

Perspectives on **Water,** **Sanitation** and **Solid Waste** in Ugandan towns

A Photostory





WABES

Water, Behaviour Change and Environmental Sanitation (WABES) is a collaborative research project between Makerere University (Uganda) and Eawag (Switzerland). The aim is to develop an integrated planning approach for water, sanitation and solid waste, since they are closely linked basic services. This integrated project focusses on two towns in Uganda -Wobulenzi and Kakooge to analyse these services and their influencing factors. This project is financially supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and ETH4D.

DE GROOTE, J., AND NARAYAN A.S., 2025 "PERSPECTIVES ON WATER, SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE IN UGANDA TOWNS - A PHOTOSTORY". EAWAG, DÜBENDORF, SWITZERLAND

Authors and Contributors

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We thank Abubakar Batte, Cate Nakigozi, Aijuka Andrew, and Jess MacArthur for their valuable inputs in this work

We would also like to thank the Town Councils of Kakooge and Wobulenzi for facilitating this research.

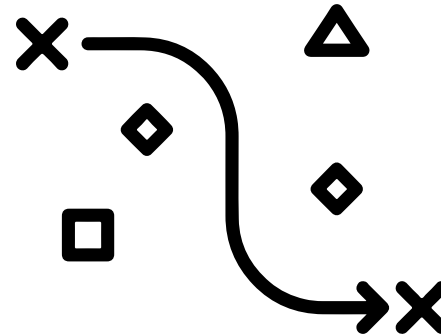
Finally, we sincerely thank each of the participants in this photovoice study that generously contributed their ideas, expertise and stories.

Synopsis

Clear water, safe sanitation and proper waste management are essential to maintain public and environmental health. In small towns of Uganda, some walk long distances for filling safe drinking water in their jerry cans, some navigate unsafe pit latrines, and some take pride in joint efforts between the community and local leaders to improve waste services.



But how do these daily experiences truly look like? To explore this, twelve residents from Kakooze and Wobulenzi were given cameras to capture their daily experience of water, sanitation, and waste management. For three days, they became photographers of their own stories, documenting what works, what doesn't, and where these essential services overlap. A trench blocked by waste, causing stagnant water. A latrine built in a flood-prone area. A waste bin made of old plastic bottles and some creativity.



