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GLoWSPROS presents problems and potential solutions that have been developed in the context of the capacity building programme Guided Learning on Water and Sanitation (GLOWS) in Ethiopia. This programme adopts a problem based approach in which participants together with community members identify key water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) problems and possible solutions. In this process they receive external support from staffs from Technical and Vocational Training Centres (TVETC), Water and Health Bureaus and staff from core partners in the GLOWS programme. As a result of this process WASHCOs and Kebele leaders initiate actions that help to improve their WASH conditions, sometimes adopting very creative solutions for their problems. To make this wealth of experience available to others short write-ups are developed called GLOWSPROS (GLOWS Problems and Solutions), to help others to learn from this experience.

Poor quality and use of existing latrines

Introduction

Sanitation is still a considerable problem in Ethiopia and an important effort is being made by the government to reduce open field defecation particularly using Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS). This is resulting in the increase of latrine coverage. Most of these latrines are built of local materials by households themselves. An important problem is that many of these latrines are not of good quality and are not clean and may even contribute considerably to the spread of diseases as they are often located close to the houses and a very important source for fly breading. A related issue is that dirty latrines do not encourage good hygiene practices and often water and soap (or ash) is not readily available close to the latrines.

Latrine under construction

A weak superstructure sometimes even without a door or cloth to cover the opening is another problem as it does not create the necessary privacy, and so people still may prefer open field if they can find better cover there.

Weak superstructure with lack of privacy

The main challenges

The main challenges include:

- Latrines are available but not used.
- Limitations in the design and in fact many latrines may not be built to a design at all.
- Lack of the use of appropriate materials which in some cases may in fact show a

lack of understanding of the importance of a good latrine, as they often are built to a much lower standard than the house.

- Use of an inappropriate structure to cover the hole. Often this is made of just a few branches of a three with space in between. This creates optimal access for flies which cannot be controlled. So at least a proper drop hole needs to be created that can be closed with a lid .
- Lack of cleanliness which may be a result of the materials that were used but may also be an indication that the need for good sanitation is not really felt.
- Bad smell may be another issue and may reduce the desire to use the latrine.
- Inadequate superstructure that does not provide sufficient privacy.
- Absence of handwashing facilities and soap or ashes.

Latrine in use but no superstructure

Possible solution

The possible solutions start from understanding the problem. Therefore a joint problem analysis with the Health Extension Worker and community members is essential. Based in this assessment it may be decided whether for example a CLTS or a hygiene promotion campaign is needed. It may also be that the emphasis needs to be on introducing a better latrine design (pit, slab and superstructure) with possible involvement of private sector particularly for slab construction.

If latrines are dirty and handwashing facilities and soap (ash) are lacking then a targeted hygiene promotion may be a good option which should promote latrine use, latrine cleaning and handwashing.

In case of smell problems it may be explored if ash can be added after latrine use to reduce the smell. This can be combined with a more interesting option of trying to promote the use of urine for fertilizer. For the male population this should not be that complex because even a very rudimentary urinal can be made for example out of an old jerry can. The big advantage is that less urine will be entering the pit which contributes a lot to reducing the smell. Furthermore the urine can be used directly as fertilizer.

An example of a handwashing facility

This note was prepared by Jan Teun Visscher and Abebe Demissie Chukalla from MetaMeta and reviewed by Desta Dimtse from RiPPLE. It was financially supported by UNICEF through SNV Ethiopia.

Further information on GLOWS PROS can be obtained from:
glows@metameta.nl.