



Uganda Sanitation for Health Activity

Effectiveness of Referrals and Commission Sharing between Sanitation Promoters and Masons in USHA's Market Based Sanitation Implementation Approach (MBSIA)

Overview and Summary of Findings

- About 81% of households in Uganda do not have access to basic sanitation.
- The USAID Uganda Sanitation for Health Activity (USHA) is implementing a market based sanitation implementation approach (MBSIA)—a network sanitation service delivery model that includes sanitation promoters (SPs), masons and materials suppliers—in 13 districts clustered in two southern geographies termed the Central East (CE) and Central West (CW).
- USHA conducted operational research to understand the extent to which trained masons were receiving referrals from Sanitation Promoters (SPs) and if they were paying commissions to SPs for referrals that resulted in a toilet construction or upgrade.
- 92% of masons in the CW and 64% in the CE indicated that they had received referrals from SPs.
- The average commission paid for a toilet upgrade was UGX 2,722 in the CW and UGX 2,125 in the CE. The average commission for a new double stance was UGX 12,000 in the CW and UGX 10,000 in the CE.
- The average revenue a mason earned on an upgrade was UGX 22,700 in the CW and UGX 18,364 in the CE.
- Masons claimed to provide commissions for most SP referrals that became toilet jobs. However, certain masons cited that they were not able to provide commissions on jobs with small profit and high transportation and material costs.
- SPs and masons reported different levels of commission being paid which suggests the linkages between them should be strengthened.

Objective

This study was conducted in May 2020 after eight months of implementing MBSIA. It investigated the interactions between Sanitation Promoters (SPs) and masons, specifically whether masons were paying commissions to SPs for referrals that resulted in a toilet construction or upgrade, variations in commissions based on the size of the job, and the potential value of commission sharing. The findings are being used to refine the next phase of MBSIA implementation and strengthen the incentive mechanism between the masons and SPs that is fundamental for the sustainability of the model.



A mason, SP and pit digger, discussing the catalogue during the value chain actors networking meeting in Mafubira, Jinja district Uganda

Background

Informed by market research conducted in early 2018, USHA developed and rolled-out a novel network household sanitation delivery model initially targeting 13 districts and sub-counties in the Eastern and Central regions of Uganda. USHA-trained masons are at the center of the network model, acting as local sanitation entrepreneurs who are the household's primary point of contact when building a toilet. Masons were selected to play this role due to their proximity to households and attractive margins on sanitation jobs. To activate demand for the mason's services, the network model includes a cadre of sanitation promoters (SPs) who are provided a small monthly stipend to visit households and make sales pitches and referrals to the masons. USHA implements the model through local NGOs or implementing partners.

About USHA

USHA is a five-year contract, February 2018 - January 2023, implemented by Tetra Tech in consortium with partners SNV, Sanitation Solutions Group, FSG, and BRAC.

The Activity works in 21 districts within three regions, implementing a series of contemporary and integrated WASH interventions at the district, community and household levels that lead to increased access to sustainable water and sanitation products and services.

Specifically, USHA aims to achieve three reinforcing outputs:

1. Increased household access to sanitation and water services;
2. Key hygiene behaviors at home, school, and health facilities adopted and expanded; and
3. Strengthened district water and sanitation

USHA suggested that masons pay SPs a commission for every toilet construction referral generated to encourage the SPs to generate more household referrals and promote sustainability. Masons were encouraged to pay SPs once they received even a partial payment from the household for their work.

Also as part of the model, USHA introduced masons to materials vendors (e.g., local raw materials and hardware stores) and trained them on how to price and properly construct four product options, including the base product, new single stance latrine, the new double stance latrine, and a latrine upgrade ¹.

Data and Methods

A survey was conducted across USHAs' thirteen Phase I² districts and involved interviewing active masons and SPs (see Table 1). Active masons were defined as USHA-trained masons who had performed at least ten construction jobs while active SPs are those who had offered at least 50 referrals to trained masons. Data was collected via calls ³. The team interviewed 23 masons and 20 SPs of roughly the same proportion in each intervention district.