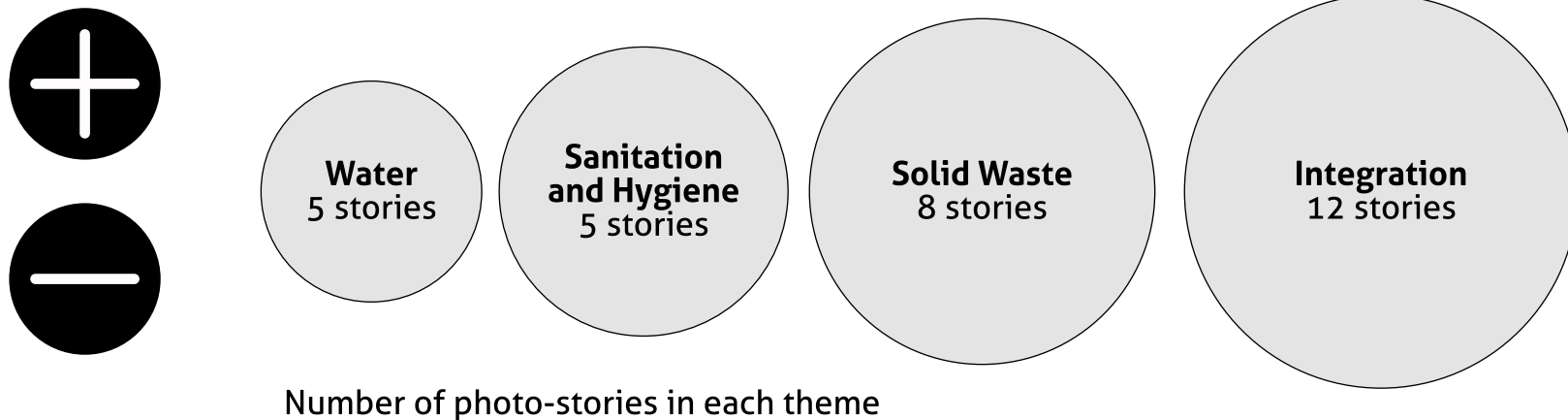
Approach

Each image tells a story—not just of challenges, but of resilience, adaptation, and the creative ways people cope with their environment. These stories were deepened in one-on-one interviews, where participants shared the meaning behind their photos, and in group discussions, where common experiences and aspirations for improvement were explored together.

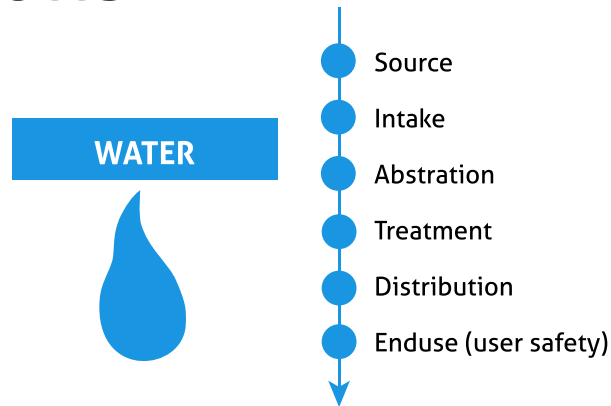
30 photo-stories have been curated and grouped into four categories:

1) water, 2) sanitation and hygiene, 3) solid waste and 4) integration of these themes.

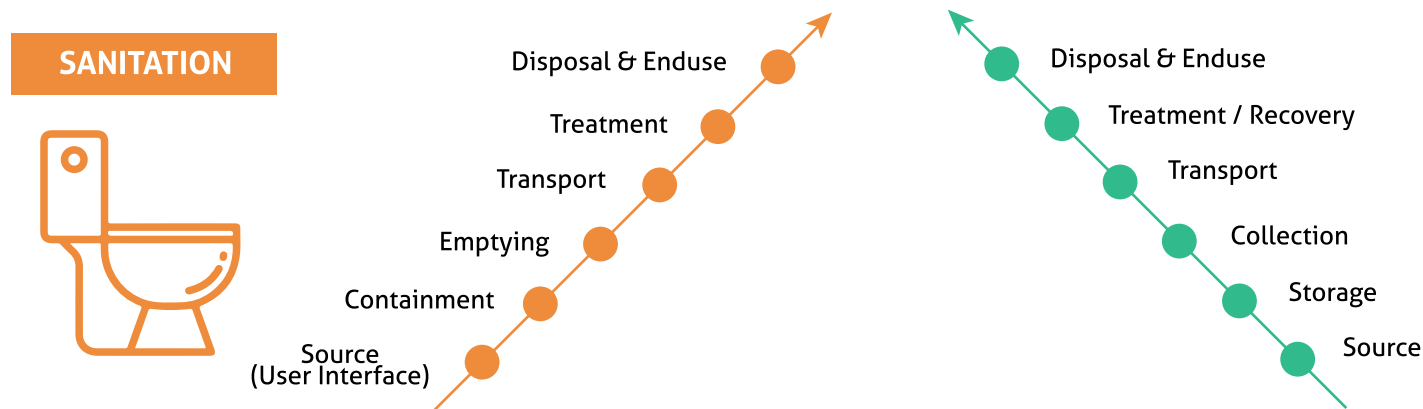
The images have also been coded as positive and negative experiences or both.



