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SUCCESS STORY

Vohitrindry: A very committed local mason elected mayor



Municyen dressed in purple, helping his team to build a nozzle...

In the past, Municyen used to struggle on his own to try to produce latrines in order to sell them. He worked alone and looked for customers for his products. However, he didn't have many customers due to the quality of his latrine which did not meet customers' needs. Then, he was looking for a training to effectively supply latrines that meet customers' needs. RANO WASH provided training for local masons and Municyen decided to take part. Ranotiavina Munycien could produce better latrines adequate to customers' needs. Municyen has seen his income increase and his quality of life improve since he took the training provided by RANO WASH. He now supplies latrines for several companies such as FID (Development Intervention Fund). Creative and ambitious, Municyen is a role model for local workers in the Vohipeno district, mainly because he started as a local mason but has an entrepreneur. Now he employs a dozen families, while continuing to research and create new WASH products to meet people's needs.

Municyen has been elected as the new mayor of the commune of Vohitrindry, in the Vohipeno district. Before being elected, he promised to improve access to drinking water, to ensure good hygiene and sanitation, and to encourage people to use latrines through partnerships. Now that he is mayor, he has challenged himself to accomplish his action plans. Munycien's training strengthened his skills and enabled him to create the latrines now sold in Vohitrindry.

Municyen says, "My first challenge as a mayor of the municipality of Vohitrindry is to improve access to drinking water in the villages of my municipality."

A person like Municyen will be pursuing his profession long after the RANO WASH project reaches its end. While the project is running, RANO WASH will make sure to strengthen the local population's adoption of the best WASH habits. RANO WASH will also provide capacity-building for local promoters like Municyen. RANO WASH encourages him to keep prioritizing water sanitation hygiene in his municipality.



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Andemaka: The cleanest municipality in Vohipeno



The students of Andemaka Primary Public School.

Located 17 km from the Vohipeno District, approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes by bush-taxi, Andemaka is one of the municipalities that has partnered with USAID's RANO WASH. Infrastructure built in close collaboration with RANO WASH is visible from the commune's entrance. This includes the Basic Health Center II (CSB II), which has RANO WASH handwashing devices in all its offices and treatment rooms. The CSB II's role to ensure that hygiene becomes both a habit and a priority for the population. To do so, the Center currently promotes and sells washable sanitary pads. There are also plans to include the pads with baby delivery kits.

Andemaka's primary public school is another good example of prioritizing hygiene. Since the students received a proper demonstration, handwashing has become a habit for them. They have memorized a short set of instructions that they repeat with pride and joy as they leave their classrooms and when they wash their hands: "Soak your hands, grab the soap, scrub the back of your hands, rub your palms, pick your nails, rinse your hands, and dry them in the air." As a result, teachers have reported that the students are healthier and there are fewer instances of sickness.

Andemaka currently has clean drinking water. Nineteen social connections and 143 individuals have been recorded since RANO WASH was established in Andemaka. Due to managerial issues, there are still around 100 requests at the end of 2019 for the installation of running water in households waiting to be validated. However, the commune has been able to resolve these issues in January 2020. Drinking water is now a real part of Andemaka's life.

The local promoters for RANO WASH are also very active as members of civil society organizations (OSC), or in local consultation structures (SLC), or in village savings and loan associations (VSLAs). They advocate for the promotion of san plat slabs to create open-defecation-free villages, according to the example set by Antanambao village in the Vohitraomby fokontany, where Akimi, a local mason, helps his neighbors build ventilated latrines.

Thanks to local promoters, and residents' enthusiasm for changing their behaviors, Andemaka has become one of the cleanest and well-organized municipalities in the Vohipeno District. In the past, Andemaka had no access to clean water because its water infrastructure was poorly maintained or damaged. Since then, residents have realized the importance of maintaining water infrastructure, and have decided to continue to follow RANO WASH's advice.



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Mangabe Village now open-defecation-free thanks to the VSLA contest



One of the VSLA Members who was awarded by RANO WASH.

The village of Mangabe was one of the first intervention villages chosen for USAID's RANO WASH project. Mangabe is in the Sabotsy Anjiro municipality, in the Alaotra Mangoro region. It is about 2 km north of the chief town in the commune, and is made up of two small settlements, or hamlets. Open defecation was a common habit there. During the initiation of the strategic hamlet, when its accessibility, the number of inhabitants, and the possibility of introducing a private-public partner were assessed, only 20 percent of the population had latrines, and those did not meet hygiene standards. Most of the latrines were poorly ventilated or difficult to maintain. There were also people who defecated wherever they could and not in proper latrines. The strategic village was initiated in December 2018. However, it was not until October 2019 that the village reached the open-defecation-free (ODF) verification stage and all the inhabitants used latrines for their defecation needs. "The village is now clean and we do not defecate in the fields anymore since latrines were built. ", added a villager in Mangabe.