Table 1: Survey Locations and Interview Sample

no.	Intervention District	Number of Interviews		Number of USHA-trained Masons and SPs	
		Mason	SP	Mason	SP
1	Namutumba	1	1	7	56
2	Kayunga	2	0	7	41
3	Luuka	2	3	9	36
4	Buyende	2	2	11	42
5	Buikwe	1	0	7	36
6	Kaliro	1	2	9	22
7	Jinja	2	0	7	64
	Sub-Total	11	8	57	297
	Central Cluster	Mason	SP	Mason	SP
8	Gomba	2	2	10	11
9	Lwengo	2	3	11	27
10	Kyotera	2	1	6	13
11	Mpigi	2	3	9	9
12	Sembabule	2	2	14	30
13	Bukomansimbi	2	1	11	23
	Sub-Total	12	12	61	113
	Grand Total	23	20	118	410

¹ The base product, new single stance latrine, and new double stance latrine come with a pit dug 15-40 feet deep and include a brick foundation collar. While the upgrades are best for traditional latrines with deep pits, firm mud, wattle interfaces, and durable superstructures

² Phase I refers to USHA's initial 13 target districts in the Central and Eastern regions. The project has since expanded to an additional seven districts in the Northern region.

³ The COVID-19 lockdown restricted movement and thus face-to-face interaction with masons and SPs.

Findings - Central West Cluster

Masons

- 92% of masons confirmed that they had received referrals from SPs.
- Masons received an average of 33 referrals from SPs.

Table 2: Mason's Average Revenue for Each Construction Type – Central

Improved Latrine Construction Type	Average Revenue Received by Mason (UGX)
Upgrade	22,700
Base	64,167
New Single Stance	77,500
New Double Stance	152,727

- 91% of masons who received referrals from SPs were satisfied with the role SPs played in the model. They largely indicated paying SPs their commissions when referrals converted to toilet jobs.
- The average commission paid for an upgrade product was UGX 2,722 and UGX 12,000 for a new double stance latrine.

Table 3: Average Commission for Each Construction Type – Central West

Improved Latrine Construction Type	Average Commission (UGX), % of Average Amount of Money Received by Mason
Upgrade	2,722 (12%)
Base	6,000 (9%)
New Single Stance	7,833 (10%)
New Double Stance	12,000 (8%)

Note: 100% of masons in the Central region stated that they pay SP commissions once the construction job is completed.

Masons' challenges when working with SPs:

- 18% of masons reported SPs had provided a poor-quality referral ⁴. This was most often seen when masons found households were not ready to construct toilets.
- 25% of masons reported having trouble paying SPs on time because of delayed payments by the households.

Other challenges cited by the masons:

- 50% of masons reported transportation costs/long distance travel as a challenge.
- 50% of masons reported customer repayment/default issues as a challenge.
- 25% of toilets at households where the owner requested an upgrade were in poor condition ⁵.

Sanitation Promoters– Central West

USHA interviewed 12 SPs in the CW to triangulate the information provided by the masons. Below are some insights.

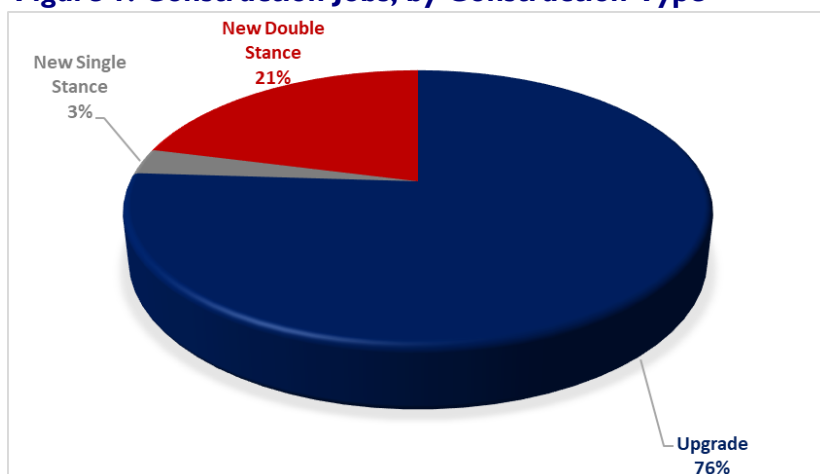
- 67% of SPs said that they received commissions from masons. The average commission per job was UGX 3,212. However, SPs from the CW indicated that commission amounts were not reflective of construction type.
- 75% of SPs claimed to receive commissions after a construction job was completed. 25% claimed to receive commissions in bulk following the completion of a series of jobs.
- 25% reported delays in the mason's work as a challenge.
- Overall, 75% of SPs interviewed felt the mason was adding value to their efforts.

⁴Some masons stated that they were satisfied working with SPs, but later in the interview called out poor quality referrals as a challenge.

