

WASH RESPONSE TO CYCLONE IDAI IN GUTU DISTRICT



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

BUILDING BACK GUTU DISTRICT'S

CYCLONE IDAI HIT WATER AND SANITATION INFRASTRUCTURE

When Cyclone Idai hit Zimbabwe during the weekend of 15–17 March 2019 no one anticipated the extent of damage and loss it caused. It brought heavy rains and strong winds that triggered flooding and landslides, resulting in loss of life, damage to homes, fields, schools and roads, and disruption to livelihoods. Chimanimani and Chipinge districts were hit hardest. Seven other districts in Manicaland, Masvingo and Mashonaland East Provinces were also affected, including Gutu district, where Africa AHEAD implemented a mix of interventions to rescue communities from poor sanitation and hygiene.

Cyclone Idai affected more than 270,000 people in Zimbabwe, displacing over 51,000, killing more than 340 and many others went missing. Scores of children were orphaned, while female survivors faced gender-based violence. Roads and bridges were severely damaged; some 1,500km of the road network was rendered unusable for months, affecting market access. Livelihoods were disrupted and 140 schools were affected. Housing, health, irrigation and other agriculture facilities were damaged, as were forests and protected areas.

A number of humanitarian players descended on Chipinge and Chimanimani and we worked with communities in Gutu district's five worst affected wards. Key aspects of our response were innovative and demonstrated good practice. Our primary focus as Africa AHEAD was to respond to WASH issues. This included construction of piped water schemes, rehabilitation of water points, construction of toilets, formation of community and school health clubs and spreading COVID-19 awareness.

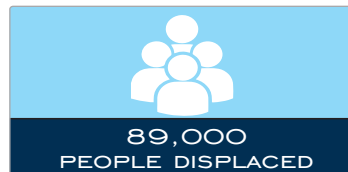
Working closely with a number of stakeholders, we are proud to have reached over 20,000 people with improved WASH services as we built back better Gutu wards hit by Cyclone Idai. Jokoro village in ward 10 is nearing 100% sanitation cover as the community adopts enhanced hygiene and sanitation practices promoted by Africa AHEAD. Munyikwa community in ward 15 is also another perfect example of a transformed society with over 700 people spread across four villages benefitting from a piped water scheme with a distribution network of 9km. One notable practice dropped by most community members is open defecation and we attribute that to Africa AHEAD's work in the district.

We celebrate our work and achievements because of the support from our generous partners under the ZIRP banner – UNOPS, World Bank and UNICEF. We are grateful to these international organisations for their helping hand not only in Gutu district but to all cyclone affected communities in Zimbabwe. Assistance came in form of finance, technical advisory services, high level monitoring visits and linking us with other implementing organisations in the same landscape for cross learning.

Lastly, we are indebted to the Government of Zimbabwe for allowing us to work in Gutu district to complement its efforts in responding to the devastating effect of Cyclone Idai. We worked closely with various government ministries and line departments that include the Ministry of Health and Child Care, Ministry of Local Government, District Development Fund, Gutu Rural District Council and many more government structures. The result was a well-coordinated approach that brought all partners together for a common goal and achievement of the desired results.



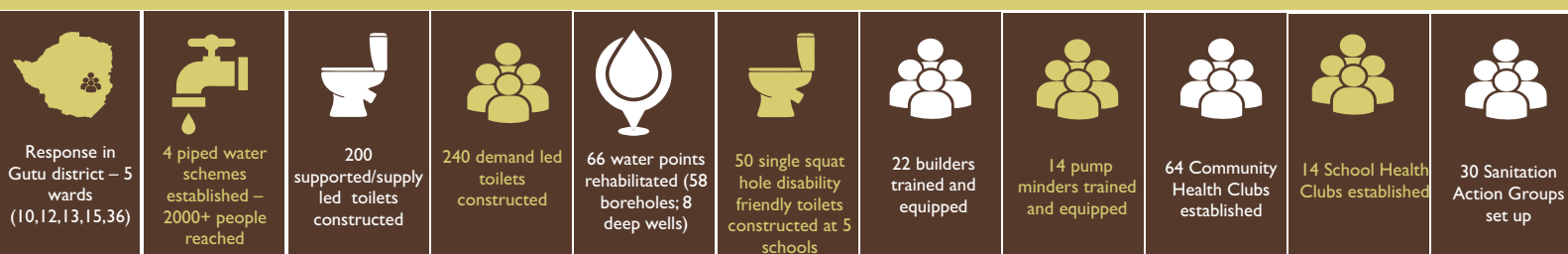
KEY CYCLONE IDAI STATISTICS



WHO IS ZIRP?

The Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project (ZIRP) is a unique partnership between the World Bank and the UN to address the early and medium-term resilient disaster recovery needs of Cyclone Idai-affected communities in Zimbabwe. It marks one of the first-ever integrated engagements with a range of UN agencies under one project umbrella. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) was designated to manage the \$72 million World Bank fund through ZIRP. UNOPS is also implementing the four-year Cyclone Idai Recovery Project (ZIRP) with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), and World Food Programme (WFP), IOM, UNFPA and UNESCO, as technical agencies. This "One Project – One Team" approach brings together expertise in each sector to fully deliver the project outcomes for Cyclone Idai recovery.

AFRICA AHEAD & ZIRP'S INTERVENTIONS



IMPACT OF INTERVENTIONS

IMPROVED ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

IMPROVED SANITATION AND HYGIENE PRACTICES

DROP IN DIARRHEAL DISEASES

PROJECT PARTNERS



United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

UNOPS helps the UN and its partners provide peace and security, humanitarian and development solutions. Our mission is to help people build better lives and countries achieve peace and sustainable development. UNOPS has mandate and expertise in infrastructure, procurement, project management, human resources and financial management services. Our partners call on us to improve speed, reduce risks, boost cost-effectiveness and increase quality.



WORLD BANK

The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world to reduce poverty and support development. The Bank's projects support a wide array of investments in such areas as education, health, public administration, infrastructure, financial and private sector development, agriculture, and environmental and natural resource management.



United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF promotes the rights and well being of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.



Africa AHEAD (Applied Health Education, Agriculture & Development)

Africa AHEAD is a group of dedicated development professionals, based in Southern Africa, devoted to empowering women and alleviating poverty mainly in developing countries in Africa. We do this by developing functional communities which can manage their own development through local and community-based initiatives.

CASE STUDY

HEALTH CLUBS PANACEA FOR BETTER HYGIENE & SANITATION PRACTICES IN CYCLONE IDAI HIT GUTU DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE

In Zimbabwe, about 37% of the population has access to basic sanitation facilities (GoZ, 2019, UNICEF, 2019). Basic sanitation is defined as every household having its own toilet that it does not share with another household. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) report of 2019 slightly above 6 in 10 of the population had basic drinking water services: 92% in urban areas and 51% in rural areas. Of the households without water on-premises, 87% in urban areas, on average, spent up to 30 minutes fetching water per day while in rural 54% spent between 31 minutes to 3 hours. In addition to a lack of access to basic sanitation, 22% of the population were practicing open defecation. As a result of poor sanitation and hygiene in Zimbabwe, community members suffered from a number of diarrheal diseases. This was worsened by Cyclone Idai which hit eastern Zimbabwe affecting over 270,000 individuals, killing an estimated 391 people, displacing over 87,000 individuals, and destroying infrastructure worth billions of dollars (IOM, 2019).

Cyclone Idai affected about 15,000 people in Gutu district, leaving over 1000 vulnerable due to unmet needs for food, shelter, education, water supply, protection, and care.

Through the Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project (ZIRP), Africa Ahead, the Government of Zimbabwe, and UNICEF there has been a significant contribution to the relief of the Idai survivors.

In response to the WASH crisis and to build back the resilience of affected families, Africa AHEAD and UNICEF with support from the World Bank-funded Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project (ZIRP) are supporting WASH activities in the five most affected wards of Gutu district (wards 10, 12, 13, 15 and 36) through interventions that include restoration of boreholes, development of piped water schemes, demand-led and supported latrine construction and the formation of Community and School Health Clubs.

To ensure access to clean and safe water, Africa AHEAD invested in several interventions that include rehabilitation of 66 water points (56 boreholes and 8 deep wells), the establishment of 4 piped water schemes from existing water sources, training and equipping of 22 male community builders, skilling and tooling of 14 pump minders (13 males and 1 female), construction of 200 supported and 240 demand-led one squat hole latrine toilets, construction of 10 squat hole latrines for 5 schools, formation of 64 Community Health Clubs and 14 School Health Clubs and training of 14 School Health Masters, capacitation of 20 Community Based Facilitators and formation of 15 Sanitation Action Groups.