USAID's RANO WASH led the implementation of numerous activities that contributed to the village's successful ODF status. These included constructing drinking-water infrastructure in July 2018, establishing the VSLA FANDRE-SENA group in March 2019, doing hygiene promotions beginning in August 2019, and a WASH contest with the VSLA MODELy in September 2019. The WASH contest proved to be a significant motivator for both communities to improve their overall hygiene situation, including their sanitation and water. The hygiene promoter strongly mobilized each VSLA to increase its chances of winning the contest. To improve their situation, VSLA members used the third box, called «Caisse RFF,» to take out loans to build latrines and toilets and obtain other materials necessary for improving their WASH situation. Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) are a simple and powerful tool to support women's economic empowerment and to build social cohesion.



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VSLA contest winners.

Group members achieve near-immediate increases in access to and control over resources with only a lockbox, three keys, and some basic financial training. VSLAs also help members come together to build financial resources, create trust networks, and pursue shared ambitions. The value of the RFF box, 100Ar (0.027 USD) per member per meeting, is not always enough if a household's needs are high. In that case, the group uses the social fund to support the household.

There are currently eight basic latrines and 13 shared improved latrines in the village. Households use these to practice hygienic behaviors. Through these efforts, and the creation of these basic and improved latrines, the VSLA FANDRE-SENA group won the contest, and Mangabe was awarded ODF status. The solidarity and effort of this community now serve as a model for others. Setting up the VSLA group with the third box, which allowed members to take out loans, was key to improving the sanitation situation.



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Accountability improves in Tsaratanana Ifanadiana



Local populations of Tsaratanana queuing for clean water.

When USAID's RANO WASH started working in Tsaratanana, much of the existing water infrastructure was broken and no longer working, or only working intermittently. Villages were dirty due to a lack of cleaning and of waste disposal measures such as litter bins or litter-holes. A lack of transparency was evident. Locals felt unable to take action, and were reluctant to pay water-use fees.

RANO WASH assisted local authorities in establishing a technical service for water, sanitation, and hygiene. The collaboration, which included the appointment of an agent to oversee this service (STEAH), significantly improved the village's infrastructure management. With the water pumps now functioning properly in Tsaratanana center, the broken infrastructure in the Ambohitsara I neighborhood has since been repaired, and monthly collective cleaning days have been established in each village on the third Friday of every month.

This "asa tanamaro" or "high labor intensity" approach to sanitation was approved during a meeting with all local stakeholders (government officials at each level, the health center, education authorities, religious leaders, traditional authorities, and RANO WASH) on September 16, 2019. RANO WASH supports this initiative by representing the WASH project during the monthly events.

The first collective cleanup, which was held on Friday, September 20, saw a huge turnout. Representatives from the different local structures created with RANO WASH support were all present: the civil society organization (OSC), the WASH technical service (STEAH), the local consultation structure (SLC), the drinking water network users' association (ASUREP), and the staff committee for sanitation and hygiene (KMFF). Women were out in force, as most local services are women-led. The cleanup included clearing the path to the health center to allow ambulance access.



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Andefampony: A newly created model municipality that empowers women



WASH committee meet to implement WASH action plans for Tsaratanana.

Andefampony is unique in that it is both a newly created municipality and in that its mayor, Julienne Louissette Rakotoarilala and its traditional authority, Queen Jacqueline Baomiray, are women. Both are strong advocates for local development, assisting with the establishment of WASH committees in each village, developing action plans, and monitoring progress. As a result of their leadership and championing of USAID's RANO WASH Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach, the municipality's major village, Fenoarivo, quickly became open-defecation-free, with nine ventilated latrines being constructed.

As mayor and queen, Rakotoarilala and Baomiray have influenced other women in Andefampony, who now feel more empowered. One such woman is Clementine Zana-zafy, a married mother of four from Ampotsimanodina village, approximately 3 km from Fenoarivo. She was so impressed by the drastic changes she saw in Fenoarivo that she decided to act. She spoke of her village's problem: whenever it rained there, the air became unbreathable due to the stench around the coffee plantations. Clementine was then trained by RANO WASH to be a local promoter, and was instrumental in leading her fellow villagers to clean up Ampotsimanodina. Thanks to Clementine's leadership, her village has also reached open-defecation-free status in a short time.

Clementine can testify to RANO WASH's impact to date:

“Before, lots of people used to have to be carried to the hospital, whether sick from malaria or diarrhea, and there were many that died. On average, six people every month would go to the hospital due to diarrhea. But there has been a dramatic change since the arrival of RANO WASH. The number of people sick from the diarrheal disease has decreased, and it is no longer a cause of death. And air quality has improved drastically.”