

Sani Tweaks

Minimum requirements in sanitation programming for all PHEs and PHPs

Excreta disposal is a service, not a one-off installation

Recent research from latrine programmes shows that on average 40% of women are not using the latrines provided. The main reasons stated are not wanting to be seen going to the toilets, lack of privacy (people peeking in), sexual harassment, cleanliness, lack of lighting at night and the lack of locks on doors.

If latrines aren't used, money, time and resources are wasted and we are failing in our responsibility to the communities we work with. Addressing the key issues below will help us to deliver better quality latrines for all users.

Before starting a latrine building programme – *consult the users*

- How did people dispose of excreta **before** the crisis, what are they doing **now**, and what would they find acceptable now?
- Find out about religious/cultural habits and anal cleansing practice.
- Are there any barriers to WASH services and facilities for specific groups such as disabled or elderly people? Consult individuals directly on what additional support they require.
- Segregated communal toilets: what is the minimum acceptable distance between the women's and men's toilets?
They should never be back-to-back
- Who will be responsible for cleaning and maintenance of communal toilets? What are the issues involved in paying latrine attendants?
- Shared family toilets: can a latrine be shared between four families? Can they share with other families, even if they don't know them? If sharing, do they still need separate male and female latrines?
- What are people's main concerns about using public or shared family latrines?
- What happens to **children's and babies' excreta**? At what age do children use the latrine on their own?
- Are latrines used to dispose of **MHM materials**? **How else could it be managed?**
- Consult on and explain siting constraints.

Design

- How did the community make sanitation decisions before the crisis and how do they make them now? Who participates in decision-making spaces? Do women and men have an equal voice?
- Where possible, show users existing or model latrines so they can comment on the design.
- Ensure maximum concentration is given to privacy. If plastic sheeting is used, it needs to be opaque. **All latrines should always have a method of internal locking**, even in rapid onset emergencies. An efficient and easy way of doing this is by fixing a string hooking on to a nail, which is not prone to door warping issues.
- How can the latrines be positioned or screened so people are not seen going into the toilet?
- Using the toilet at night: can lighting or torches be provided* in the toilet or the pathway?
- Calculate the time when the pit should be full, based on pit volume and number of users. **Plan** for desludging or decommissioning (+solid waste). If desludging is planned, the pit should be lined and have easy access for a hose or slab removal.
- On completion, a PHE or PHP needs to **sign off** the construction quality before payment is made or the latrine is 'opened'.
- What is the best way of ensuring people wash their hands after defecation (consult)?

Monitoring: regular repairs

- Most programmes build new latrines aiming for 1:20 or 50 people per latrine, while neglecting the many latrines which have fallen into disrepair and are not in use.
- Within a month most plastic sheeting superstructures will be damaged. Regular monitoring cleaning and repair – every 2 weeks – is essential to ensure the latrines are still being used.
- What system will you use for people to report damage and design and cleanliness issues and give feedback?

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This checklist is part of the Sani Tweaks series: communications tools to promote best practices in sanitation programmes. www.oxfam.org.uk/sanitweaks.