

FAECAL WASTE MANAGEMENT

Faecal sludge management (FSM) is the proper collection, transport, and treatment of faecal sludge from pit latrines, septic tanks or other onsite sanitation facilities. Faecal sludge is a mixture of human excreta, water, solid wastes and other anal cleansing materials or menstrual hygiene materials that are disposed in pits

FSM is necessary in densely populated areas where a proportion of the population is not connected to a sewerage network, and the covering and rebuilding of pit latrines is not possible. FSM services are usually provided by formal and informal private sector services providers, local governments, water authorities and utilities. However, in many developing countries FSM services are often unavailable, or if they are available are often informal, unregulated, unhygienic and unsafe. This can lead to surface water and groundwater pollution, the spreading of pathogens into the environment and adverse public health impacts. It can also result in unreliable services with relatively high costs to the households which need them.

The sanitation ladder does not guarantee proper use and the associated health benefits. In Kampala, majority (70%) of the urban poor use shared latrines; with less than half (47%) of the latrines clean enough to be used and another 45% of the facilities being abandoned, The various sanitation initiatives in urban poor areas have not emphasized improved use, cleaning and maintenance (Emptying) of the available facilities; emphasis seems to be on mere sanitation infrastructure, the misuse and abandonment of latrines is usually a gradual process that causes descending of the sanitation ladder hence open defecation and urination leading to filthy and dysfunctional latrine structures

In some communities, the faecal sludge remains buried once the pit is full and they open a new site as the sludge is not collected, transported or treated but is safely disposed of. This is considered a safe system of disposal though expensive and it is only suitable where space allows. It's more common on the urban fringes and villages rather than in dense slums where space is limited and others adapt so that they can continue using them even when they are full by allowing the contents to overflow into an open drain or local informal sewer thus increasing the diseases and unhealthy living.

In a bid to curb increased open defecation and urination that is brought about by filthy and dysfunctional latrines, Alliance Water Solutions (AWASO) is promoting emptying services in peri-urban communities that are not connected to sewage lines in Jinja and it might take them over 20years to be connected. Such communities/institutions include: schools, health facilities, household slums, landing sites, island's, religious institutions and markets. Though the need for the services is enormous, the capacity to afford payment is very minimal on top of poor latrine floor structures set up and lack of access to toilet/latrine facilities.

Support towards improving quality service delivery as an organisation with appropriate transport system, data management, marketing and enforcement among others is urgently needed as we aspire to serve the needy and reduce the disease burden at household level in less privileged communities.