

A Mountain of Disposable Nappies

Itumeleng Youth Project

By Tshepo Sibiya, Kedibone Ntobeng
and Christina Khanyile Mothupi

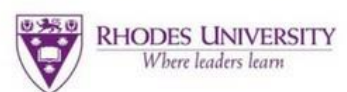


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A Mountain of Disposable Nappies

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CPC: Changing Practice Course
- CSO: Civil Society Organisation
- EPWP: Extended Works Program
- GTFM: Greater Tubatse Fetakgomo Municipality
- IYP: Itumeleng Youth Project
- NPO: Non-Profit Organisation
- RRR: Reduce, Re-use and Recycle

1.

Introduction

Who are we?

TSHEPO SIBIYA (the chairperson)

“I’m Tshepo (Nyathi) Sibiya. I grew up in Ga-Mampuru village which is in Steelpoort, in the Sekhukhune district in Limpopo Province. I attended primary school in Ngwanatheko and did my secondary schooling and matriculated in Makopole II. Ga-Mampuru is a beautiful place which is between Lolo Mountain and the Tubatse River.

I am the founder and chairperson of the organisation called Itumeleng Youth Project. In 2014 I attempted to register Itumeleng but the registration failed. My love for environmental care came to light during the year 2016 when I received an invitation to attend the CSO Indaba in Groblersdal at Loskop Valley Lodge, run by the Association for Water and Rural Development. Peter Mashile (the nappy man) under the company called Q-define invited us.



Kedibone, Tshepo and Christina

Attending the CSO Indaba strengthened my knowledge and opened my mind to civil society organisations and the love for community development. I remember in January 2017 doing

our first waste awareness campaign. We followed this with a cleaning campaign. The community loved it and they wished we could do it daily but also they asked us to come up with solutions for disposable nappies. Every house we came to complained about disposable nappies. That's when we realized that this is a huge problem.

I want to see waste being collected in our area, people understanding how to manage disposable nappies and having a solution for dumping and disposing them.”

CHRISTINA KHANYILE MOTHUPI (treasurer)

“I am Christina Khanyile Mothupi. I was born in Dennilton. In 2005 my family and I moved to the new area called Ga-Mampuru village. There I attended primary school at Ngwanatheko; I matriculated at Makopole II Secondary School.

In 2016 Tshepo Sibiyi introduced me to the organisation Itumeleng Youth Project, which I decided to join. Later on Itumeleng Youth Project was invited to attend the CSO Indaba in Groblersdal at Loskop Valley Lodge. The rule was that each organisation can send two participants. Luckily I was one of the two members to attend on the behalf of IYP.

When I look around my village all I see are people are suffering to fetch water from the river while we have resources in our community to supply the community with water. There is also a waste dumping problem.”

KEDIBONE NTOBENG (Deputy Chairperson)

“I am Ntobeng Kedibone and I live in Ga-Mampuru village in Steelpoort. I am a caring, loving single mother of one girl. I started school in the old village in Ga- Mampuru called Ditantakeng section; the primary school was called Mampuru. Then in 2002 my parents moved to the new section, Ditseng, and I continued my primary education in Ngwanatheko. I did my matric in Makopole II secondary.

In 2016, around October, Tshepo Sibiyi invited me to join Itumeleng Youth Project. I did not know about NPOs. He opened my mind about community development and I fell in love with what he said. I started to understand about community development structures. In 2016 we had a meeting with Peter Mashile who introduced environmental health to IYP.

I would like to see waste being collected daily in our village and also a cleaning campaign and an awareness campaign quarterly to remind us and to teach us how to live in healthy lives.”



Ga-Mampuru Village hand drawn map

Background to the organisation

Itumeleng Youth Project's abbreviation is IYP; we registered with the Department of Social Development as a Non-Profit Organisation in 2015. The main objectives of the organisation were to build an information center to help community with information; to uplift the community with computer skills and to help matriculated students apply or do online registration or admission.

In 2016 we first met Peter Mashile who introduced himself as the nappy man. He was looking for a registered NPO to partner with regarding environmental health. He took the organisation for a tour to a nearby community called Longtil, to show us a dumping site managed by our local government. It was dysfunctional. He asked us how we manage waste in our area, especially disposable nappies. That's when the organisation adopted environmental health as our second objective.



Awareness campaign and refuse bag distribution (5 January 2017)

In January 2017 the organisation decided to do the first ever waste awareness campaign and distributed refuse bags at every house we entered. We followed with a cleaning campaign and collected the refuse bags we distributed.



