

WASH case study

# CIRMIRO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

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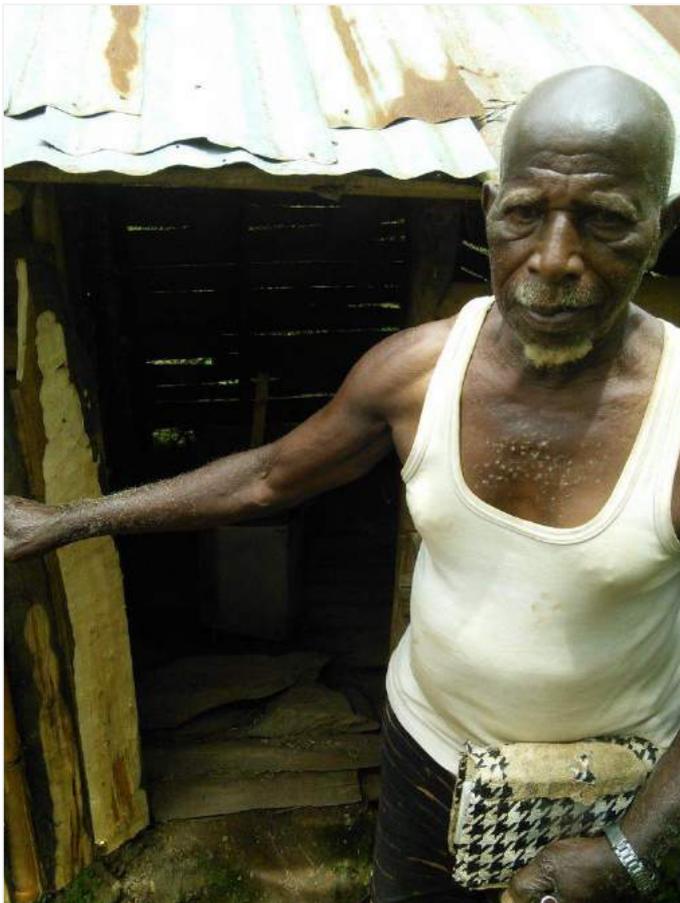
‘As a carpenter by trade, I was able to build a hygienic latrine to meet my physical needs.’ - Burumeka Kabumbuze Cirimiro resident

Since 2014, Tearfund teamed up with Oxfam and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to form a WASH a consortium to specifically implement WASH projects under the UK Government’s “Payment by Results” programme. The resulting “SWIFT Consortium” aims to deliver sustainable access to safe water and sanitation and encourage the adoption of basic hygiene practices in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya

## What has changed?

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Cirimiro is a village in South Kivu, in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in Kaziba Health Zone, Walungu Territory. Burumeka Kabumbuze, a resident of the village, was having difficulties maintaining good hygiene conditions in his household, given his advanced age.



“I was born in 1935, so I am currently 83 years old. I am a widower, my wife died 10 years ago, after having 15 children. I have a very low education level because I only studied until the fifth year of primary school, until 1953. I am a carpenter by trade. Because of my age, I could not use the regular family toilet because of the position required by the location of the hole. I had to sit on a bucket, which bothered my family and attracted flies and left a bad smell in the house. ”

With the help of the SWIFT Tearfund teams, Burumeka now has access to a latrine adapted to his needs and his family’s hygiene conditions have improved considerably.

*Image 1: Burumeka, standing in front of his latrine*

## How has the change been achieved?

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Burumeka's situation changed when members of the village committee and of the health zone accompanied by Tearfund teams came to visit him to discuss his family's hygiene practices.

"They started telling me about disease transmission and the importance of having a hygienic latrine. My grandchildren, with whom I live in the house, showed them our unhygienic toilet according to their standards. I then realized I was completely out of line in terms of hygiene and sanitation practices."

After this first meeting, the team and the family planned another home visit to evaluate the improved latrines, once the necessary modifications put in place by Burumeka's family.

"My grandchildren started improving the toilet as recommended. After two weeks, the same team returned to follow-up on the project. They congratulated us on the quality of the latrine that was now much more hygienic. "

## Why does it matter?

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Since the improvement of his latrine, Burumeka feels much more comfortable, he can now use the toilet like everyone else, which has reduced tensions at home.

"I feel fully protected and a good atmosphere has returned to our household. "

He also finds that his family is healthier.

"Since then, no one in my household has been to the health centre for diseases related to lack of hygiene and sanitation."

## What are the challenges?

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The main challenge faced by Burumeka and his family was to adapt the latrine to the physical constraints of the octogenarian. The first improvements made by his grandchildren still did not allow him to use the latrine properly.

"My grandsons now aware and determined to fight diseases related to lack of hygiene and sanitation, began to say that I was bringing bad luck to the household because I could not comply with the rules of hygiene using the toilet as they did. But I told them that my physical condition limited me greatly in using their latrine. "

## How will the challenges be met and what makes this change sustainable?

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Burumeka did not give up and used his carpenter skills to personalise his latrines.

"An idea came to mind. I told myself that I could develop a latrine that would meet my physical needs to contribute somehow to the eradication of diseases and avoid the contamination of neighbours. As a carpenter and with the help of the household members, I was able to make a sort of wooden bucket that I placed over the square hole of the latrine to make a hygienic latrine and meet my physical needs. "

The hygiene conditions have therefore improved for the whole family, taking into account the particular needs of each member.

Burumeka now finds that his family's health expenses have decreased, demonstrating lasting change.

"Money that we used to spend on medical care is now spent on other daily needs."