



World Toilet Day: Tippy taps a toilet hygiene solution for rural populations

Mercy Mitua is 13. She attends primary school at Kakuli Primary School in Kalawa, Makueni County.

Water in her county is a challenge, especially in the remote areas where you can hardly find taps.

Mercy was in a dilemma, especially because she wanted to practice good toilet hygiene. They had been taught in school that one must wash their hands every time they use a toilet.

Improved taps

Mercy took a five litre jerrycan and made a small hole on its upper body to allow water to flow through it.

With that, she made a tippy tap, a locally improvised tap that allows easy access to water after toilet use.

Mercy learnt how to make tippy taps through the Health Club in her school.

Tippy taps are simple water devices made using plastic jerrycans, which are periodically filled with water.

The device is operated by a foot lever, which reduces chances of bacteria transmission because the user only touches the soap. It uses only 40 millilitres of water to wash your hands versus 500 millilitres using a mug.

Basic Hygiene

Washing hands after using the toilet is a basic hygiene practice. If you don't always do this then you are putting your health at great risk.

In most urban areas, water can easily be available, so children can wash their hands all the time. But in rural areas, where water is scarce, it may not always happen.

Placed next to toilets, tippy taps allow families in rural areas to wash hands with soap and minimal water, hence enabling them conserve

the little that they have. Mercy has since passed the knowledge to her family and neighbours who are now able to practice good toilet hygiene.

"Initially, we had one ordinary



Children learning how to wash hands with soap after visiting the toilet, using tippy taps during the recent National Global Handwashing Day celebrations held in Kitui County. PHOTO | COURTESY WORLD VISION KENYA

water tap with clean running water in the entire school. Now we have four tippy taps that serve the entire school, that is 11 teachers and 200 pupils," said Mr. Martin Mutinda, the Deputy Patron of the Health Club at Mercy's school.

The tippy taps are periodically filled with clean water and placed strategically outside the school kitchen and latrines.

Today is World Toilet Day

World toilet day is set aside to create awareness on the significance of toilets.

People are educated on the need to prevent human waste from polluting the environment and causing deadly diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera or dysentery.

On this day people are also reminded of the significance of



Mercy Mutua, (centre) watches her young sister washing hands with the tippy tap she built. PHOTO | COURTESY WORLD VISION KENYA

adhering to good hygiene practices, especially washing hands with soap after visiting the toilet

so as to prevent diseases.

"Even if you don't see it, hands are usually contaminated after every toilet use. They contain germs from faeces and other things that can transmit diseases when you use them to eat food or prepare meals for others," said Wanjiku Kuria, a technical sanitation and hygiene specialist at World Vision Kenya.

"That's why it's a good hygiene practice to always wash hands with soap after leaving the toilet," she stated.

The ministries of education and health, together with non-governmental organisations like World Vision Kenya and Unicef have been sensitising schoolchildren in rural areas on low-cost technologies that use water efficiently.

Tippy taps are examples of such technologies.

WHEN NATURE CALLS.....

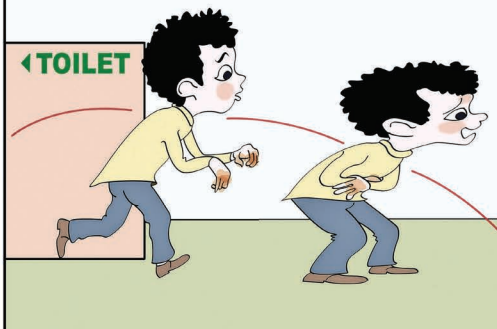
AT ONE POINT OR ANOTHER, WE HAVE ALL EXPERIENCED THE NEED TO GO TO THE TOILET. WHETHER IT IS THE TRADITIONAL PIT LATRINE OR THE MODERN ONE WITH BOWL AND SEAT, THERE IS ALWAYS THAT INEXPLAINABLE FEELING IN FINDING ONE WHOSE DOOR IS OPEN, WHEN NATURE STRIKES.



IMPLEMENTATION OF CERTAIN HYGIENE POLICIES AND INCREASED ACCESS TO SANITATION SUCH AS A WELL CLEANED TOILET HELP IN REDUCING INFECTIONS.



GERMS AND BACTERIAS CAUSE SEVERAL DISEASES SUCH AS DIARRHOEA, CHOLERA AND TYPHOID.



FOR GOOD HYGIENE AND PREVENTION OF DISEASES, ALWAYS MAKE SURE YOU WASH YOUR HANDS USING SOAP AND WATER.

