

Demonstrating the effectiveness of social franchising principles: the emptying of household ventilated improved pits: a case study from South Africa

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Abstract

Having viewed the successful social franchising partnerships pilot programme that serviced sanitation facilities at 400 schools in the Butterworth District of the Eastern Cape of South Africa, the Amathole District Municipality (ADM) expressed interest in exploring how well the partnership model could empty household pit latrines in its jurisdiction. The impact and effectiveness of the model was demonstrated by the emptying, by five franchisees over a period of only six weeks, of the contents of 400 household ventilated improved pit latrines in Govan Mbeki Village, and the safe disposal of their content. The paper describes the methods and results in removal and disposal of faecal sludge. Problems were encountered, and the solutions (technical, institutional and social) are described. Not unexpectedly, the amount of effort involved in this work – including time, training required, equipment required and ingenuity – varied enormously. The main variables included the type of top structure, the nature of the pit contents, whether or not there was broad consistency of type and contents in an area, distances (between pits, from home base to work site, from pits to disposal site, from location of specialized equipment to work site), logistical delays (e.g. non-arrival of equipment) and bureaucratic hold-ups (especially payment delays).