

Devon supporting
the Millennium
Development Goals

Stand up 2010

FOR BETTER SANITATION IN UGANDA

Update...

On 12 February 2009 schools in Devon joined Devon County Council in raising money for toilets and clean water supply in parts of rural Uganda. Over £8,000 was raised which has so far been spent on improving the facilities at two schools, with plans for work in other schools in 2010.

Urgent needs at Maaya

New toilets and washing facilities for girls was one of the priorities for the fundraising. This became even more critical for Maaya Primary School when one of their existing toilet blocks collapsed in April 2009. This left the school with one small block of toilets to serve over 750 pupils and threatened it with closure. So Maaya was the first school to benefit from the funds.

A new block of latrines with five cubicles and enclosed washing areas was constructed by the New Build Uganda team, assisted by the local community. A small tank was also built to collect rainfall run-off from the new latrine roof for use in the school garden. Work was completed in time for the start of the new school term in August 2009.

A new kind of toilet

Rwabagabo Primary School has been chosen as the site for a demonstration composting toilet. Although such toilets have been used successfully in many parts of the world, they are relatively new to Uganda. These toilets can be used for ten years or more because the waste is removed regularly. It is hoped that this project will help to demonstrate the benefits of composting toilets to local communities throughout Mubende District.

'Stand up for better sanitation in Uganda' is part of Devon County Council's 5 Year Action Plan with the Directors of Education in Mubende, Gulu and Amuru Districts in Uganda. The building work is carried out by local Ugandan builders and monitored by the Food For Thought Programme of Devon Development Education and Kulika Charitable Trust (Uganda).



New toilet block with washing cubicles at Maaya Primary School, Mubende

For further information contact Devon Development Education, The Global Centre, Exeter Community Centre, 17 St David's Hill, Exeter EX4 3RG. www.globalcentredevon.org.uk

Composting toilets

When we flush our toilets, water takes the waste through a system of pipes to sewage works where it is treated to kill the germs. The remaining material can then be used as fertiliser. In countries like Uganda water is not easily available so an alternative is required.

Composting toilets do not need water. Each time someone uses this toilet, they add a handful of 'soak' – material like straw, sawdust, ash or shredded paper. Composting bacteria need carbon and nitrogen. Human waste contains much nitrogen, so the 'soak' provides the carbon. Without carbon, ammonia is produced – which is very smelly. The 'soak' also allows air to mix with the waste, producing good fertiliser.

Beneath each toilet is a chamber containing a basket. When the basket is full, it is emptied in a special shed and returned to the chamber. The waste is left in the shed for about a year while it decomposes and becomes compost. This is safe to use, but it is recommended to be used around fruit trees and not on vegetables.



Activities

- Invite the students to name as many benefits of composting toilets as they can (at least seven). As a class, put them in order of importance. Discuss whether there are any disadvantages.
- Write captions for the four photographs on this page to explain how a composting toilet works.