

Humanitarian Sanitation: What we do and challenges we face

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Oxfam, Jan Heeger

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Who am I?

Marij Zwart, 35, Rotterdam

- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene advisor at NLRC
- Sanitary engineer (Wageningen, TU Delft)
- Utilities (Evides)
- Emergency WASH deployments
- Global WASH cluster



The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement



16 million active volunteers
7 fundamental principles



International Committee of
the Red Cross (**ICRC**)

provides assistance and
protection to victims in
conflict situations,
guardian of humanitarian
law of war & founder of the
Geneva Conventions

International Federation of
Red Cross and Red Crescent
Societies (**IFRC**)

umbrella organisation of
191 national societies, takes
action in the event of major
**natural disasters (before,
during and after)**

What makes us unique

We aim to prevent and alleviate human suffering, protecting life and health, and ensuring respect for humanity.

Any time, anywhere

With the largest volunteer aid network in the world, we are present everywhere.

Since 1863

With over 150 years of experience in disaster and conflict relief

As local as possible, as international as necessary



Why water and sanitation?

Water is a human right, yet 2 billion lack water access and 3,5 billion sanitation

- **Public health**

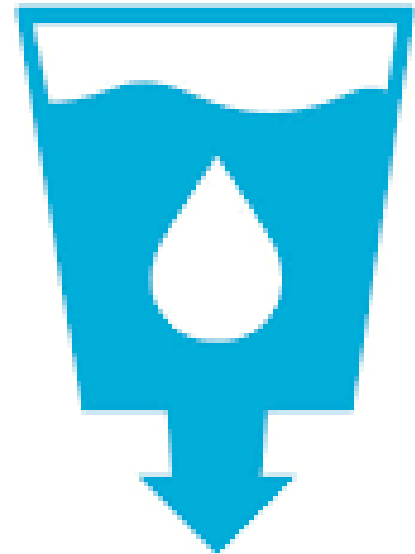
Water-related diseases like diarrhea, cholera, typhoid, skin infections etc

- **Human dignity**

Safety, well-being and social status, lost opportunities for education and work, sexual assault

6

CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Diarrhea **top 3** cause of death for children under 5 worldwide



Children under five years living in war zones are **20** times more likely to die from diarrhea due to unsafe water and sanitation, than from direct violence associated with the conflict.



Why during and after emergencies?

To alleviate suffering and protect human life

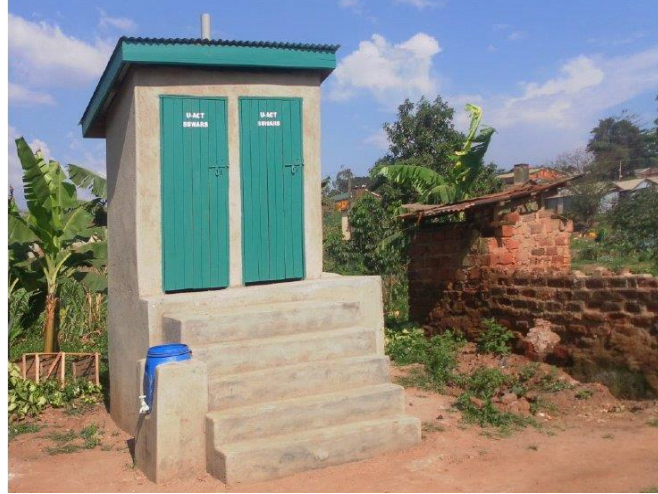
Increased risks due to

- Lost access to water and toilet
- High population densities
- Less access to required hygiene items like soap
- General increased vulnerability

Disasters like floods and droughts often cause direct increase in exposure to water-related pathogens

Sometimes the disaster itself is directly water-related (cholera)









