

Mvula's early work in school sanitation (1996-2002)

Introduction

The majority of rural schools in South Africa have no toilets, too few toilets, or have toilets that are unsafe and unpleasant to use. Provincial Departments of Education have tended to prioritise infrastructure spending on classrooms to ease overcrowding, and water and sanitation facilities have been neglected. Opportunities to use the school curriculum to promote basic health and hygiene are seldom exploited.

The European Union (EU) funding programme was started in 1996 in an attempt to reduce the great deficit of adequate sanitation in rural schools. The Mvula Trust as an Implementing Agent allocated finances to more than 150 institutions to erect good basic sanitation in the form of Ventilated Pit Latrines (VIPs), and carry out proper health and hygiene training and awareness raising on the importance of good sanitation. Working through School Governing Bodies, each school community was required to contribute 10% of the construction costs. This was done to ensure the commitment of the community to the success of the programme.

EU-NGO School Sanitation Improvement Programme in Limpopo Province

This programme ran from 1996 – 2002. It involved the construction of institutional ventilated improved pit (VIP) toilets for 5 521 pupils and 142 teachers in eight schools in the Letaba area in the Mopani District Municipality, approximately 20km east of Tzaneen.

Programme opening

The programme was officially opened on 20 August 1999 by Father S Mkhatswa (then Deputy Minister of Education) and Mr Ronnie Kasrils, former Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, The Mvula Chair of the Board of Trustees, Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi (who is also the Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism), and the then MEC for Education in Limpopo, Mr E Mushwana.



Mr. Ronnie Kasrils at the Banana School Sanitation project opening

Construction of the toilet blocks commenced in 1996 with an application from one school. In May 1998 construction was scaled up. Schools were clustered to ensure benefits of scale.

Each VIP toilet design had its own hand washing facilities, and a small 200-litre tank at each hand washing facility was provided. This was for manual filling until such time as new water infrastructure is provided.

Objectives

The objective of the programme was to enhance and strengthen capacity of local schools to manage environmental sanitation issues, educate learners on health and hygiene issues related to water and sanitation, and strengthen local capacity on construction of sanitation facilities and rainwater harvesting techniques.

Parallel to this, capacity building, management training, health and hygiene education and maintenance training of the school pupils and teachers was implemented.

Lastly, the programme used The Mvula Trust as its implementing agent, on condition that project agents would be other NGOs and / or community-based structures.

Schools included in the programme

The schools, which were part of the programme, are listed, along with the number of users, and numbers of toilets, urinals and hand washing facilities built:

Name of school	Number of users		Toilets			Urinals		Hand washing facilities	
	Learners	Staff	Girls	Boys	Staff	Learners	Staff	Learners	Staff
Banana Lower Primary School	666	15	11	6	3	6	1	2	1
Khujwana Primary School	1 050	28	18	9	3	9	1	2	1
Marito Primary School	780	24	13	7	3	7	1	2	1
Matimu High School	732	15	14	6	3	6	1	2	1
Mpumulana High School	723	20	12	6	3	6	1	2	1
Ponani Primary School	940	23	16	8	3	8	1	2	1
Shikhati Lower Primary School	300	7	5	3	2	2	1	1	1
Tinghisi Lower Primary School	330	10	6	3	2	2	1	1	1
Total no of users	5 521	142	95	48	22	46	8	14	8

Budget

The budget for the programme covering all schools was:

Line item	Amount
Feasibility Study	R8 000
Training and health education	R15 000
Materials and labour	R397 450
Transport	R2 000
Communication	R1 600
Project administration for the Project Agent	R29 496
Project administration – other	R36 378
Total	R 489 924



School children singing during the project opening at the Banana School in Limpopo

Benefits

The benefits were many, and went far beyond new and clean school toilet facilities:

- Standardised designs save costs.

- Clustering of projects within a programme brings benefits of scale and opportunities for cross-community learning.
- Maximum community involvement means people within communities gain experience in planning and implementing a project, ordering supplies, managing finances, paying labourers, resolving disputes, and many other generic skills.
- Stakeholder involvement means increased long term sustainability.
- Local economic benefits include money coming into the community through remuneration of local labourers and contractors, and purchasing from local suppliers (such as brick and pedestal makers).
- Empowerment in the form of developing specialist skills of local contractors and builders means they have opportunities to

practice their trade, and earn income of these and other projects.

