



SUCCESS STORY

Helping Communities Achieve Open Defecation Free Status

Engaging communities to improve sanitation and promote cleaner, safer societies



Hildah Onyango from Nyamninia sub-location, Siaya County constructed a latrine using cheap and locally available materials

“Training from the community health volunteer moved us to construct a latrine to serve our household of 10. Cases of diarrhea among our children because we always remind them to wash hands at the tippy tap after visiting the latrines and as adults in the homestead we’ve made it a daily habit to set a good example.”

- Hildah Onyango

Eric Onyiego/ KIWASH

Access to sanitation in Kenya continues to be a major challenge. The 2009 census puts the overall access levels at 65% with rural coverage at 56% and Urban at 79%. According to the Siaya County WASH hub, 1,114 out of 2,245 villages still practice open defecation. Hildah’s household is among several others in Nyamninia sub-location without latrines.

For a long time 32 year old, Hildah Onyango’s family have been practicing open defecation due to lack of a functional latrine, adults either visit latrines far from their homestead or wait until its dark to defecate in the bushes while the children defecate openly. A visit by a Community Health Volunteer (CHV) trained by USAID’s Kenya Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene project to educate households in Nyamninia sub-location on the benefits of having a latrine and practicing hand washing regularly has kicked started the process of positive behavior change among community members.

In 2016, KIWASH trained CHVs on Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), a participatory approach that mobilizes communities to take action to become open defecation free. Kenya adopted the CLTS approach as the national rural sanitation strategy and defined national targets to reduce open defecation by 2020.

After receiving training on CLTS, Lilian Oluoch a community health volunteer in Nyamninia Sub-location, Siaya County went on to sensitize community members about the importance of constructing latrines and hand washing facilities with soap and water to avoid fecal oral contamination and the continued to spread disease.

“I have already reached about 100 out of 127 households that I’m targeting with WASH messages. I’m happy to report positive responses from the community because within the first month of sensitization, five households have already started constructing latrines while others that have latrines have committed to set up tippy taps and wash hands every time they visited the toilets,” noted Lilian.

Hildah is happy that she has a latrine in her homestead that is more private and safer to use.

“Training from the community health volunteer moved us to construct a latrine to serve our household of 10. Cases of diarrhea among our children has reduced because we always remind them to wash hands at the tippy tap after visiting the latrines and as adults in the homestead we’ve made it a daily habit to set a good example,” Said Hildah Onyango.

KIWASH is collaborating with the Ministry of Health and nine target county governments to help implement the CLTS approach in order

to ensure more communities in Kenya attain an Open Defecation Free status and lead healthy livelihoods. This involves triggering of communities to increase demand for sanitation and hygiene through collective improved behavior change needed to ensure real and sustainable improvements.

