

# **TOILETS MAKING THE GRADE**

**A methodology for  
mobilising efforts towards  
safe, clean, hygienic  
school sanitation.**

# TOILETS MAKING THE GRADE

Utilising a contest framework, Toilets Making the Grade (TMG) is a cost-efficient methodology to catalyse improvements in the sanitation and hygiene situation at schools, at scale:

- 1) At each school, students and adults create a team, motivated by contest incentives, like prizes or recognition.
- 2) These teams self-analyse their own respective school's hygiene challenges. Inspirational tools, like the "four-senses-inspection" or "every-vote-counts", are provided to assist them in this process.
- 3) The newly created, joint understanding motivates the teams to identify solutions for overcoming their own challenges. The contest submittal form helps to structure their results.
- 4) School actors undertake specific actions to improve their own sanitation and hygiene situation.

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"Toilets Making the Grade"  
Award Ceremony Kampala, Uganda  
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St. Peter's Primary School  
Kampala, Uganda  
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## APPLICABLE IN DIVERSE SETTINGS

The TMG methodology can be applied both in high and low income countries. In 2018–19 contests were implemented in Uganda, Pakistan and Germany. While the core methodology remained the same, the framework was adapted to suit the local settings.

In Germany, a national contest was run by an NGO. The contest was announced online and through extensive campaigning. Any school in Germany could participate voluntarily and receive support via online-channels. A multi-stakeholder jury selected 3 winners and awarded cash and hardware prizes, donated by the private sector.

In Uganda, a contest was run by the public health and education departments of the local government in the city of Kampala. Announced via official channels, the contest was open to public primary schools. Participants received on-demand Q&A-support. A jury, including high level individuals, identified two “role model schools” per district, but all participating schools received a WASHaLOT handwashing facility.

In Pakistan, a contest was run by a local NGO, exclusively amongst its 18 project schools. Participation was mandatory, but schools received much personal guidance from NGO staff. A jury consisting of senior stakeholders selected three winning schools, which were honoured at a high level award ceremony and rewarded with school bags, sports kits and swings for the playground.

In all cases, however, TMG helped to inspire team work at schools, resulting in a self-assessment of challenges and the self-implementation of improvements.

## MINIMAL INPUT, MAXIMUM IMPACT

When it comes to school toilets, many assume that “no one cares”. In reality, everyone desires a safe, clean, hygienic sanitation facility, even if this wish is not apparent, due to the taboo surrounding sanitation. TMG enables an honest, genuine discussion. The different tools of its tested methodology, make this intrinsic motivation visible for all, creating a positive group dynamic. The existing knowledge of users, cleaners and administrators is harnessed. Everyone becomes aware of their respective role and responsibility. This insight and transparency leads to changed behaviour and a culture of earnest caringness.

These elements make TMG a vehicle for positive change. Small improvements in equipment and supplies, awareness or organisational structures can help to break the cycle of decay and can turn school toilets into a pleasant place of well-being. Once the framework has been adapted to a specific context, the scope of the contest can be scaled for maximum outreach.

Since schools are enabled to self-analyse and -implement, an up-scaling to more schools requires proportionally little input.

## PROACTIVITY AND TEAMBUILDING

The TMG methodology invites individuals to participate in a team exercise. Teams accept a challenge, without a predetermined outcome. The competition with other teams and the recognition at the awards ceremony help to drive ambition. This activity creates a common understanding, social cohesion and constructive group momentum. The contest provides the fun framework to inspire each individual to engage and for the team members to collaborate. As first improvements become recognisable and group members experience self-efficacy, many teams are motivated to excel further. Small improvements trigger larger ones and lead to positive change.

# HOW CAN YOU BENEFIT?

## **Local Government:**

By running such a contest, you will receive self-assessments from your schools, concerning their sanitation situation. By participating in the jury, you will receive insights into the underlying issues, which go beyond hardware and budgetary constraints. The ownership initiative created at schools will ease the financial burden on your administration. Infrastructure investments are better maintained and demonstrating your initiative to do so can attract new investors.

While the TMG contest was being implemented in the capital of Uganda, the Kampala Capital City Authority received fewer “requests for assistance for sanitation” from participating schools, since these were so focused on the improvements that they were realising by themselves.

## **Learners and Educators:**

TMG is a rewarding exercise, personally and for your school. By accepting the challenge posed and creating a team, you can help to make your school sanitation facilities a more pleasant place, create a better learning environment and education at your school. You will be provided with clear step-by-step instructions, which help you discover for yourself how you and everyone around you can work together to improve the current situation.

## **Donors and Implementing Agencies:**

TMG can be applied to complement your current ‘WASH in School’ activities to increase the sustainability of your investments into infrastructure. TMG also furthers awareness for the importance of sanitation and hygiene with school students, staff and administrators and strengthens team work between different stakeholders in and around schools – even beyond sanitation.

“Leading students from soap to citizenship starts with concrete items, like ‘washing your hands’ or ‘cleaning up after yourself’. Only by experience can students understand desired, abstract concepts, like ‘respect’, ‘responsibility’ or ‘sustainability’. The TMG methodology leads students and staff together on this journey.”

Dr. Tom Keating, Project CLEAN, USA

“School sanitation facilities are the first place in society where our children reside in a public space without adult supervision. This realization turns school toilets into a place with high pedagogical value.”

Thilo Panzerbieter, Director, German Toilet Organization

“I was impressed that most schools demonstrated substantial improvements – regardless of the jury decision. This indicates that Toilets Making the Grade creates improvements through active engagement, not by winning.”

Gladys Nantume, Sanitation for Millions, GIZ, Uganda

**We have raised your interest?  
Please contact us.  
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Methodology  
developed by



Adapted and applied in Uganda and Pakistan  
in collaboration with



**SANITATION  
FOR MILLIONS**