- Marked decrease in absenteeism owing to fall in diarrhoea-related illnesses.
- The projects instilled in the school communities gave a sense of confidence that people at grassroots level are in a

position to achieve positive changes in their communities.

- Indirect benefits extended to new networks being formed, especially between schools which are often isolated and do not establish contact with their colleagues in nearby village.

EU-NGO School Sanitation Improvement Programme in the Mpumalanga Province

In the Mpumalanga province, the Mvula Trust facilitated the Nkomazi Institutional Sanitation project. The project started in 1997. The project provided sanitation facilities in nine institutions (four crèches and five schools) in the Nkomazi area in the southeast of Mpumalanga. In addition, health education programme was also run in conjunction with construction programme. The total cost of the project was R433, 131, 17.

Below are the schools, which were part of the programme, along with the number of users, and sanitation need for each school:

Benefits for the School

- Schools were involved in the design process
- Builders were provided with technical training
- Community people contributed verbally during the meeting that took place at the school
- Privacy for girls
- Cleanliness
- PHAST training also helped them to partially educate the community after school hours

Schools	Sanitation needs	Staff	Boys	Girls
Magudu primary School	VIPs for pupils and staff, including hand washing facilities to replace non-functioning flush system	18	536	492
Ndlemane primary School	VIPs for pupils and staff with hand washing facilities	9	236	240
Mbombo primary School	VIPs for pupils and staff including hand washing facilities to replace non-functioning flush system	11	478	439
Zandile primary School	VIPs for pupils and staff with hand washing facilities	9	436	450
Thuthukani Crèche	VIPs for pupils and staff with hand washing facilities	2	25	40
Siyampambile Crèche	VIPs for pupils and staff with hand washing facilities	2	25	40
Sihlangeni Crèche	Connection of flush system to existing water tank (upgrading reliability of flush system)	4	25	25
Sikwahlane Crèche	VIPs for pupils and staff. Upgrading hand washing facilities	2	14	24
Sikhanyisiwe Crèche	VIPs for children and staff	4	13	16
Total served people				3574

Two other examples of school sanitation in the EU-NGO Programme, KwaZulu-Natal Province

The Emnambithi Institutional Sanitation Project and the Bulwer School Sanitation Project were also part of the EU-NGO Programme. In these two cases, The Mvula Trust was the implementing agent, and the project agent (Thuthuka) on both projects were located within

the communities. The same programme objectives applied as in Limpopo.

Emnambithi Institutional Sanitation

The Emnambithi Institutional Sanitation Project provided sanitation facilities within all

community institutions in the communities of Dewaal, Spandikron and Waaihoek. The project serviced a total of 3 224 users located in 10 separate institutions via 100 toilets, 22 urinals and 10 handwashing basins.

In addition to the infrastructure, training was provided to the Project Steering Committee, and the individual committees appropriate to the areas of project management, financial management, and technical construction.

The unit cost for each of the three facilities was: toilets R1500, urinals R2000, and hand washing facilities R5000. These were calculated on the capital cost of each facility. Based on the total capital cost of all facilities the cost per capita of the project was R104.70. The total cost of the project was R518, 822

Bulwer School Sanitation

The project cost was R480 954. The cost per pupil was R89.88 for materials and labour.

Benefits for Project Steering Committee (PSC)

Full consultation was encouraged with the school governing bodies with an option offered to form a PSC to assist in managing the project. The PSC had full responsibility for selecting builders and suppliers of material, and

sanctioning all project payments. They also shared a part of controlling the project account, which was managed by the Project Agent.

The following five schools were part of the project, and had the following numbers of learners and staff.

School	Learners	Staff
Sindawonye Primary School	321	8
Esiqingini Primary School	258	10
Sithunjwana Primary School	608	15
Enkalabantwana Primary School	680	16
Mathomela High School	500	16

For more information

1. *Mvula's methodology and approach* – Limpho Klu, Regional Manager, Polokwane: Limpho@mvulaptb.co.za.
2. *The EU-NGO Programme* – Rob Dyer, National Programme Manager: rob@mvuladbn.co.za.
3. *Access to references and other materials* – Jabu Masondo, Communication and Advocacy officer: Jabu@mvula.co.za.

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The Mvula Trust Case Study Series includes case studies and stories of The Mvula Trust projects and experiences in the field of community-managed water supply, sanitation, and integrated development.



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