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL HEALTH CLUB GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Africa Ahead puts Community and School Health Clubs at the fore of WASH interventions in responding to the devastating impact of Cyclone Idai. These are its flagship in addressing poor hygiene practices and improving access to sanitation services. Community Health Clubs are an initiative meant to teach children in schools and community members in general appropriate hygiene and sanitation practices with the hope of improving current hygiene and sanitation habits.

A total of 64 community health clubs and 14 school health clubs are leading the adoption of good hygiene and sanitation practices across Gutu's five worst affected wards by Cyclone Idai.

“Community and school health clubs are the flagships of Africa AHEAD's work in most communities. They are led by community members through a committee that ensures the functionality of the club. Their formation, running and structures are all made sustainably”, said Munetsi Mapepure, the Africa AHEAD WASH ZIRP Project Manager.

During the life of the ZIRP project, the community and school health clubs were formed to achieve the following:

- Increased use of toilets in schools and households
- Increased rates of handwashing

CASE STUDY

- An improvement in access to safe drinking water
- Safe disposal of human waste
- Eradication of open defecation in all villages
- Implementation of Community Health Clubs in all villages across the 5 worst affected wards by Cyclone Idai in Gutu district.
- COVID-19 awareness raising
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Education is a major component of CHCs and SHCs. Community-Based Facilitators (CBFs) are leading a revolution in the uptake of better hygiene and sanitation practices.

“We went through a five-day training programme facilitated by the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC) with support from AA. In turn, we take messaging from such trainings into communities. The results are pleasing as community members are positively changing behaviour”, says Nobert Madzivire a CBF in ward 12 of Gutu district, one of the five heavily tore apart by Cyclone Idai.

Community Health Club programmes operate in a way that is intended to be both sustainable and cost-effective by utilizing a standard set of materials. The trained 20 Community Based Facilitators (CBFs) serve villages across the five wards. 90% of the CBFs are also Village Health Workers, working under MOHCC, making contact with community members easy on hygiene and sanitation matters. These CBFs lead awareness-raising in villages and lead weekly meetings. CHCs are made up of both male and female participants enriching discussions. After discussing critical issues for the week, participants are often given tasks to execute to improve their hygiene and sanitation at home. Individuals can participate in tasks from building a homemade hand washing station to practicing safe water storage. Community members meet once every week to discuss hygiene and sanitation issues. In schools, children meet once each week as well for 30 to 60 minutes

RELEVANCE OF CHCS AND SHCS IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19

Water is a critical component in the response to COVID-19. Africa AHEAD, through ZIRP, has invested in water resources that have helped in the fight against COVID-19. It is unfortunate that immediately after Cyclone Idai hit southern Africa, the COVID-19 pandemic followed a few months later causing serious deaths and infections. One of the key preventive measures was washing hands with clean and safe running water. With 66 water points rehabilitated, including 4 piped water schemes, over 20,000 individuals have had water access restored and to some improved. The water distribution network for the Munyikwa Piped Water Scheme in ward 15 of Gutu district is an example of improved access to water of sufficient quality and desired quality.

As a result of this, hygiene and sanitation practices have improved, directly helping to reduce the prevalence of water-borne and diarrheal diseases. This has also meant better access to water during an unending COVID-19 scare.

CHALLENGES

Perhaps the most significant challenge is bridging the gap between policy and implementation. One of the largest gaps is the failure by national and district level authorities to adopt the concept of Community Health Clubs. This needs to be integrated into MOHCC's total led sanitation development plans so that the country responds to sanitation and hygiene outbreaks in a timely and well organized manner. Further, CBFs and VHWs need support that enables them to reach remote areas. Organizations responding to emergencies also need to coordinate in terms of approach to disasters and ensure that those who work in villages are always given clear instructions about what their roles are within the larger organization. This avoids an uncoordinated approach to the implementation of programs, which often leaves communities without a continuation of the Community Health Club activities after the projects conclude.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

As of mid-April 2022, over 2000 adults were participating in 64 CHCs led by 20 CBFs and about 1500 pupils in 14 SHCs led by 14 School-

CASE STUDY

Based Facilitators (SBF). These have been pivotal in raising awareness of hygiene and sanitation issues across and beyond Cyclone Idai affected communities. With the high volume of community members reached by the project, there is increased participation in Africa AHEAD activities in all villages across the five wards in which the project is implemented. Beyond being responsible for community education and spreading awareness for healthy sanitation habits, these health workers also collect sanitation and hygiene information about each village to report to The Ministry of Health.

