

School Sanitation for the Department of Education, Eastern Cape

Introduction

The Coega Development Corporation’s Rapid Infrastructure Development Agency (RIDA) appointed The Mvula Trust in 2004 to implement a major school sanitation programme. The Provincial Department of Education identified the projects. The projects commenced in June 2004 and will come to an end in March 2005.

Mvula’s role is to assist in managing the construction of toilets in 40 rural schools in the Eastern Cape. Prioritised schools are located in seven education districts. The first phase involved R10 million work. It is a pilot to establish and test contractual arrangements and construction methods appropriate to promoting local economic development and quick delivery of toilets.



School toilet construction in the Eastern Cape

Track record

The Mvula Trust won the tender because of its track record that includes:

- Experience in rural household and institutional sanitation.
- Knowledge and experience in working in rural communities.
- Experience in integrating school sanitation with user education relating to health and hygiene.



Mooiplaas Lower Primary School children in the Eastern Cape

- Experience in operations and maintenance arrangements.
- Desire to influence the school curriculum to incorporate health and hygiene and sanitation issues.
- The geographical spread of the Mvula offices suited the Department of Education’s targeted areas.

“We are pleased that we are one of the first schools in our district to have received these sanitation facilities and that we have attended training on health and hygiene. We see ourselves as ‘a pilot’ and therefore we have a huge task ahead of us in demonstrating to other schools that we can look after these sanitation facilities by practising good health and hygiene”

Says Mr Mgushelo the Principal from Dove Junior Secondary School.

Project Overview

The project involved four Water Services Authorities and eight municipalities. The total budget per school was R250 00.

Location of projects and budget break down

Water Services Authority	Local Municipality	Education district	No of schools	Budget
Amatole	Mbashe	Idutywa	8	R1 586 030
O.R. Tambo	King Sabata Dalidyebo	Umtata / Mqanduli	5	R9 728 71
O.R. Tambo	Port St Jones / Nyandeni	Libode / Port St Johns	5	R1 668 205
O.R. Tambo	Qaukeni	Lusikisiki	7	R990 468
O.R. Tambo	Mbizana	Bizana	5	R767 924
Alfred Nzo	Mzimbvubu	Maluti	5	R1 109 290
Ukhahlamba	Elundini	Mount Fletcher	5	R1 097 319

Approach

- Consultation and planning meetings with the Coega Corporation, the provincial Department of Education, school authorities and district officials before commencing the programme.
- Local emerging contractors appointed through tender.
- Contractors managed by the three Mvula Trust Regional Offices in the Province (East London, Kokstad and Umtata).
- Contractors procure own labour and materials (excluding free issue materials).
- Retention against defective work.

User education materials

User education materials have been developed and introduced in schools through workshops on several learning areas in the curriculum.

Materials developed include:

- Manuals for School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and Principals.
- Exercises for pupils that integrate health and hygiene and sanitation-related operations and maintenance issues.
- Teachers' guide.

Low cost desludging

This programme is also piloting low cost desludging technologies to empty pits. A demonstration of the UN Habitat Vacutug was carried out at Mooiplaas Primary School in the Amathole District Municipality where there were full pits. This was to assist the Department of Education to develop a strategy to guarantee

long-term sustainability of toilets at schools. The Vacutug is a much smaller, cheaper and more mobile version of the "Honeysucker" tanker. Contents of ventilated improved pit (VIP) toilets are sucked out and disposed of by reburying in new pits dug close-by.

"The materials are good and are up to the standard of learners. A thorough read and preparation of how to use the exercises in one's lesson plans is required so that they can add a health and hygiene perspective to what one is teaching. We need further support in increasing the number of trained educators in our school."

Mr Jedezwi, teacher, Dove Junior Secondary School.

"The materials are not at all an add on but instead, they are fun and easy to teach as they complement our lessons plans. We are excited, ready and keen to implement the training that we have received, we are even thinking about how to share this training with other educators in our school."

Ms Gcwabe Principal, Maluti Junior Secondary School.

Benefits

For the schools / learners / teachers / parents

- Teachers and learners are proud of using good-looking toilets and hand washing facilities.
- Have privacy for girls.
- Involvement of parents in decision making and participating in project implementation.

- Pupils spreading the health and hygiene message back into their families.
- The toilets include hand-washing facilities – and form part of broader health and hygiene education.
- The schools are provided with water tanks that can be used for drinking, hand washing and other health and hygiene related issues (some schools have separate rain water harvesting facilities).
- The design is user friendly, and takes account of learners who are physically handicapped – this design is implemented in all the schools.

For Local Economic Development

- Small and medium enterprises have managed to implement contracts to the value of R500 000 for the first time.
- They have opened accounts with the suppliers.
- They gained experience in building works.

Lessons and challenges

Working with new partners is a learning process involving new challenges. In this project they included:

- Quality of construction work required strict supervision.
- Local contractors had difficulties in meeting Coega Corporation requirements.
- Contractors had problems with the tendering process and their cash flow.
- Operation and Maintenance requires a lot of attention.
- Need to get the District Municipalities (DMs) involved.

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.



For more information contact

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- Financial constraints of the Department of Education make the future of the programme uncertain.

The Mvula Trust will take the lessons into account in future school sanitation programmes. It will also continue to advocate for:

- Improved dialogue and coordination between those involved in (school) sanitation.
- Capacity building of emerging contractors.
- Improvement of access to cash for contractors.
- Need for massive funding to address the backlogs.

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