solid waste management is another key component addressed by the youth. This is done through house to house solid waste collection at a small fee. Plans to enhance household involvement in solid waste management especially in sorting and separation at source are in progress

- **Children's club**

For sustainable hygiene, sanitation and environmental education, the youth have established a children's club whereby the children are trained on hygiene, sanitation and environmental education. The trained children play an important role as peer educators to their fellow children, family and the community as a whole. The children also participate in clean-ups and sports activities. Currently, the club has 400 children.

- **Kiambiu Community**

Kiambiu community as a whole continues to support the youth in water and sanitation intervention. The community members have been in the front in clean-up activities and community policing in relation to hygiene and sanitation.

- **Local Government**

The local government plays a legislative role in reinforcing law and order ensuring a conducive environment for development of water and sanitation intervention. In addition, the area chief and councilor have helped the youth secure space/ land while other government bodies e.g. National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), Nairobi City Water & Sewerage Company (NCWSC) and Athi Water Board Services (AWBS) continue to support the youth in many ways such as procurement of construction material and water storage facilities.

- **Maji Na Ufanisi**

Maji Na Ufanisi has been instrumental in developing sustainable water and sanitation interventions in Kiambiu. This has been achieved through effective community mobilization and provision of technical support to the partner CBOs.

Community members are trained as foremen who in turn participate in the construction of the sanitation blocks. This ensures good operation and maintenance of the facilities since they are the end users.

- **Other developmental partners**

Other developmental organizations comprising civil society organization and the private sector are supporting the youth's initiative. These partners help the youth to mobilize resources

External funds were needed to accomplish the following activities which are currently under implementation:

- Construction of one sanitation block
- Drainage system
- Acquisition of a water storage tank
- Installation of four water points

### **Resources**

Maji na Ufanisi contributes in terms of construction tools and materials, training of hygiene promoters, Development of hygiene education kit, project management and evaluation and management of the project.

The Kiambiu youth group contributes in terms of time spent in community development activities such as: clean ups, advocacy, hygiene promotion and awareness creation.

They provide the space for construction which has to be bought from structure owners at an agreed fee. The youth are also expected to provide security for the construction materials and the facilities when they are complete.

The Kiambiu Community in general contributes in kind, they offer labor during construction. They also play a big role in ensuring environmental cleanliness. They participate in community clean – ups organized by the youth. In addition the structure owners provide the youth with space for construction of sanitation and drainage facilities at an agreed fee. This has created a sense of ownership and sustainability of the project.

Currently, Maji Na Ufanisi has fundraised a total of \$43,357 to support the youth through Kiambiu Environmental Health and sanitation (KESHO) Project. The funds are expected to improve water and sanitation conditions in Kiambiu.

### **Successes**

- ❖ Promotion of PHAST methodology in the community
- ❖ Promotion of a cleaner environment
- ❖ Formation of a children's club that deals with child rights and environmental hygiene
- ❖ Creation of strong partnership with other developmental partners like NEMA, Greenbelt, Forestry Department, Kituo cha Sheria & Pumwani Public Health Officer
- ❖ Formation of the group's under 18 football team, with Kenya Football Federation ((KFF)
- ❖ Appointment of one group member to the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) ,Pumwani District Environmental Committee



- ❖ Community policing resulting to reduction of garbage dumping from outside the settlement

### **Lesson Learned**

- ❖ The youth are important stakeholders in carrying out water, sanitation and environmental interventions
- ❖ Its important for the youth to scale up their interventions to reach a larger population
- ❖ To deal with waste management issues in the informal settlement, the youth in these areas need to be supported in terms of skills in waste management
- ❖ Community involvement is tantamount for any change to take place in the informal settlements

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