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Water source gives despised village new name

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Kanywamaizi (water drinker) residents have waited for over 60 years to get clean water. The only reliable water source in the area had hard and water salty.

"It used to be called Kanywankari (urine drinker) because of the water colour resembling that of urine with a salty taste," Yosam Turyamukuratira, the chairman LC 1 who doubles as the chairman in charge of charge for the Kanywamaizi cell, says.

Before the intervention of Ruhira Millennium Villages Water Project, the safety and quality of water was very poor and people were fetching water from ponds, unprotected streams or anywhere they would find something like water.

Most of the water sources in Kabuyanda Sub County are salty thus making it not suitable for human consumption. The water contains a lot of iron and manganese minerals. This was compounded by people lacking latrines thus using bushes as places of answering nature's call.

As a result of presence of minerals in the water most people have stained teeth due to absorption of a lot of minerals. Dr Simon Peter Okuru a dentist with Poly Dental clinic says as a result of taking in a lot of minerals from hard water teeth are bound to turn brown.

Walking of long distances in search of water was also eating into productive time both for parents and children and thus poor performance for school children while mothers who do most of the digging would go to their gardens late.

Whenever it rained people would go for pond water from the run-off both to escape from walking long distances and bad taste of the existing water points. Some people were walking as far as five kilometre for water especially during the dry season.

One of the biggest challenges was water usage like bathing, cooking and this subsequently compromised on the level of hygiene in homes.

Some members of the family would go on for days without bathing while others would not have their clothes washed. This trend can still be seen among the population especially men and children who are yet to embrace proper use of water. Water containers remain largely dirty.

Ideally each person should use at least 20 litres of water per day but because only two jerrycans were drawn in some families there wouldn't enough for everybody in some homes.

Interventions

Hygiene, water purification and protection, sanitation and latrine improvement has been done.



Women drawing unsafe water from a pond. PHOTO BY OTUSHABIRE TIBYANGYE