

Sh1.6b sanitation project kicks off in nine Nakivale refugee schools

By Fred Turyakira

Construction of 125 latrine stances at nine primary schools in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Insingiro district, has commenced, to address persistent sanitation and water challenges affecting learners.

The project is being implemented by ISRAAID Uganda, an international humanitarian organisation, with funding from the International Co-operation and Development Fund of the Taiwan government.

The sh1.66b water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programme was officially launched and project sites handed over to contractors at Rwekubo Primary School.

Delphine Tumusiime Mugisha, the country director of ISRAAID Uganda, said the two-year programme will support the construction of 25 latrine blocks, each with five stances, bringing the total to 125 stances.

The project will also construct six incinerators for the safe disposal of waste, including menstrual hygiene products.

The beneficiary schools are Rwekubo Primary School, Nyakagando I Primary School, Nyarugugu Primary School, Ngarama Primary School, Misyeru Primary School, Kendobo Primary School, Ruhoko Primary School, Nakivale Primary School, and Juru Primary School, all located within

PHOTO BY FRED TURYAKIRA



Kato (third-right) handing over contract documents to Eng. Tumusiime Mugisha (left); as the settlement commandant for Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Monica Mugisha (second-right) and other officials witness in Insingiro district yesterday

Nakivale Refugee Settlement.

The contractors undertaking the works are ENEWART Engineering Ltd, ALBER Engineers and Services, Blu Roc Construction Company, and Manzi Establishments Ltd.

Agatha Natukunda, the senior education officer for Insingiro district, said out of the district's 196 schools, only about 10% meet the minimum standards for pupil-to-latrine ratios.

"This has greatly affected the

teaching and learning process. After lessons, learners often queue for long periods to access latrines. Some return to class after lessons have already started, while others miss lessons entirely because they are still waiting to answer the call of nature," she said.

"We appreciate this intervention and pray that it can be extended to more schools in Insingiro district, because the sanitation gaps remain enormous," she said.

BENEFICIARY SPEAKS

Janipher Nyangoma, the headteacher of Rwekubo Primary School, said the school faces a severe shortage of latrine facilities, with a ratio of one stance for every 139 boys and one stance for every 114 girls.

Delphine Tumusiime Mugisha said the project will also rehabilitate non-functional rainwater harvesting systems in schools to improve access to water and strengthen sanitation and hygiene standards.

She added that school management committees will be trained to sustainably operate and maintain both existing and newly constructed WASH facilities.

"During our assessment, we discovered that some facilities are non-functional due to poor operation and maintenance. School management teams must take responsibility for protecting and maintaining these facilities," Mugisha said.

The project will also train learners to make reusable sanitary pads, to help address menstrual hygiene challenges that often force girls to miss school.

"The project seeks to improve sanitation and hygiene in schools while also addressing menstrual health. We shall involve parents and caregivers so that girls can continue accessing sanitary materials even when they are at home," Mugisha said.

"We will also train learners in child hygiene and sanitation practices so that they grow up understanding the importance of proper hygiene."

She said the decision to prioritise latrine construction was informed by assessments showing that most schools lacked adequate sanitation and handwashing facilities.

Mugisha warned contractors against shoddy workmanship and cautioned workers against engaging in inappropriate relationships with learners and girls in surrounding communities.

Louis Kato, the assistant resident district commissioner of Insingiro, pledged government support for the project and urged district engineers to closely supervise the works to ensure that quality standards are maintained.

He also directed contractors to secure construction sites to prevent accidents during implementation.