When compared to programs such as Community-Led Total Sanitation, the Community Health Club model fosters change by promoting healthy behaviors as a cultural norm rather than using shame-based communication in the community to create change. In general, discussions with participants in CHCs responded positively to the community-based approach, citing a good fit with the Zimbabwean culture.

The challenges these Community Health Clubs face, while significant, are not impossible to overcome. In continuing to study the outcomes of these community-based programs and listening to participant feedback, these clubs are well on their way to improving sanitation and hygiene in Gutu district of Zimbabwe.





AFRICA AHEAD DRAWS WATER TO DOORSTEPS

Emelensiana Mapunga, 59, and her granddaughter; Lisa Mapunga, 15, walk slowly to fetch water from a tap installed by Africa AHEAD with support from the Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project (ZIRP). The water point is just 20metres away from their home and is one of 21 such taps created by the WASH rich project seeking to improve the water, hygiene, and sanitation status of Cyclone Idai hit households and individuals in eastern Zimbabwe. It's been exactly a year fetching water from this tap and life has just been simplified specially and uniquely – not more than 200m away from each homestead across the 4 villages served by the 9km water distribution network.

“We used to fetch water from Chikwengweru, a shallow well, before turning to Makute, a perennial dip well, when the weather turned hotter around August and the well dried up”, said Emelensiana.

Fetching water from Makute particularly became a challenge for Lisa during school days as she had to wake up as early as 3 am. After school, she had to go again once or twice to fetch more buckets of water to be used for cooking, laundry, dishes, and bathing by six family members. This left her with limited time to study as she had to do other house chores that included cooking, washing dishes, and sweeping the house and general yard.

“We get clean water from the tap which is just a stone's throw away. It's something we never dreamt of in our lifetime. We hear about running water in the cities and never thought of it here in rural Gutu”, says Lisa, as she fills up her 20litre bucket with water gushing from the tap. It's her first time drawing water from a tap and an experience she shares with school colleagues and others from communities struggling with water needs.

With 9km of piping, Munyikwa piped water scheme serves over 700 people from a single high yielding borehole supported by a solar-powered system and 30,000litres of storage tanks. The water is piped to four villages, a clinic, a school, and a business centre. The taps are designed to be about 200m away from each other to reduce distances travelled to access water. The system was designed in two phases with the first phase completed around March 2021 and the second phase by end of 2021. The scheme has improved water access to over 700 people from a source that used to serve less than 50 people.

Given the poor rainfall pattern experienced in the 2021/2 rain season, a lot more neighbouring villages will need water from the piped water scheme as it has become one of the few reliable water sources with clean and safe drinking water in the community.



AFRICA AHEAD PUSHES FOR 100% SANITATION COVERAGE IN GUTU COMMUNITY

34 adults and a multitude of innocent-looking children gather under a big tree to talk about hygiene and sanitation matters. A team from Africa AHEAD and the Ministry of Health Child Care arrives with educational material to discuss the benefits of good hygiene and the use of toilets to fight diarrheal diseases which have seen an average of 4 children chased from school each week. Open defecation is a threat to a safer lifestyle for Jokoro village of ward 10 in Gutu district where 9 out of 31 families only have latrine toilets. The low sanitation coverage is symbolic of bad practices embedded in the culture of the community – open acceptance of defecation.

It's lunchtime and the community is about to enjoy a delicious meal. Suddenly one community member brings a shovel with fresh faeces made by a fellow community member. It's placed where everyone can see, flies are everywhere and all, except one brave man, fail to dig into the delicious meal.

"We can't eat when we are looking at the faeces, it's disgusting", echoed one community member.

It only took this sanitation triggering session by Africa AHEAD to

convince and push 31 households of Jokoro village to immediately abandon open defecation and start construction and use of toilets. With no resources but expanded knowledge and trainings on proper sanitation and hygiene, Jokoro village is a story that cannot go unheralded.

