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URINALS FOR THE GIRL CHILD

A friendly design for a girl's "short call"

Background

Mirembe Infant Primary School is a non Government-aided school located in Nateete, Rubaga division. The school has over 808 children, some 463 girls and 345 boys.

In 2007 the school administration, spearheaded by the head teacher, contacted Community Integrated Development Initiatives (CIDI) with a request to construct new latrines with girls' washrooms and urinals at the school.

In 2008, CIDI, under its Water and Sanitation program to improve the studying environment in schools, honoured the request by constructing a 4-stance latrine inclusive of 2 washrooms and 2 urinals for the girl pupils in Mirembe Infant P/ School.



Girls' urinals at Mirembe Infant School: the urinals are constructed with a slope to allow for easy flow of urine

Network for Water and Sanitation Uganda (NETWAS) in partnership with CIDI carried out a field study to document usage, operation and maintenance of girls' urinals. The study also aimed at finding out perceptions and attitudes of girls and teachers in relation to usage and maintenance of the girls' urinals.

'Before construction of the girls' urinals, the school faced multiple challenges, as the available 8-stance latrine with no washrooms was not adequate for the increasing number of children in the school. Due to congestion, pupils would spend 10-15 minutes waiting for their turn to use the latrine. Often the younger pupils were pushed to the back of the queue by the older ones.

Secondly, the administration realised that sharing of the latrines for urination by both girls and boys was affecting class attendance and pupils' performance.

Faced with the urgent need to combat the alarming situation, school administration contacted CIDI'.

Head teacher, Mirembe Infant Primary School

The school health and sanitation club - Mirembe Primary School

Formation and composition

The school health and sanitation club was formed to increase pupils' participation in maintenance of hygiene and sanitation through their active engagement in cleaning and maintaining of school facilities.

The club consists of 50 pupils from different classes: primary four to primary seven; and it is governed by a general committee of seven members also elected from various classes and is actively supported by the science teacher and school senior woman.

The school health club is at the forefront of maintaining the urinals in the school and is directly charged with monitoring usage and cleanliness of the urinals.

Roles of the School Health Club

- To monitor hygiene and sanitation situation in the school.
- Physical supervision of the operation and maintenance of urinals to ensure school sanitation standards for the urinals are maintained.
- Sensitisation of other pupils on hygiene and sanitation including maintenance of the new urinals. This is done through meetings organised by the school.
- Attend health and sanitation workshops. The club represents the school on invitations to workshops on health, hygiene and sanitation.
- Spearhead child-to-child and child-to-community Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) activities through music, dance & drama and clean up activities.

Dialogue with club members

In an in-depth discussion with members of primary 5, 6 and 7, pupils highlighted various advantages of having the girls' urinals:

- **Urinals have reduced congestion** and eliminated accidents resulting from pupils fighting for their turn in the toilets.
- **Urinals allow for privacy** since both girls and boys do not share these.
- **Urinals are convenient especially with washrooms** close by where the girls can clean up during menstruation.
- **Easy cleaning and maintenance** of the new latrines with urinals due to design.

These advantages have resulted in reduction of open urination that used to be done in corridors or other hidden places.

Senior woman and science teacher

How do the Senior Woman and Science teacher perceive urinals for girl children?

The senior woman teacher organises weekly meetings with pupils, particularly the girl pupils in primary 5 and 7. The meetings are geared towards sensitization of pupils on the use of urinals, personal hygiene, proper disposal of sanitary towels for the adolescent girls and maintenance of the girls' urinals.

'...We are privileged to have girls' urinals. The school has registered a number of changes since construction of the girls' urinals e.g. reductions of congestion in toilets as pupils quickly return to class when using urinals. There are no long queues.

People envy us and think we have a lot of money to have constructed these urinals. My fellow teachers from Mutundwe P/ School, Grapa Parents Junior school, Lungujja Progressive P/ School, and Kibuye Public School have shown interest in obtaining the girls' urinals for their respective schools as they have similar problems as we had.'

Science teacher

Cleaning and maintenance of urinals in Mirembe P/ School

Participation and supervision

Cleaning of the urinals is participatory duty and is done by only girl pupils. Cleaning is carried out twice a day. To facilitate this process, the school designed a cleaning roster whereby two classes are given two slots for a particular day. The general health committee of the School Health Club supported by the science teacher and senior woman teacher supervises cleaning of the urinals.

Materials used during clean up include liquid soap, brushes and water basins.

To promote good hygiene and sanitation, a hand-washing facility was placed near the urinals.

Perception of the urinals by other schools

The study team visited Kisa and Mackay Primary Schools. The schools had just acquired girls' urinals. In a dialogue session, pupils highlighted privacy and easy maintenance as the major advantages of the girls' urinals.



The previous urinal at Kisa Primary School that was open and lacked privacy

Pupils also mentioned that before the school had the urinals for girls, the girls often had to share latrines for urination with the boys and girls would feel uncomfortable about it.

The pupils further pointed out that they consider it easier and safer to urinate in the urinals because they are always clean whereas the latrines sometimes have maggots on top of the slab causing them to fear to go. Previously, this often forced the pupils into open urination.

