



# RENOVATING OUR SCHOOL TOILETS

OCTOBER

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**ASRHR** Adolescents Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights

**AGYWS** Adolescents Girls and Young women's

**APO** Afyaplus Organization

**DC** District Council

**ROST** Renovation of Our School Toilets

**MHH** Menstrual Health Hygiene

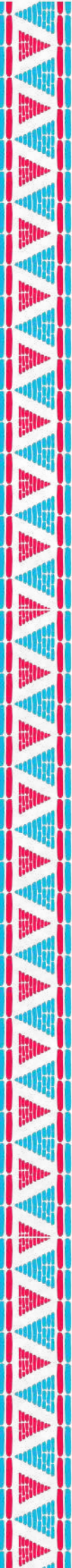
**MHM** Menstrual Hygiene Management

**WASH** Water Sanitation and Hygiene

**GBV** Gender Based Violence

**NGOs** Non Governmental Organizations

**SDGs** Sustainable Development Goals



# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Dear Partners

The urgent need for improved sanitation facilities in schools across the Iringa region has become increasingly evident. Current conditions of the toilets at these institutions reveal a critical situation, with inadequate cleanliness, broken infrastructure, and a lack of essential supplies, significantly impacting students' health and well-being.

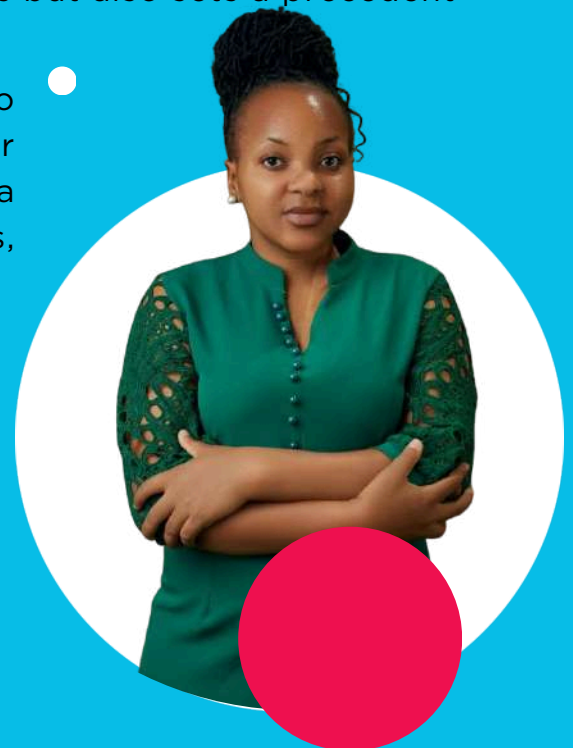
Afyaplus is committed to addressing these challenges by renovating and upgrading toilet facilities in these schools. Our project aims to create a safe and hygienic environment for all students, ensuring they have access to clean toilets that promote dignity and well-being. Through this initiative, we aspire to increase school attendance, reduce health-related absenteeism, and foster a culture of proper hygiene practices among students.

To achieve our goals, we are reaching out to potential partners and donors who share our vision for improving sanitation in schools. Your support can play a crucial role in transforming these facilities and positively impacting the lives of thousands of students. Together, we can create a sustainable solution that not only addresses immediate needs but also sets a precedent for better hygiene standards across the region.

We invite you to join us in this vital mission to enhance the quality of education and health for students in Iringa. Your partnership can make a significant difference, helping us bring smiles, health, and hope to our school communities.



**SUZAN YUMBE**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



# ABOUT AFYAPLUS ORGANIZATION

AFYAPLUS is a not-for-profit organization operating its core development agenda of prevention and control of diseases through the promotion of water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and empowerment of girls and young women. The main goal of the organization is to improve school performance and create a community free from diseases caused by lack of safe and clean water, poor sanitation, poor hygienic practices, Nutrition and empowerments adolescent girls and young women in a community.