"Following the triggering, Jokoro community decided to create a Sanitation Action Group (SAG), build their latrines, set up hand-washing stations, and improve their overall waste management. No subsidies are provided for latrine construction under the approach, as it is designed to foster a sense of ownership and self-reliance among community members", says Felistus Mutimukhulu, Africa AHEAD's Hygiene Promoter.

Triggering is based on stimulating a collective sense of disgust and shame among community members as they confront the crude facts about mass open defecation and its negative impacts on the entire community. The basic assumption is that no human being can stay unmoved once they have learned that they are ingesting other people's faeces.

It works with Community-Based Facilitators and Village Health Workers to help community members see for themselves that open defecation has disgusting consequences and creates an unpleasant environment.

“Africa AHEAD does not want to see faeces anywhere except in the toilet”, echoes Andrew Muringaniza, Africa AHEAD's Water Technician, addressing Jokoro community members gathered to learn more about adopting enabling and positive hygiene and sanitation practices.

18 of the 31 families in the village have completed the construction of latrine toilets joining the only 9 who had toilets before Cyclone Idai hit eastern Zimbabwe with Africa AHEAD responding through the Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project (ZIRP) in 2019. This great feat took the community six months to accomplish. The remaining four toilets are under construction and all nearing completion. Soon the community will celebrate 100% sanitation coverage.

“Africa AHEAD promoted the construction of toilets as homes for faeces as they have no place anywhere else. We only had 9 households with toilets before the WASH ZIRP project but due to the model they employed to promote toilet construction, it took one community meeting to change the attitude of the entire community. We now have 27 households out of 31 with fully functional and complete toilets”, said Moreblessing Manomano, Chairperson of Jokoro Sanitation Action Group (SAG).

With door-to-door visits, each village member was motivated to construct a toilet for their homestead. They consulted Africa AHEAD-trained builders to assist with the construction of toilets so that they would meet desired standards. The good uptake of toilets by Jokoro has influenced other neighbouring villages, and be active participants in community health clubs.

Efforts by the Jokoro SAG are strengthened by Community Health Clubs (CHCs), the cornerstone of Africa AHEAD's work in raising awareness of WASH-related issues around Zimbabwe. CHCs support and promote Participatory Health and Hygiene Education (PHHE) activities that are a key source of information and inspiration in strengthening and improving hygiene practices. CHCs are voluntary community-based organizations in Africa conceived and popularised by Africa AHEAD dedicated to improving public health through the promotion of hygiene at village level.

Jokoro village joined neighbouring Muchineripi village to form Chigubu Gear CHC to extensively disseminate health and hygiene matters into the community.

Africa AHEAD has supported the formation of 64 CHCs and 14 SHCs across the 5 wards it operates in Gutu south.

ABOUT ZIRP

The Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project (ZIRP) is a unique partnership between the World Bank and the UN to address the early and medium-term resilient disaster recovery needs of Cyclone Idai-affected communities in Zimbabwe. It marks one of the first-ever integrated engagements with a range of UN agencies under one project umbrella. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) was designated to manage the \$72 million World Bank fund through ZIRP.

Under WASH, ZIRP seeks to improve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and reduce open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

UNICEF, the technical partner under this component, worked on strengthening the adoption of safe hygiene practices using the Participatory Health and Hygiene Education (PHHE) approach; and fostering sustainability and resilience through WASH operation and maintenance and drinking water safety and security planning.

Africa AHEAD is the implementing partner of ZIRP in Gutu district of Zimbabwe.



AFRICA AHEAD FIGHTS CLIMATE CHANGE WITH PIPED WATER SCHEMES IN CYCLONE HIT GUTU

Crop failures, drying water bodies, livestock losses and extreme weather conditions are just a glimpse of an array of challenges being faced by most communities around Zimbabwe. At the centre of it all is the buzz word climate change, a long-term change in the average weather patterns defining earth's new climates.

Recent weather events in Zimbabwe are testimony to the growing threat of climate change. The 2015 El Nino heat wave, the 2016 humid La Nina, 2019 Cyclone Idai and 2022 dry spell are just a few of the weather events that have affected crop yields, water bodies' carrying capacity and state of infrastructure in communities.

For Gutu communities in Zimbabwe, climate change is real, with footprint of its impact all over the district prompting stakeholders to respond in a number of ways that require urgent redress.

