

A STUDY BY THE HEALTH MINISTRY SHOWS THAT KATAKWI WAS AMONG THE WORST, WITH 11% LATRINE COVERAGE

**PALLISA**

By Lawrence Okwakol

Eight villages in Opwateta sub-county, in Pallisa district that registered for the Sanitation Fund Programme (SFP) have recorded a 100% pit-latrine coverage. They have been recognised and rewarded by the office of the district health officer.

Dr Godfrey Mulekwa, the district health officer, said items including water drums, big community saucepans and solar-powered lamps were bought using money from SFP. Mulekwa said, currently, Pallisa's pit latrine coverage stands at 88%, but before SFP started in 2011, the coverage was at 32%.

"I want to commend the work of the community, health educators and village health teams for helping Shariff Oriada, the SFP focal person in Pallisa, to ensure communities move away from open defecation, which results in the transmission of dangerous diseases," Mulekwa said.

Oriada said the sub-counties that passed the required laws in ensuring all households had pit-latrines were doing well.

Robert Amuriat, the secretary for health and education, said: "We do not mind losing votes in the next elections. What is

# Pallisa recognised for 100% latrine coverage



Oriada (in blue) handing over a pit-latrine smoking bin. Photo by Lawrence Okwakol

important is our communities living in a disease-free environment," Amuriat said.

Oriada also commended the innovativeness of the village health teams in Opwateta sub-

county regarding the smoking bins as a means of driving flies out of grass-thatched pit-latrines.

Clare Amagoro, a senior health educator, said washing

hands after using a pit-latrine had also improved to 54.2%, from zero, before the programme started, since only children used to wash hands at school.

## Other districts' progress

Of the districts in Uganda, Katakwi has one of the worst records, with just 11% of latrines of acceptable standard, a new study has shown.

The study, which provides an analysis and evaluation of the current and retrospective sanitation and hygiene situation conducted by the health ministry was conducted in 15 districts that have benefited from the Uganda Sanitation Fund since 2011.

The 15 districts are Dokolo, Amolatar, Amuria, Katakwi, Kaberamaido, Soroti, Serere, Kumi, Ngora, Bukedea, Kibuku, Pallisa, Mbarara, Sheema and Bushenyi.

The report highlights that the latrines inspected in the districts during the survey at 62% were considered clean, with Bushenyi being the cleanest at 91%. However, the reports indicate that 78% of the households interviewed did not have a hand-washing facility near the latrine.

## Latrine coverage

| District    | Not acceptable standard | Acceptable standard | Total coverage |
|-------------|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Mbarara     | 51%                     | 44%                 | 95%            |
| Bushenyi    | 55%                     | 34%                 | 89%            |
| Sheema      | 62%                     | 33%                 | 95%            |
| Pallisa     | 57%                     | 30%                 | 87%            |
| Kibuku      | 73%                     | 27%                 | 100%           |
| Bukedea     | 57%                     | 23%                 | 80%            |
| Kumi        | 75%                     | 20%                 | 95%            |
| Ngora       | 66%                     | 17%                 | 83%            |
| Serere      | 68%                     | 17%                 | 85%            |
| Soroti      | 80%                     | 13%                 | 93%            |
| Katakwi     | 63%                     | 11%                 | 74%            |
| Amuria      | 62%                     | 10%                 | 72%            |
| Kaberamaido | 69%                     | 7%                  | 76%            |
| Dokolo      | 93%                     | 7%                  | 100%           |
| Amolatar    | 70%                     | 0%                  | 70%            |

Martha Naigaga, the sanitation co-ordinator at the Ministry of Water and Environment, said latrine coverage in the country stands at 86% in urban areas and 80% in the rural ones.

She explains that latrine coverage in areas like Karamoja, Gomba, Kiboga and Kyankwanzi stands at less than 20%.

She attributed the low toilet coverage in such districts to lack of prioritisation at family level in investing in digging of latrines, culture, poverty, poor technology and low level of sensitisation.