## Our mission

To cultivate behavior change and build a strong community through the promotion of water sanitation, hygiene services, Nutrition and empowerment of adolescents girls and young women through engaging relevant stakeholders.

## Our vision

A responsible healthy Tanzanian community free from diseases caused by unsafe water, poor sanitation, hygiene and nutrition services; and where adolescent girls and young women are empowered.

## Our areas of interventions

We operate in the Iringa and Pwani regions, specifically within the following councils:

- Iringa Municipal Council
- Iringa District Council
- Kilolo District Council
- Mafinga Town Council
- Mkuranga District Council



# STRATEGIC GOALS



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Services Improved in Schools and Community.

Afyaplus Organizational Capacity Improved.



Adolescent Girls and Young Women Empowered to Exploit their Potential to the maximum.



## INTRODUCTION

Toilets play a critical role in creating a hygienic, safe, and supportive environment in schools, directly impacting students' health, attendance, and academic performance. In Tanzania's Iringa region, inadequate school sanitation facilities have posed significant challenges, affecting over 22,000 children who encounter unclean and poorly maintained toilets daily. Many schools in the region lack the resources to prioritize sanitation improvements, leaving facilities in disrepair and compromising students' well-being.



*The current external condition of the toilets at Kihesa Primary School in Iringa MC underscores the urgent need for renovation to ensure that students have access to safe, clean, and functional facilities.*

This issue is particularly concerning for female students who may feel uncomfortable using these facilities due to a lack of privacy, which can result in absenteeism during menstruation, further hindering their education. Poor sanitation affects not only physical health but also has profound social and psychological impacts, as students feel less inclined to attend school in an environment that fails to meet their basic needs. Beyond the schools, the effects of poor hygiene extend into communities, as diseases spread from school to home, impacting families and lowering community health standards.



Recognizing this challenge, the Tanzanian government has called for partnerships with NGOs, community leaders, and donors to address the sanitation crisis in underserved regions like Iringa. Initiatives such as the School Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (SWASH) program have provided a foundation, but resources are still limited. This project is a direct response to the government's appeal, seeking to renovate toilets in twenty Iringa schools to create healthier learning environments, reduce health risks, and support uninterrupted education.



*Toilet water storage facility at Luhindo Primary School is in a critical state, highlighting the urgent need for intervention.*

By improving sanitation, we aim to promote a space where students, particularly girls, can attend school with confidence, free from the anxiety of inadequate facilities. Clean, private, and well-maintained toilets help students focus on their studies, enhance school retention, and set a standard for hygiene practices that benefit both schools and surrounding communities. Through collaboration with donors and community partners, this project will help improve health outcomes, support academic success, and create a foundation for sustainable educational growth in Iringa.



# BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

This project is part of a broader national initiative to improve educational infrastructure and sanitation facilities, particularly in regions with limited access to resources. Despite government and NGO efforts, sanitation remains a key challenge due to insufficient funding, maintenance issues, and the cultural stigmas surrounding toilets and hygiene. The primary goal of this renovation project is to bring toilets in 20 schools up to modern, hygienic standards, thus ensuring that all students can attend school in a dignified and supportive environment.



*Current condition of toilets at Ilala primary School and Kihesa Secondary School highlights the urgent need for renovation to provide students with safe, clean, and functional facilities.*

## Problem Statement

Poor sanitation in schools is a persistent problem that negatively impacts health, attendance, and educational outcomes. The absence of clean toilets, privacy, and basic hygiene products like soap and menstrual hygiene materials in schools increases health risks and poses barriers to education, especially for girls. Students who do not have access to clean toilets may choose to avoid using them, leading to health issues such as urinary tract infections, poor concentration, and reduced academic engagement. Moreover, inadequate toilet facilities disproportionately affect girls, who may miss school during menstruation due to the lack of menstrual hygiene products and private changing areas.



## Project Goals and Objectives

### Overall Goal

Main goal of this project is to contribute to creating a safe, healthy, and conducive learning environment in Tanzanian schools by providing improved sanitation facilities that can support the educational, physical, and psychological well-being of students.