"Houses and toilets collapsed in Munyikwa community of ward 15. Our fields flooded resulting in limited to zero yield in 2019. Three years later, we mourn yet another climate change induced weather phenomenon characterised by a short rain season and extremely high temperatures. Again, crop yields are low and water bodies are drying up", says Matthias Matombo, Village head of Madhuku community in ward 15 of Gutu district, on of the five worst affected communities by Cyclone Idai in 2019.

Africa AHEAD is leading response to water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) in communities affected by the cyclone with support from the Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project (ZIRP) comprising organisations that include the World Bank, UNOPS and UNICEF.

Water access has always been a challenge for ward 15 communities even before Cyclone Idai affected some of the perennial water bodies. Community members would wake up as early as 3am to fetch water from the only available source, the Roman Catholic led Mweya Unoyera Training Centre. Some would turn to unprotected wells in the community. In an unusual manner, men had to accompany women and children for security reasons. Wildlife strays in the area time and again, posing a security risk to the community. Getting to the Mweya Unoyera water point late, that is around five or six in the morning, meant one would spend half of the day waiting to be served in a long, winding and tiresome queue exposed to the scorching heat. Community members had no choice but to patiently wait for the precious liquid, water.

Unfortunately, four of the community's wells that served a considerable section of the community got affected by Cyclone Idai

forcing many to travel long distances of as much as 3km to dig deep and dangerous holes in rivers just to be able to access water for domestic use.

The introduction of a piped scheme under ZIRP project in Gutu district has revolutionised the water situation for Munyikwa community, shortening distances to fetch water and supplying a lot more people with safe and clean water from a water point that already existed and previously served less than 50 households.

"We see a revolution in our society. From one borehole that is far from several houses, Africa AHEAD through the ZIRP project made water access and availability to every community member. Each household is now a stone throw away from a water source. There can never be better development than this in Zimbabwe, where climate change is worsening the water situation in the country", said Chairman of Munyikwa Piped Water Scheme, Shelta Matombo.

Munyikwa piped water scheme distributes water to four villages, serving over 700 individuals, through 9km of piping and 30,000litre tanks supported by a solar system. The scheme is run and managed



by the community through a Drinking Water Safety and Security committee whose responsibility is to ensure the scheme sustains lives of community members by providing enough drinking water to all.

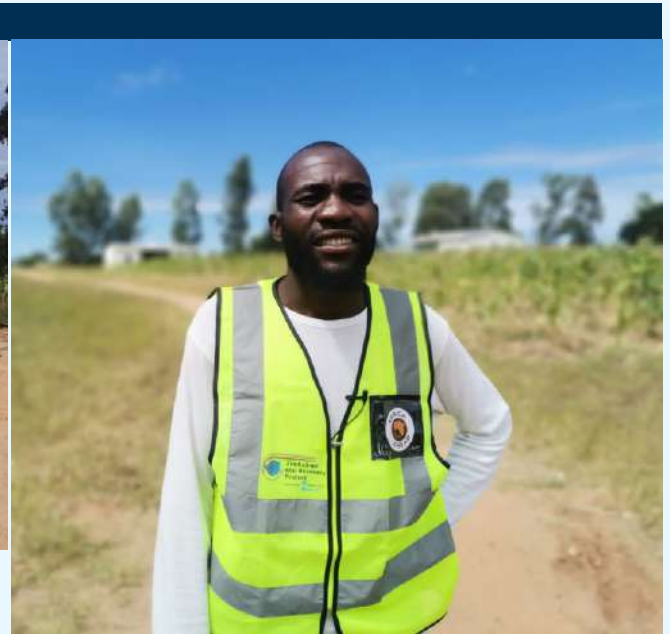
“We have seen several developments around water access in other communities but what we see in Munyikwa is beyond imagination. We receive water on our doorsteps”, said Emelensiana Mapunga, who fetches water a few metres from the perimeter of her yard fence.

“Surely, one thing we have benefitted is more time to be engaged in other activities. School children had to wake too early to fetch water

and even after school they had to walk long distances for more water to be used in houses. With these taps all over our community, we now manage time wisely and never scramble to fetch water as it is now readily accessible by everyone at any given point in time”, added Emelensiana.

Africa AHEAD is establishing 4 piped water schemes and has rehabilitated 66 water points that include boreholes and deep wells across five wards affected by Cyclone Idai in Gutu district of Zimbabwe. This has resulted in improved and increased access to safe drinking water and adoption of good hygiene and sanitation practices.





