



SUCCESS STORY

LATRINE PROMOTION

One woman takes a step toward better sanitation



Photo: C. Thompson/AED

Madame Bernadette stands behind the new toilet she had installed. She is still working to have walls and a roof completed to enclose her latrine.

Bernadette is an elderly woman who lives with her daughter and granddaughter in Tamatave, a city on the east coast of Madagascar. Like many people in their neighborhood, Bernadette's family has a shallow, unsanitary latrine in their yard that is unpleasant to use.

In November 2007, Bernadette attended "World Latrine Day" festivities in Tamatave and stopped at the display set up by the USAID/Hygiene Improvement Project (HIP) and local NGO Frères Saint Gabriel (FSG). There she received information about the importance of using a hygienic latrine and the benefits of having a washable latrine slab, a *SanPlat*. FSG markets and sells simple latrine models including the SanPlat as well as more complex toilets.

Like many other people that day Bernadette wanted to learn more. She stopped by the FSG "sanitation market" the next month and selected a model that would suit her needs: a toilet that allows her to sit down. For six months she paid installments, and in June 2008 FSG came to her house, dug the latrine, and installed her toilet. Bernadette is currently waiting to have a roof and walls completed.

Although Bernadette is the only one in her neighborhood to have one built by FSG, it is hoped that others will follow. "When it's all complete and being used, other people will see it and maybe want the same for themselves," she says. Bernadette is relieved that her new latrine will take 12 years to fill up, and she need not worry about having to soon dig another one.

While FSG continues to promote the purchase of cleaner latrine models, HIP works to educate the community about proper usage of those latrines as well as the need to wash hands with soap and drink safe water. They have seen success with other families, schools, and health clinics being convinced about the importance of latrine usage and taking action to ensure they have cleaner latrines available. HIP's hygiene promotion work aims to reduce diarrhea in small children and supports the national Madagascar Action Plan and the national WASH group.