*Current condition of toilets at Miyomboni Secondary School and Mkwawa Secondary School highlights the urgent need for renovation to provide students with safe, clean, and functional facilities.*

## Specific Objectives

To achieve this goal, the project focuses on three core objectives:

- **Improving Access:** Renovate and upgrade sanitation facilities in 20 schools by 2026, aiming to provide safe, functional, and hygienic toilets for over 22,646 students and teachers.
- **Promoting Health and Hygiene:** Implement hygiene education and awareness programs in schools and surrounding communities, which are essential for maintaining the new facilities.
- **Strengthening SWASH Systems:** Establish and strengthen School Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (SWASH) management systems to ensure the sustainability of the facilities and practices.



# BASELINE SURVEY FINDINGS

## Methodology

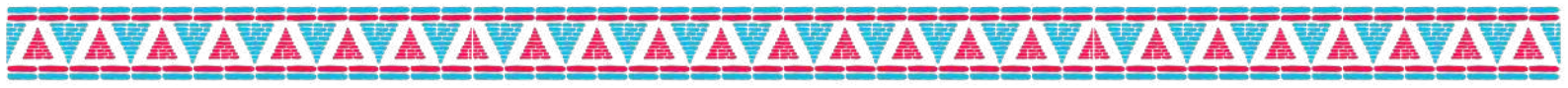
We conducted a baseline survey targeted 12 schools in the Iringa municipality, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data on existing sanitation conditions. We used observation checklists, student and teacher interviews, and photographic documentation to assess the facilities. Key metrics included the number of operational toilets, accessibility, presence of privacy features, cleanliness, and availability of hygiene supplies. The survey also evaluated general attitudes towards hygiene, the frequency of facility cleaning, and the presence of SWASH committees.



*A student at Luhindo Primary School poses for a photo after helping to clean the school. Luhindo Primary urgently needs support to improve its sanitation facilities, as the toilets lack windows, proper flooring, doors, and a reliable water supply. With action, we can bring lasting improvements, safety, and smiles to students in Kilolo District.*

## Summary of Findings

- **Structural Deficiencies:** Many toilets in surveyed schools were structurally unsound, with broken holes and crumbling walls that compromised safety and privacy.



- **Lack of Basic Supplies:** Most facilities lacked essential supplies like soap, water, and menstrual hygiene products. Only a few schools provided changing rooms or menstrual pads, which are critical for girls' attendance during menstruation.
- **Insufficient Cleanliness:** Toilets in almost all surveyed schools were unhygienic, partly due to inadequate maintenance and cleaning protocols.
- **Cultural and Behavioral Challenges:** Interviews revealed that in some communities, cultural taboos about menstruation hinder discussions about hygiene needs. This barrier affects girls' comfort in accessing toilets and limits their school attendance during menstruation.



*Current conditions of toilets at Ipogolo Secondary and Mkwawa Secondary reveal severe disrepair, with broken structures, inadequate cleanliness, and lack of essential supplies. These facilities urgently need renovation to provide a safe, sanitary environment for students, ensuring their health, comfort, and dignity in school.*



## IMPORTANCE OF TOILETS IN SCHOOLS

Toilets play a great role in the physical health and psychological well-being of students. This section expands on the importance of toilets from multiple perspectives, drawing on research and global best practices.

- **Health and Hygiene:** Poor sanitation in school toilets increases the risk of diseases such as diarrhea, urinary tract infections, and other hygiene-related illnesses. According to WHO, over 400 million school-age children globally are at risk of parasitic infections that can be mitigated through improved sanitation.
- **Educational Outcomes:** A healthy school environment promotes better attendance, particularly for girls. The provision of clean, safe, and private toilets reduces school days missed due to health issues and menstruation. Studies show that sanitation improvements correlate with better learning outcomes and overall student engagement.
- **Psychosocial Well-being:** Toilets are integral to students' dignity and self-esteem. When students feel uncomfortable using the toilets, it can cause anxiety and distract from their studies. Improved sanitation facilities help students feel valued and respected, creating a positive school culture.



## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL SANITATION

Leaders and sanitation experts around the world emphasize the importance of toilets as essential elements of school infrastructure. Below are some notable perspectives and remarks that reinforce the value of good sanitation in schools:



“You can tell a school by its toilets: they say an awful lot about a school and tell you about the value the school places on its environment - and they can help improve pupils’ behavior.”

*Susan Lewis, Chief Inspector for Wales*



“Every pupil deserves a good toilet and the chance to use it when they need to. Schools teach life skills and how to be responsible. Children and young people should be helped to become more responsible and given the opportunity to show that they can be responsible.”

*Speaker at the World Toilet Summit, Belfast 2005*



The very fact that some [toilets] are adequate - or even fantastic - proves the point that there is really no excuse for the nasty school loos I so regularly hear about. It’s just a question of taking responsibility, making it a priority and involving children and young people.”

*The late Peter Clarke, Children’s Commissioner for Wales*

These global insights highlight the need for adequate sanitation facilities as fundamental to a school’s role in providing a safe and supportive environment for learning.



# CHALLENGES AND CULTURAL CONTEXT IN IRINGA REGION SCHOOLS

The Iringa region faces a unique set of challenges when it comes to implementing and maintaining sanitation facilities. Limited financial resources, infrastructure, and social attitudes about hygiene and sanitation pose significant barriers.

## Challenges

**Economic Constraints:** Budget limitations mean that school funds are often prioritized for academic needs over sanitation. Many schools lack the resources needed to renovate toilets or provide basic supplies.

**Cultural Stigmas and Taboos:** Discussions on hygiene, especially menstrual hygiene, are often considered taboo in many communities. This cultural attitude discourages open conversations about girls' needs, making it difficult to implement comprehensive hygiene solutions.

**Community Health and Sanitation:** Poor hygiene practices in the community at large contribute to unsanitary school environments. Many children come from homes without proper toilets or hygiene education, which reinforces poor sanitation habits at school.



## PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND FOCUS AREAS

To address these challenges, the ROST project has identified several key focus areas, each with specific activities aimed at improving sanitation and hygiene in schools.

**Awareness and Education:** Conduct regular workshops on hygiene practices for students, teachers, and the community. This will include sessions on handwashing, menstrual hygiene, and proper toilet use.



*A core mission of Afyaplus is to equip school children with essential knowledge on sanitation and health awareness. We believe that change begins with education—by fostering understanding and enhancing facilities, we're building a healthier future.*

**Improved Design and Maintenance:** The toilets will be designed to optimize hygiene and reduce maintenance needs, featuring durable materials, water-saving systems, and privacy measures



Community Involvement: Engage parents, teachers, and students in sanitation committees responsible for monitoring and maintaining toilet conditions. This approach encourages shared responsibility and sustainability.



*Community involvement is key to our school initiatives, fostering sustainability and ownership. By keeping communities updated and emphasizing their role in practicing proper hygiene and caring for infrastructure, we ensure long-lasting impact and shared responsibility.*

Standards and Inspections: Implement regular inspections to ensure compliance with sanitation standards. The SWASH committees will play a central role in monitoring conditions and reporting any issues.

Affordable Aesthetic Improvements: Make toilets inviting spaces by adding murals, providing comfortable toilet seats, and using brightly colored paint to make the facilities more attractive and less intimidating for younger students.





## Acknowledgement

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Global Giving team for their invaluable support and partnership in our initiative to renovate school toilets in Tanzania. Your commitment has been instrumental in transforming sanitation facilities, improving WASH services, and enhancing the well-being of students in the Iringa region. We are immensely grateful to Global Giving and all stakeholders for making this vital project possible. As we move forward, we look forward to your continued support in the upcoming quarter. Together, we can make a significant difference in the lives of our students and communities.



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