BUILDING GUTU BACK

It's 5 am and Dickson Pugede, 36, quickly jumps on to his bicycle and heads to Mugodhi Primary School for some construction work. On-site, he polishes his new trowel and checks the status of the rest of the tools he will be using throughout the day. It is going to be yet another hectic day for him and his assistant, Farai. Between 6 am and 6 pm for six days a week he shapes the state of infrastructure in the Gutu district of Zimbabwe. The father of three has been a builder since 2014 and over the years he has perfected his art of bricklaying making him one of Gutu's ward 36 preferred and finest builders. This is also one of the reasons Africa AHEAD chose to work with him in constructing a fraction of the 200 latrines across five wards under the Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project (ZIRP) for vulnerable households affected by Cyclone Idai in March 2019.

One noticeable effect of Cyclone Idai was the proliferation of open defecation as several toilets were erased to the ground. Some were old and weak and others were just too weak to withstand the strong winds that came with the humid tropical weather phenomenon. The immediate impact of open defecation was a rise in diarrheal diseases. "Fortunately for Dickson, he is one of three builders in his ward constructing toilets for vulnerable households under the ZIRP project implemented by Africa AHEAD in Gutu district of Zimbabwe. The toilets built are unique, strong and come with circular holes measuring 1.3m in diameter and 3m deep. It takes an average of five days to complete construction of a single squat hole toilet given that all required resources are available", says Dickson.

Households supported with latrine construction bring together other resources which include river and pit sands and bricks, all locally available materials. The contracted builders get support from assistants and Dickson works with one.

Quality has no room for compromise as Africa AHEAD with the

help of an environmental health technician under the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC) inspect structures at all stages. To ensure quality standards and targets are met on time as well as the continuation of construction of latrines beyond the life of the project, the builders were supported with building tools, PPE, and continued receiving capacity building. This has resulted in improved structures and a quick turnaround on building structures, a reason most clients now prefer working with Dickson. The result is a boom in business.

"I get paid US\$50 per squat completed. This is now the market's standard, but we can negotiate downwards. The least I have gone down to is US\$30. Our mission as builders is to contribute to a reduction in open defecation and increased adoption of positive sanitation behaviours introduced by Africa AHEAD", echoes Dickson, the father of three, two of whom are benefitting from the use of toilets he constructed at Chikore School.

One key benefit realized in communities where Africa AHEAD is working with Cyclone Idai affected communities is a decrease in diarrheal diseases.

"There is a sharp decrease in diarrheal cases in wards where Africa AHEAD is present. This is partly attributed to the promotion of good hygiene and sanitation practices that include construction of toilets", says Environmental Health Technician for ward 15, Andrew Matenda. Dickson's major celebration is the new business he is getting from the community attributable to the construction of the quality toilets under the ZIRP project.

WHAT GOOD HYGIENE AND SANITATION MEAN TO A RURAL GIRL

My name is Ropafadzo Madhekwana and I am a 17 year old girl and form 4 student at Gudza Secondary School in Gutu district of Zimbabwe. I stay in Mutero Village, which is about 6km away from my school, this means I have to manage my time well to be able to get to school on time and not miss any lessons. Before going to school, I help my parents with house chores and after school, I do the same. These include fetching water, firewood and making sure my siblings are equipped for school.

Education means a lot to me, and I believe it's the gateway to a brighter future for my family and community. When I complete my studies, I hope to be a social scientist and work with various people in the community. When I look at the disasters, we face each day my heart bleeds as most families have no means to rise when hit by disasters which look set to worsen given climate change.

There is so much I can do to make sure I receive the best education but little to influence access to some of life's essential necessities. One such key necessity we all need is access to safe water and clean sanitation facilities. When Cyclone Idai made landfall in March 2019, our toilet at home was affected and we had to resort to open defecation. Fortunately, our well did not collapse meaning water supplies were not interrupted.

At school, toilets collapsed, and given our enrolment of over 320 students a crisis loomed. Thanks to Africa AHEAD through the Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project (ZIRP) for rehabilitating a borehole close to our school, Gudza Secondary, which also supports the primary school and surrounding community. When the toilets collapsed, only a few were left functional resulting in overcrowding. Most turned to the bush for relief. Hygiene was compromised and this was not healthy as we had another problem to face – COVID-19. The construction of new, spacious, disability-friendly toilets has been a welcome development for the community.