Resources/inputs

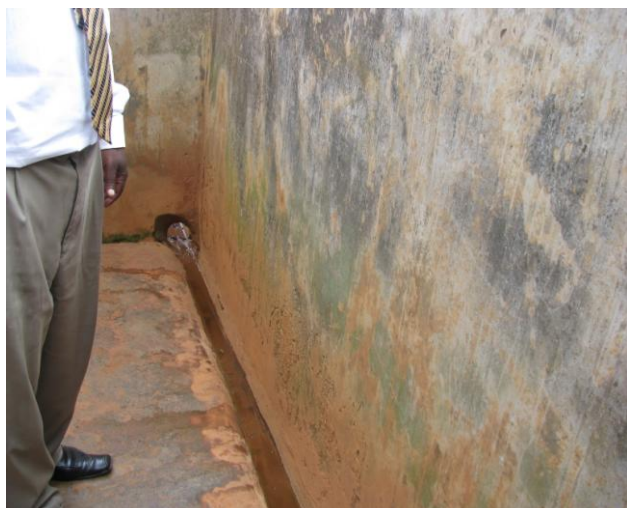
Resources involved in construction of the urinals included: manpower (labour), bricks, sand, cement and water.

In most instances the drainage of the urinal is attached to the VIP latrine. A stand-alone urinal block would go for about Ug Sh 3,416,000. Adding a urinal to a VIP toilet block, taking advantage of the behind wall of the latrine section only costs about Ug Sh 800,000. Hence it is more cost effective to have the urinal attached to a latrine. The urinal utilises also limited space. It is even

more cost effective with the girls' washroom attached to the same block.

Major drivers/factors for success

- **A pro-active school administration**, which contacted CIDI to address the prevailing poor sanitation situation in the school and welcomed the idea of a girls' urinal for the well being of the pupils.
- **Involvement of pupils** in the cleaning and maintaining of the urinals has ensured pupil ownership of the new facilities.
- **Formation of the school health club** with the responsibility of maintaining good hygiene in the urinals and also educating pupils about proper usage of the urinals.
- **Design of the urinal** in such a way that it prevents possible splash backs. The urinals are constructed at a slope of about 45 degrees to allow for easy flow of urine and drainage. They are also demarcated with squatting space for each user.



Flat urinals that do allow for urine to stagnate

- **Easy cleaning and maintenance** of the urinals has ensured full pupil participation in cleaning of the urinals.
- **Support from the teachers** like the science teacher and senior woman teacher who monitor usage and maintenance of the urinals.
- Although not studied, it is **likely that the school can do with a lower pupil-latrine stance ratio**
- Also not studied yet but **the smell coming from latrine pits may be less** if less urine is added to the faeces.

Lessons Learnt

Having girls' urinals in place gives several **benefits**:

- (i) it provides **convenience and privacy** for girls and
- (ii) **reduces time wastage** during break times. And

(iii), this ultimately promotes pupils' **class attendance**. Since girls have a safe place to urinate, further benefits of the girls' urinals are (iv) **elimination of accidents from fighting** for toilet, and (v) **reduced open urination**.

The study reveals several lessons on Management and Maintenance, design and costs of girls' urinals:

Important Management and Maintenance issues

- **Frequent cleaning of the girls' urinals** is important to keep away possible germs transmission and bad odour in case of any splash back.
- **Structures like School Health Clubs**, (or private cleaners), science teachers and senior women teachers are needed. Cleaning timetables should be in place to ensure routine and frequent cleaning of the urinals. Actually same as for latrines.
- **There should be a steady supply of water** to ensure frequent cleaning of the urinals as well as promote hand washing after toilet and urinal use.

Important Design issues

- The urinal has 5 **squat spaces** along its length, which allows 5 pupils to urinate at a time.
- **The angle of slope** of about 45 degrees prevents possible splash back as it ensures splashing away from user. (angle of incidence is equal to angle of reflection/ deflection of the urine).
- **Direct sunrays and rain** are effective. If the urinal is not roofed but left open to the sunrays, this will ensure quick drying during the dry season, and easy wash away during the rainy season.
- **For even more privacy** it is important to separate urinals for older and younger girls since the older ones are not comfortable to squat with the younger ones.

Important Cost issues

- **Cost of constructing a separate urinal is higher than when attached to the latrine**. It is much cheaper to have it constructed on the same block of the latrine and washrooms.

Challenges

The field study has also revealed some challenges:

- **Costs**: constructing a urinal next to latrines implies extra cost. However, the cost of a urinal is relatively low as compared to that of a latrine. The cost of constructing a stand alone urinal is about UG Sh 3,400,000, and yet to have a urinal attached to a urinal of any cost will cost an additional Ug Sh 800,000.
- **Cost of detergents and disinfectants**. On a weekly basis, the school requires about Ug Sh 30,000 to purchase detergents like harpic, liquid soap, Vim. The data do not indicate whether these are exclusively used for the urinals.

- **Frequent blockages** as a result of objects being thrown into the drainage channels.

Source of information/References

- Field report, 2009 (unpublished)
- Community Integrated Development Initiatives (CIDI). Report on construction and usage of girls' urinals.

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