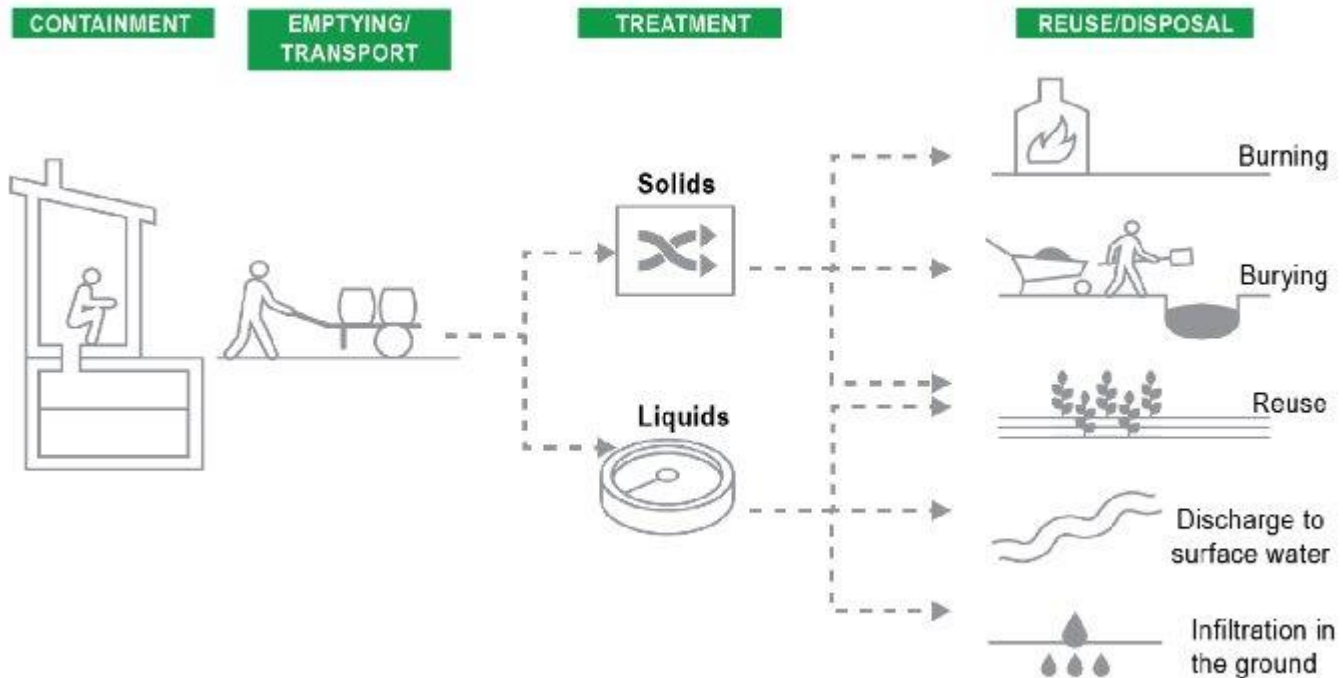
The ground water level is more than 1.5 meters deeper than the bottom of the pit



The latrine is more than 30 meter away from a water source like a well or surface water



There is sufficient space to dig a new pit once the pit is full, and material (lime) and knowledge are available to decommission the old pit safely









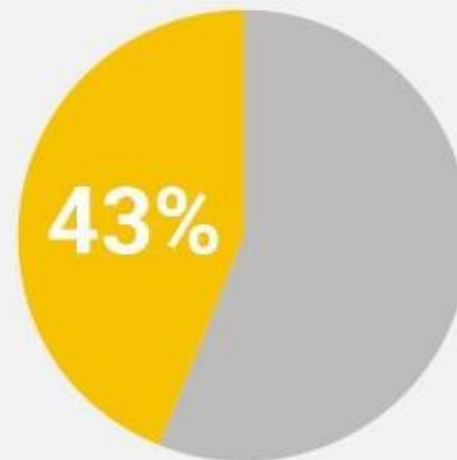


6.2.1a SANITATION

3.5 billion people



lacked safely managed sanitation services.



of the world's population.

419 million people

practised open defecation, in 2022.



SDG 6 INDICATORS - 2024 UPDATE

Challenges

Insufficient capacities and resources (access, knowledge/expertise, **funding** (long-term & flexible) etc...)

2024 mid-year Global Humanitarian Overview funding update

- People in need: 309.9 million
- People targeted: 187.8 million (60% of people in need)
- Required funding: \$48,65 billion
- Received funding: 23 %

Funding availability not equally distributed or needs-based!

(source: Global Humanitarian Overview 2024 Mid-year update, OCHA. Received funding includes inter-agency appeals, RCRC movement, bilateral support and in-kind support)

Challenges

Insufficient funding → Conflicting priorities → (quality of) sanitation not prioritized over other needs

Lack of expertise → not sufficient focus on quality on the longer term (and no funding for long term services)

Leading to 40% of women and girls being too afraid to use the emergency latrines that humanitarian agencies built (Oxfam 2022)





Reasons include



Not wanting to be seen going to the toilet



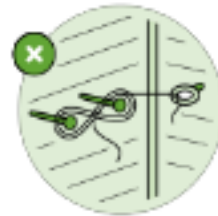
Lack of lighting at night



Fear of vermin



Lack of privacy (a fear of people peeping in)



Lack of locks on doors



Fear of sexual harassment



Lack of maintenance and cleanliness



“ We feel happy using latrines when we feel heard and confident that our concerns have been listened to. ”

Community consultation throughout the project cycle is critical to ensure latrines adapt to the feedback, and provide dignified, safe, and accessible facilities.

Challenges summary

- Long term and flexible funding required in order to deliver quality sanitation services
- Quality of sanitation services (and knowledge on how to achieve that) needs more attention
- Solutions might not be offered by new technology development, but just better listening to the target group (and be able to act upon that)



Thank you

