

Sanitation Blocks at Ilpus Primary School Saves the School from Closure by the County Public Health Department



A hand washing point constructed at Ilpus Primary School under funding from Kenya RAPID program. Photo credit: Johnson Ng'ang'a

Ilpus primary school is located in Saku Sub-County, in Saku Constituency of Marsabit County. The school has a total population of 95 pupils.

Marsabit County, Kenya, March 2018 — Although Ilpus Primary School was fully operational and able to support learning, it lacked sanitation and hygiene facilities both for pupils and teachers. The pupils were defecating in the nearby Marsabit forest. This posed a health hazard to the pupils and also to the surrounding communities.

Lack of privacy exacerbated the school dropout rate, especially for girls who required feminine hygiene products. The school faced shutting down. “We received a letter from the public health office in Marsabit to close the school due to lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities,” said the head teacher, Mr. Francis Lekanapal, “The pupils were defecating in the forest, which acts as a water tower for Marsabit town. This posed a health hazard to the main water reserve in the forest serving Marsabit residents. There was no toilet for teachers, either. We had no alternative but to agree to prematurely close the school. Fortunately, the letter was issued some few days before the April long holidays. As the head teacher, I approached various agencies in vain for help.”

He continued, “As a community, we were at the verge of the drought, and therefore construction through community contribution was almost impossible. Communities were relying on food relief. Fortunately, the Kenya RAPID program came and supported in the construction of the 3-door sanitation blocks for boys and girls. The construction was undertaken during the long holidays, enabling the lifting of the school’s operation ban by the public health department. The sanitation blocks include a privacy wall and bathroom for the girls which is very essential during the menstrual periods. The privacy walls were also branded with hygiene messages on hand washing and proper use of latrines. The program also supported in construction of hand washing points, both for boys and girls. The connection is from a water supply serving the adjacent communities. The pupils through the school hygiene club were taught proper sanitation and hygiene. We are grateful to Kenya RAPID for standing with us during our time of need.”



A raised hand washing tank and rain water harvesting tank at Ilpus Primary School, Marsabit County constructed through Kenya RAPID support. Photo credit: Johnson Ng’ang’a.

“We were trained on hand washing with soap. We keep our toilets clean and always wash our hands at important times; after visiting the toilet, before eating, before food and vegetable handling, and after eating,” said Lucy Narangin, a pupil at the school. “We thank Kenya RAPID providing us with latrines and connecting our school to a water supply. We use the water for drinking and cleaning our classrooms and toilets.”



One of the 3-Door VIP latrines built through Kenya RAPID support