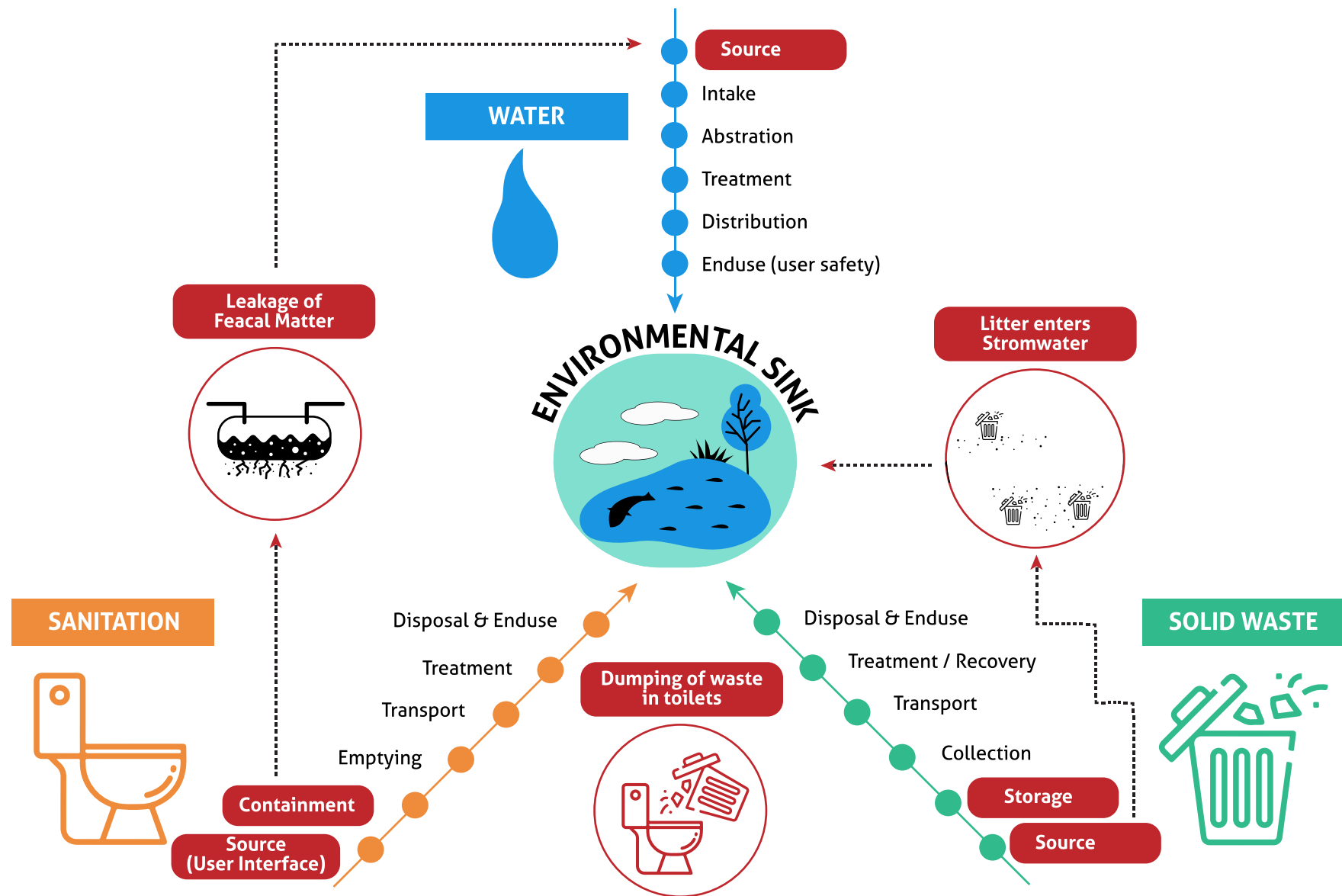
Prompt Questions



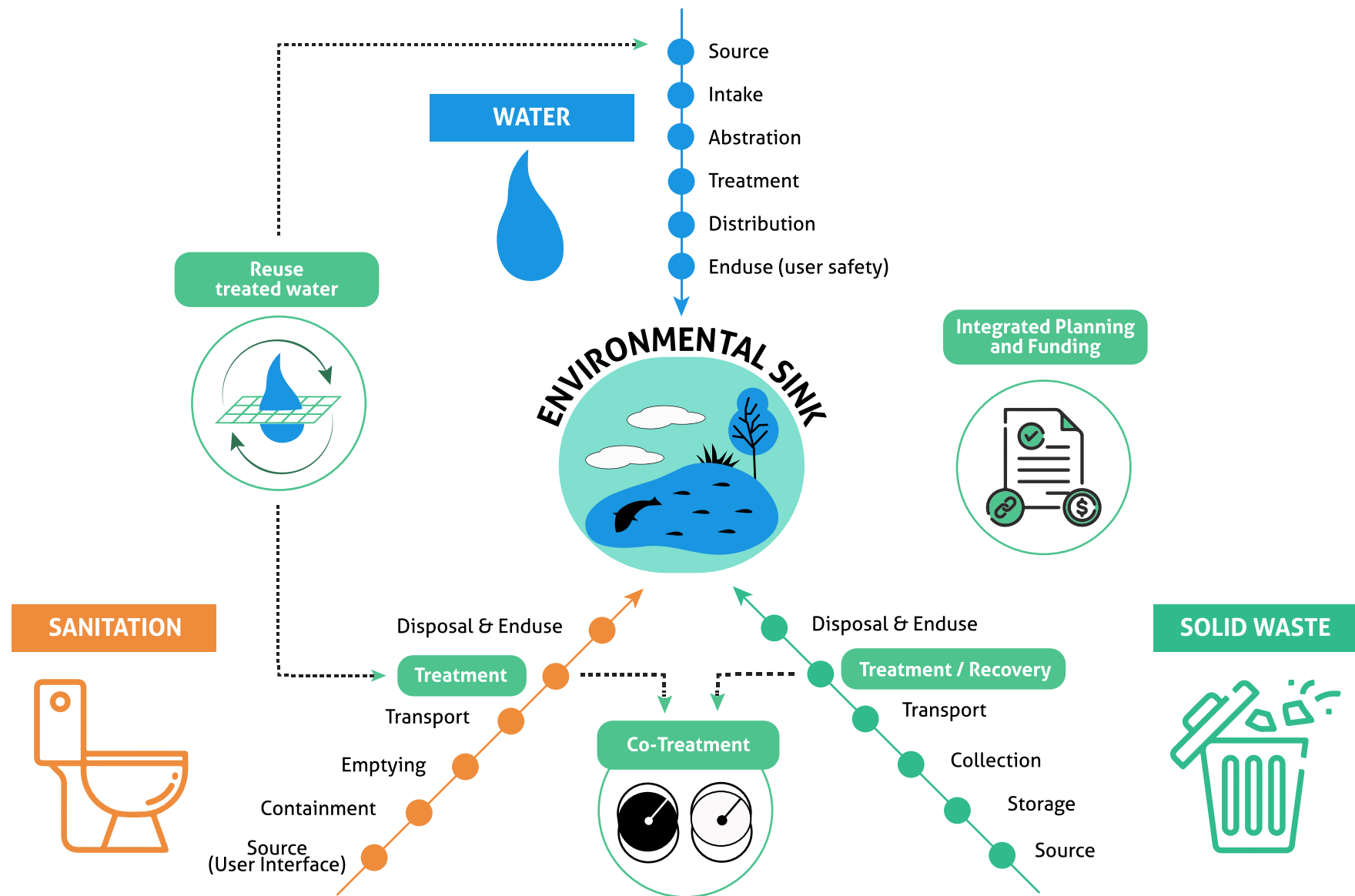
**How are your daily experiences with water,
sanitation and solid waste.
When do you see these services interacting?**



Common Negative Interlinkages



Common Positive Interlinkages



Storytellers

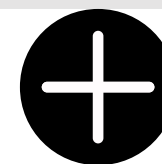
Isaac Sentongo Kakooge	Isaac Kinalwa Kakooge	Grace Namakula (pseudonym) Wobulenzi	Betty Nayiga Wobulenzi
Halima Namilimu Wobulenzi	Yusuf Ali Kirunda Wobulenzi	Gordon Katamba Wobulenzi	Brian Mwebe Wobulenzi
Joseph Makanga Kakooge	Damali Nakgamda Kakooge	Barbra Namirimu Kakooge	Wilson Sekibindi Kakooge

Water

Sanitation

Solid waste

Integration

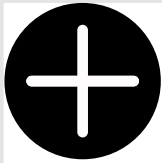


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The tap is in front of my house which makes it easy for me to get clear water.