The formation of three School Health Clubs (SHCs) each comprising 40 members have come in handy to promote good hygiene and sanitation practices.

We now make informed choices and know what to do when it comes to hygiene and sanitation matters. Simple things we do include washing hands after using the toilet and before eating or touching food and observing COVID-19 preventive measures recommended by the World Health Organisation and the Ministry of Health and Child Care.

We pass on knowledge gained from the SHCs into the community in

ways that include community demonstrations and discussions with families. At school, we have 30-minute meetings once each week and what we value is 'listening and acting'.

Change can be noticed in terms of behaviour amongst community members. People are adopting positive behaviour and taking heed of messages shared by Africa AHEAD. Evidence of such includes handwashing in public institutions, protection of water in buckets, and use of tippy taps to wash hands after using the toilet.

One critical change brought by Africa AHEAD is the construction of disability-friendly toilets and the installation of mirrors in school toilets. As a girl, I now feel comfortable and confident looking at myself after using the toilet. This is mostly important during my menstrual cycle.

As I prepare for my O Level end-of-year examinations, I feel confident I will excel as conditions for enabling a good learning environment for the girl child have changed for the better. I have better access to water, hygiene, and sanitation facilities created by Africa AHEAD through the ZIRP initiative. Thank you for the transformation you have brought to my community and school.

Someday soon I look forward to standing in front of students to teach them how to live clean and hygienic lives. Teaching is my dream and I hope to live the dream.





SCHOOL HEALTH CLUB INSPIRES UPTAKE OF POSITIVE HYGIENE BEHAVIOUR

“Faeces have no place in the bush but in the toilet only”, says young Tadiwa Murimvi, 12 years old and a grade 7 pupil at Chokera Primary School in Gutu district of Zimbabwe.

Lessons and knowledge attained from Utano Uchi School Health Club, comprising 25 girls and 25 boys from grades 4 to 7, have shaped the behaviour and choices made by pupils on hygiene and sanitation. Tadiwa cascades information and knowledge she acquires to her family of 6, friends, and school colleagues.

“Through Africa AHEAD teachings, we have acquired new knowledge and skills which include constructing toilets with fly screens, zero tolerance to open defecation, and making use of toilets to dispose of faeces”, says Tadiwa.

Tadiwa's homestead does not have a toilet and she uses her grandmother's next door. Even her 9-year-old sister, Memory, and twin siblings, Kupakwashe and Kunashe, 5, now know that faeces belong to the toilet and have no place anywhere else. Being the firstborn in her family, she has no choice but to lead her siblings by example.

Tadiwa has been a member of Utano Uchi School Health Club since 2019. They meet every Tuesday and Thursday for an hour from 3 to 4 pm to discuss Water, Hygiene, and Sanitation (WASH) related issues. Through the guidance of their health masters, Mr. Reuben Zhara, and Mrs. Mapangudze, Tadiwa and other club members are learning a lot and becoming ambassadors of good health practices at the school and in the community.

“Health clubs promote the importance of hygiene and sanitation. This includes personal health care, maintaining a clean environment,



promoting construction and use of toilets, zero tolerance to open defecation, prevention and management of diseases, and use of safe clean water”, says Mr. Zhara, the Health Master for Utano Uchi School Health Club.

Utano Uchi and other school health clubs have been pivotal in spreading messages on good hygiene and sanitation practices which have in turn resulted in a drop in open defecation, high uptake of handwashing, cleaner and tidier school environment, and improved self-confidence by most pupils.

Tadiwa invests time to spread new knowledge she acquires to other school children who are not part of the health clubs and the greater community she hails from.

“Health clubs are the glue that binds communities together and remains Africa AHEAD's flagship to increased awareness of health and hygiene issues amongst children. When we catch them young, we reach a wider section of the community”, says Felistus Mutimukhulu, Africa AHEAD's Hygiene Promoter.

Content taught in school health clubs is also benefitting students studying Guidance and Counselling as some of it is part of the curriculum covered by students.

Africa AHEAD has led to the formation of 14 School Health Clubs across 7 schools in 5 wards of Gutu district, the worst affected by Cyclone Idai. Over 1500 pupils are participating in the clubs, receiving WASH messages which they, in turn, disseminate to other sections of the community. In the same schools, children enjoy access to well-ventilated, user and disability-friendly toilets and increased access to safe water for multiple uses.





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