⁵Poor condition implies that the interface is too weak to hold human weight. In some cases, logs have been eaten by termites or the soil cover has been washed away, leaving the pit exposed. This poses a health risk and could cause harm to both the user and the mason upgrading it.

Findings - Central East Cluster

Figure 1: Construction Jobs, by Construction Type



Masons earned the highest revenue, UGX 138,889 on average, for constructing the new double stance toilet. This was followed by construction of the new single stance option and then the upgrade. This is further summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Average Revenue for Each Construction Type – Eastern Region

Improved Latrine Construction Type	Average Revenue Received by Mason (UGX)
New Double Stance	138,889
New Single Stance	92,000
Upgrade	18,364

- 71% of masons claimed to have paid commissions to SPs for most referrals that became jobs. Masons that did not pay commissions cited that they were not able to do so because:
 - Construction jobs had not been completed due to the COVID-19 lockdown.
 - Upgrade jobs were not profitable, particularly once accounting for transportation costs.

Table 5: Average Commission for Each Construction Type – Eastern Region

Improved Latrine Construction Type	Average Commission (UGX), % of Average Amount of Money Received by Masons
Upgrade	2,125 (12%)
New Single Stance	5,000 (5%)
New Double Stance	10,000 (7%)

- 100% of masons from the Central East cluster stated that they paid commissions to SPs after they had been paid by households.
- 71% of masons that received referrals from SPs were satisfied with the role SPs were playing in the model.
- 43% of masons cited receiving poor quality referrals from SPs.

Sanitation Promoters – Central East

- 25% of SPs said they were receiving commissions from masons. The average commission per job was UGX 2,000. Like in Central West, commission amounts were not reflective of construction type.
- SPs claimed to receive commission on 52% of referrals that became jobs.
- All SPs that received a commission did so after the mason completed the job
- 67% of SPs who did not receive commission cited masons receiving too little money from households as a reason they were not paid.
- 63% of SPs suggested that an attractive commission amount would be 10% of the mason's revenue per job.
- 75% of SPs experienced no challenges in the model, and 88% cited having a good experience working with masons.

Takeaways

- There is a regional difference in commissions. In the CW, 67% of SPs reported receiving a commission from masons, compared to only 25% in the CE. USHA will emphasize commission sharing as a best practice in all upcoming phases of the “all actors” training to try to close this gap.
- Contrary to what masons stated, most SPs reported not receiving commissions on all referrals that became toilet jobs.
- In both clusters, SPs’ commissions were not reflective of construction type. The average commission per job was UGX 3,212 in the Central region and UGX 2,000 in the Eastern region.
- Masons are aware that they should be giving 10% of their earned revenue as a commission to the SPs. Nonetheless, they are not consistent in doing so, and are often underpaying SP commissions.
- The low profitability for some jobs was consistently offered as a reason to not pay commissions.
- Collecting money from households appears to be a barrier for masons to regularly pay SPs the agreed commission
- It was surprising to learn that most SPs were satisfied working with masons, as they did not entirely receive commissions at the amounts suggested in model. This may be explained by the monthly stipend they receive from USHA implementing partners.

Way forward

- Implementing partners should use their monthly all actor meetings (which include masons and SPs) to ensure consistency in commission sharing and that commissions have been paid for all referrals that become construction jobs. Staff should follow up to ensure effective commission sharing when commissions are not paid.
- Insights indicate that masons may not be able to pay SPs after each job due to physical distance (e.g., living in different villages); lack of regular in-person meetings between masons and SPs; and low revenue on some product options (e.g., latrine upgrades). If masons cannot pay SPs after every job, they should be encouraged to pay lump sum commissions after a series of jobs are completed.
- Implementing partners should provide SPs and masons with a list of households whose baseline sanitation status indicates the need for a new or upgraded toilet to limit poor-quality referrals.
- Implementing partners should utilize their all actor meetings to determine whether SPs and masons are appropriately pitching sales using techniques taught by USHA and insights from the social research.

USHA Contact

Jonathan Annis, Chief of Party
Mobile: 0779 598 038 | email: jonathan.annis@uganda-sanitation.org
Plot 12A, Farady Road, Bugolobi, Kampala

AUTHOR: Stephen Anecho PEER REVIEWERS: Jonathan Annis, Dennis Alioni, Chelsea Lanzoni, Anantya Chandra, Puneet Goenka EDITOR & PHOTO CREDIT: Dorothy Nabatanzi