Isaac Sentongo

November 2024



“

I was happy to see that these kids can fetch water from a borehole in good condition instead of a well.

Grace Namakula

November 2024



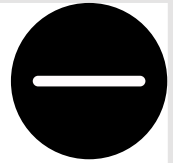


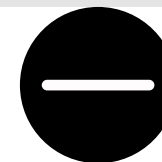
“

People might think
this is a protected
water source.
But there is a boot
and a dead frog, so
now this water is
no longer safe at all

Gordon Katamba

November 2024

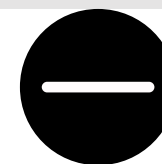




Barbra Namirimu
November 2024

“

Some wrongdoers can hide in the bushes and harm people who come to fetch water



“

I wish NWSC could bring tap water to the village so that the boda boda people can keep washing their boda bodas without polluting the drinking water of others.

Grace Namakula

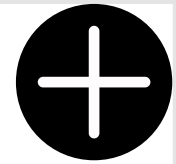
November 2024

Water

Sanitation

Solid waste

Integration



“

It made me happy to see someone with a Katandaalo. After washing utensils, they put them here to dry. And when they are dry, you take them inside without water.

Joseph Makanga
November 2024

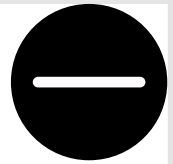


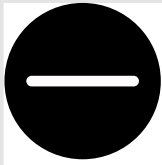
“

Many people fall sick due to germs, but with proper handwashing facilities, we can focus on prevention rather than cure

Joseph Makanga

November 2024





“

This pit latrine is in
the bush.

Using it at night is
risky, as you could be
bitten by a snake

Isaac Kinalwa
November 2024





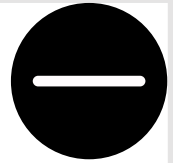
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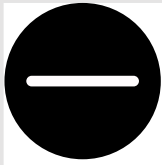
Elderly and disabled people use this latrine.

They don't have the financial ability to build a pit.

However someone who comes to use the toilet may end up doing open defecation

Isaac Kinalwa
November 2024



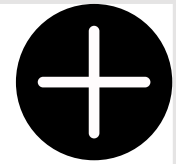


Damali Nakgamda
November 2024



This toilet has no door. If someone finds you in there, it will lead to shame.

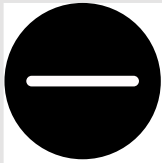
Water
Sanitation
Solid waste
Integration



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People collect plastic bottles and sell them to make money, which helps to manage waste in town. Now, I see less plastics around.

Joseph Makanga
November 2024

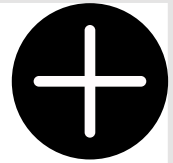


Isaac Kinalwa
November 2024



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They should get another place for disposing this waste. Because sometimes if the town council doesn't come to collect the waste, they leave it until the following week. And here is a market with food stores and restaurants. So flies can come from the waste to the food



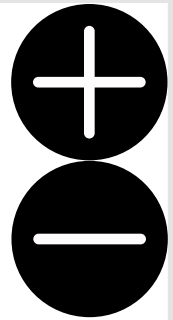
Waste can also be valuable when managed properly and with creativity.



Wilson Sekibindi
November 2024

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How they charge you depends on the sack. The more waste you have, the more they charge you. But the price is fairly good.



Betty Nayiga
November 2024



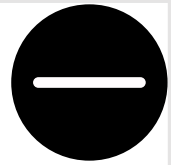
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Cleanliness starts with us, the people and we should all do our part.

But i also ask the town council to take action and make sure the town stays clean

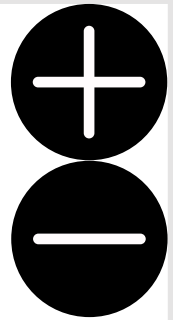
Isaac Kinalwa

November 2024

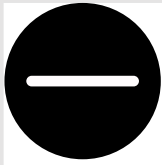


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This truck is a good way of managing waste in Kakooge. But one small truck is not enough and we need more workers.



Wilson
Sekibindi
November 2024



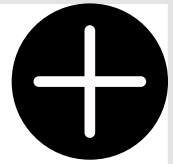
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Those who throw polythene bags with feaces here don't have toilets. Those who have toilets are already full, so they have nowhere to put their feaces.

They put them in the polythene bag and dump at this place.

Betty Nayiga
November 2024





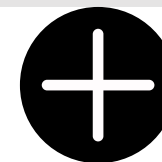
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I just want to thank the administration of Kakooge Town Council trying to keep our town clean.



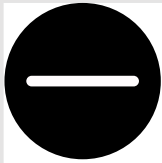
Wilson Sekibindi
November 2024

Water
Sanitation
Solid waste
Integration



Yusuf Ali Kirunda
November 2024

“ The latrine at the mosque is very clean because they pay someone to maintain the cleanliness.



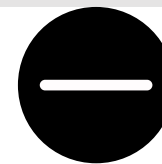
Yusuf Ali Kirunda

November 2024

“



There are two reasons why people dump their waste here; Some can not afford the small fee for waste collection, and at times, the town council doesn't collect for a long time, so waste accumulates in households and people decide to dump it somewhere.

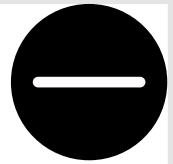


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The existence of the waste in the well is due to the dumping of waste in the drainage channels, which is carried by rainwater to the well.

Isaac Sentongo

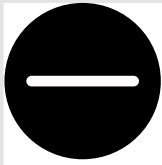
November 2024



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If the culvert is blocked by waste, the water has nowhere to flow and stagnates, allowing mosquitoes to breed.

Isaac Kinalwa
November 2024



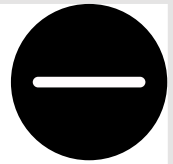
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The waste in the sacks is placed in the drainage channels, but here it can be washed into the wells by the rainwater.

Isaac Sentongo

November 2024



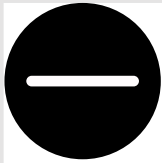


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The dumping site is near a school and makes the place very dirty.

Kids play there and get diseases from the rubbish.

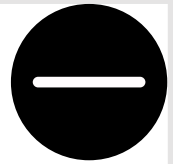
Grace Namakula
November 2024



Betty Nayiga
November 2024



In the community where this well is, there is no borehole, no tap, no nothing. It's the main source of drinking water.



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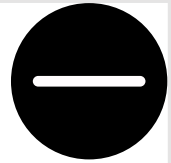
If people see
that it's going to
rain, they start
bringing waste
and drop it in
the trenches.

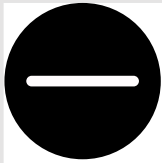
Halima Namilimu
November 2024

“

When it rains, these diapers are taken by the running water into the wetland where many people still fetch drinking water. So they are at risk of fetching water which is contaminated by these diapers.

Gordon Katamba
November 2024

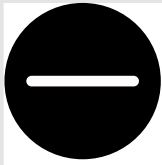




Yusuf Ali Kirunda
November 2024



“ When constructing a spring like this, there should be a proper drainage channel to take the water away. Additionally, a committee should be responsible for it's maintenance.



Gordon Katamba
November 2024

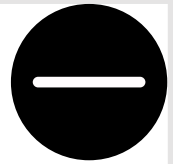


There is no drainage pipe to carry away the water after showering. The stagnant water makes the place very dirty.



“

They put metals to prevent waste from going into the culvert, but people still dump waste into it.



Brian Mwebe
November 2024

