

# Tippy tap increases hand washing in Karamoja

ABIM

By George Bita

Yuventino Ochen walks out of his pit-latrines at the southern end of his hut commonly known as *manyata* and heads for the hand-washing facility nearby to clean his hands.

He picks the soap, rubs it in his hands and steps on a wooden pole attachment, which tilts a five-litre jerrycan to pour out water. The local tool called a tippy tap aids in hand washing.

The rudimentary assemblage comes cheaply as it involves setting up poles on which a small jerrycan is mounted. This container is linked by a string to the wooden footstep platform essential in releasing the water so one does not need another person to pour out water for them. Being hands free the tippy tap reduces on chances of contaminating the water container.

Barely four years ago, this facility was non-existent at this homestead in Aridai South village in Abim district of Karamoja sub-region.

Ochen with other Karimojongs have embraced the simple hand-washing technique to improve sanitation and hygiene.

## Genesis of the change

According to Mathias Buteraba, the Abim district health inspector, by 2012, most patients admitted to health units in Karamoja sub-region were suffering from diarrhoea, typhoid and other waterborne diseases.

"The sanitation coverage was standing at 38%. This prompted local authorities to seek plausible interventions to improve the situation," Buteraba explains.

He reveals that the Government, together with development partners, then embarked on sensitisation, as well as helping residents own improved latrine structures.

He says residents were encouraged to build simple grass-thatched latrines with the hand-washing facility.

## Current status



Abim RDC Mpipbaza Hashaka demonstrates hand-washing in Gotapwou. Photo by George Bita

Buteraba discloses that 3,381 hand-washing facilities have been constructed in settlements in over 61 villages of Abim.

"This is a sign of change in attitude towards good sanitation and hygiene practices. It shows that more people are washing their hands after toilet use to avert the spread of disease-causing germs," he said.

"The sanitation coverage has also shot up to 63.3% of late. This indicates an improvement in household cleanliness," Buteraba observes.

Joan Namukose, the branch manager of Multi Community Based Development Initiative, says follow-up visits have been conducted since 2012.

Samuel Emeru, the WASH project manager for Karamoja, commends the progress so far made in ensuring that residents embrace good hygienic practices.

## Challenges

Gino Ojwang, the Abim district cultural officer, says that some residents cherish culture so much that it may take quite a while to

change their mind-set.

"In Morulem, Alerek and Lotuke sub-counties it is common to find expectant mothers who believe defecating in latrines is taboo. They claim it has an effect on the unborn child and prefer the bushes, which do not have hand-washing facilities," Ojwang says.

## Way forward

Namusoke says a total of 30 volunteer community facilitators were trained and tasked with making routine visits to ensure compliance with the new set up.

## VIEWS ON SANITATION AND HYGIENE IN KARAMOJA



**Isaac Mwaka**  
It is unfortunate that some NGOs are leaving Karamoja when people are beginning to change.



**Clara Cherop**  
Some people in the area refuse to embrace good practices due to traditional beliefs.



**Moses Lotuk**  
I was initially not much bothered about hand washing, but now I never miss to wash them.



**Sarah Abonyo**  
Gone are the days when one would just walk away with dirty hands after visiting the latrine.

# State House intervenes in church land row

MASINDI

By Pascal Kwesiga

The State House directorate on land has directed Masindi Kitara Diocese to halt construction activities on land being claimed by the church and the family of an 88-year-old woman, Ann Ngaronsa.

The directorate has been investigating a dispute between the two parties over a 0.93 hectare piece of land, where the church is located in Kyema cell in Masindi municipality.

In a December 16, 2016 report, the directorate, Edward Ochieng, said the church and the family of Ann Ngaronsa have erected a new church (church) for Kyema Church of Uganda, Masindi, in the area.

## BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ Ngaronsa, a resident of Kyema cell in Karujubu division, Masindi municipality, has since 2009 been battling with the church in court over the land.

In a September 18, 2015 ruling, Masindi Grade One Court dismissed a case Ngaronsa had filed in respect to the land she claimed. She alleged that wrong parties had been sued. She had sued three individuals, who represented the church, for supervising the construction of a new church building on the disputed land.

Ngaronsa, who is currently bedridden, alleged that Kyema Church of Uganda grabbed part of her family's eight-acre-piece of land.

## Land not under church title

However, it is alleged that Ngaronsa's deceased husband, Sam Rwakaikara, who died in 1978, donated part of the family's land to the church in the 1930s. The family maintains that the portion (of land) where the church building was constructed is not part of the land title for the land Rwakaikara gave it. The church acquired a land title for the land in 1936. The contested 0.93 hectare piece of land is not part of the property which was titled by the church.

"Why has this portion remained unregistered since 1936? Therefore, occupation of the land (disputed) is trespass," the report indicated.

The State House team interviewed the church and the diocese's estates officials during their investigation. Ochieng said Ngaronsa is a "voiceless" old woman, who should not be deprived of her property through intimidation.

# EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT