

PUBLIC HEALTH IN SOUTH SUDAN

Categories: Hygiene Assistance/Community Development/Refugee Assistance

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Hygiene Assistance

Communities Must Come Together To Ensure Success

Basic sanitation, good hygiene practices, and access to safe drinking water are all components that lead to a healthier life. Thus, the promotion of proper sanitation and hygiene practices is essential for the livelihood of communities, especially in areas where open defecation is common. Furthermore, in communities where the water supply is limited, the women in the family are often given the task to seek water, which ultimately takes up a large proportion of their livelihoods when they could be doing something more effective. Moreover, poor sanitation facilities often lead to young girls missing or even dropping out of school in order to cope with menstruation.

WASH facilities are in fact meant to encourage proper hygiene behavior not only in households, but within schools and social havens such as markets where people congregate. Basic hygiene practices merely comprises of simple steps that can lead to a healthier life, however where the lack of encouragement exists, there lies a risk in unawareness.

In the Yei River County, many villages do not have the power to maintain the facilities provided to them not only by JEN, but by other NGOs, private companies, and the government. Yet it ultimately up to the communities themselves to ensure that facilities and practices remain functional. For example, the community of Rubeke have not been able to sustain their borehole, thus community members have ended up drinking from unprotected wells under the belief that “clear water = clean water.”



Above: A broken borehole

Reasons behind why the Yei River County communities cannot sustain their facilities include donor dependency, lack of plans for funding distribution, and the lack of interest from community members to volunteer. All this needs to be reversed in order for communities to flourish and remain healthy. Further, community leaders must take responsibility in encouraging the rest of the local population.

Community Development

Integrating to Encourage Self-Reliance

Although the sustainability of hygiene programs primarily depends on community leadership, other key community members can play important roles. For example, in Otego Payam of Yei River County, the school administration and trained hygiene teachers are responsible for school hygiene education.

In fact, hygiene teacher of Yembe Primary School, Mr. Joseph Juma Ginya, explained that for school hygiene to continue, they introduced income generating activities such as farming, which could generate enough income to allow them to buy hygiene materials such as soap.

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The integration of hygiene education together with other activities allow for students to develop a notion that they have the ability to do things on their own, rather than frequently having to depend on external aid

Refugee Assistance

Distribution of Items to IDPs a Success

On January 22, a meeting was held among aid agencies, including JEN, for the distribution of materials to the Internally Displaced Persons with an agenda to categorize the items donated by aid organizations such as JEN, CARITAS and UNHCR, while taking into account the total IDP population as well as the potential method of distribution. In the end, it was agreed that the IDP's own committees would carry out the distribution, while the guidance of the agencies.

The distribution itself took place the following day. Jerry cans, buckets with lids, soap, plastic sheets, sleeping mats, kitchen sets, and tools for communal use such as wheelbarrows were among the items distributed to the IDPs.



Above: People gathering to collect Jerry cans

Community Development

Maintaining Community Resources

Most organizations often operate under limited resources and on a tight budget, ultimately depending on locally available resources to help support home-grown projects. That being said, it is almost never a good idea to start a project completely from scratch, especially if it requires an enormous amount of resources unavailable locally.

Martin Lokolo Justin, JEN's economic empowerment assistant at Yei Central in

South Sudan, is responsible for JEN's day to day implementation of empowerment projects, one of which includes soap making. His job is to analyze what resources the soap making group may need and whether they can afford it or not with JEN's absence. This is an excellent sign for JEN, for it indicates a self-reliant community, which will be well-off in the long run.



Above: Community members participate in soap making



The 7 EN's of JEN

- Engage
- Entrust
- Encourage
- Endeavor
- Enjoy
- Encounter
- Enable

DONATE NOW AND HELP THE CAUSE!

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