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MADAGASCAR

SUCCESS STORY

HYGIENE AND TOURISM

Community takes interest in WASH to promote better business



Photo: C. Thompson/AED

These members of a silk weaving co-op hope that having better hygiene and sanitation in their community will increase tourism and as a result, increase their income.

In the community of Soatanana located near Ambositra in Madagascar, women are trying to start a small business cooperative with their traditional silk-weaving. Within this past year, these women have discovered how a cleaner village may draw more tourists to where they live and increase their income.

When visitors stay overnight in Soatanana it brings money into the community. They pay for food and lodging, and the women get to display their silk products for sale. Last year the women found that guests were displeased with the overall lack of sanitation in the village. “They were upset because there was no proper latrine,” says Emilienne, one of the weavers. Fearing that this would discourage tourists from staying in Soatanana, the women’s group asked for help from local NGO Ny Tanintsika with building better latrines.

Ny Tanintsika sent technicians to Soatanana and constructed two new latrines using a *SanPlat* (a washable platform) and two new shower stalls. The women saw how this made their guests more comfortable and requested additional education on hygiene. “We want to learn about cleanliness and how to keep our village clean,” stated Voahangy.

The Hygiene Improvement Project (HIP) became involved and began teaching members of the women’s group as well as other leaders in Soatanana about WASH practices beyond latrine usage: washing hands with soap and drinking clean, treated water. In August 2008, a mobilization was done in Soatanana with the Office of Regional Tourism from Ambositra and HIP, emphasizing the importance of hygiene and its connection to better business. Not only will they sell more silk products, but cases of diarrhea will decrease and the general health of the community will improve if they follow the WASH practices.

With support from HIP the community wrote an action plan and set a goal to build latrines at each household. They intend to follow through with this plan to make Soatanana a cleaner, healthier place for both residents and guests.