Awareness campaign and refuse bag distribution (5 January 2017)

In 2017, with the work of IYP, Bophelong Home Based Care invited leaders of and Mampuru Club Marathon to do a disposable nappy clean-up in the community dongas around the Ditenseng section. Again on 20th July Bophelong invited IYP and EPWP (Extended Public

Works Programme) participants to do river cleaning because the river has been turned into a disposable waste dumping site.



Nappy cleaning 18 July 2017

Introducing our Change Project and Focus Area

Our Change Project focus is on illegal dumping with a particular focus on disposable nappies. The focus area is Ga-Mampuru village in Ditenseng section. The reason we are focusing on disposable nappies is because during our house to house awareness campaign on domestic waste management many more people complained about disposable nappies than other domestic waste. We think this is because most domestic waste can be managed effectively if we try to apply the three R's -Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. The questions people raised during the awareness campaign were how do people manage disposable nappies and where do they dump them?

Our area doesn't have a dumping site and this leads to people dumping everywhere they choose to dump, regardless of whether it is safe or not. Their only criteria for dumping is that they dump far from where they live. This is why the community saw opportunities of dumping

on the riverbanks and also in the river. They see the river as a waste transporter. This is problematic as the water resources we have, which is a water purification plant and a steel tank, have stopped supplying the community with water. This means we rely on the river which we are polluting.

Even the water purification plant takes water from the river and the canal that the community uses for water purposes takes water from the river. But our river has been turned into a dumping site. This is why we chose illegal dumping for our Change Project

During our observation in the village we came across a lot of issues that challenge the community, but we decided to stick with disposable nappies as it is a big issue which causes conflict between neighbors. Our rivers and dongas are full of disposable nappies and also bottles in the river. These observations were made by Tshepo Sibiyi, Christine Mothupi and Kedibone Ntobeng during Assignment one of the changing practice course.

2.

What are we seeing?

History of waste and disposable nappies pollution

As mentioned above, our area doesn't have a site that is allocated for dumping and this leads to people dumping everywhere. The issues that we are facing are unauthorized waste dumping which include **domestic waste, used disposable nappies** and **business owners who dump glass bottle waste in dongas and on the river bank**. Below we present a history of this waste problem.

In 1973 the Mampuru clan and the community members were forced to move from Brakfontein (Magagamatala) to Steelpoort (Boschkloof). During that time the population was smaller and they did not need to think about how they would manage their domestic waste because they didn't have much domestic waste. They were using traditional customs and not many Western habits that cause more waste. Women were using cloth nappies for their children and washed them.

Disposable nappies were there years ago, but black people thought that disposable nappies were meant for white people because they were expensive. In the 1990s mining started, the population increased and job opportunities became available for more people. Some people

could now afford to buy disposable nappies but you would never ever see disposable nappies on the street or in dongas. The reason being that people believed heavily in witchcraft. Some people were throwing them in toilets not knowing that they would not decay.

Around the year 2000 development started here and disposable nappies decreased in price in comparison to what people were earning again. Many people started to be able to afford disposable nappies. That's when people start to realize that disposable nappies do not decay. Most parents decided to throw them far away from people.

A new development began in 2006, the Lion Smelter Phase One and the population increased yet again. People from different places arrived. Business increased; taverns and renting rooms were built but we still didn't have a dumping site. The tavern started to open 24/7; waste bottles and cans increased in large numbers. This is when waste started to be unmanageable. More settlements were developed and grew so there was no space where people could dump away from human settlements. This is when people started to see river banks as dumping sites and the river as a waste transporter.

In 2011 the Lion Smelter was extended by building Phase Two of the first smelter. Local business owners extended their business and people from different countries came and started doing business in our area. Many people started to work, and we then had more challenges of drop-outs from school. Teenage pregnancy and illness increased. That's when waste starting to be everywhere, in dongas, next to people's yards and also on the river banks. Itumeleng Youth Project did a door-to-door awareness campaigns and cleaning campaigns. In July 2017 I.Y.P introduced the Changing Practice challenge of disposable nappies to Bophelong Home Based Care. Then on the 18th July 2017 Bophelong Home Base Care invited IYP to a disposable nappies cleaning campaign in the section. On the 20th July we again did the disposable nappies cleaning campaign on the river banks. Before doing campaigns we engage with the municipality for collection of the nappies. They agreed but till today they have not come to collect as they promised.

Categories of Issues

Domestic waste



Domestic waste is a problem in our area. People who live next to the school dump waste next to the school yard corner and no one is complaining and we don't have community cleaners. This is dangerous to children because they throw everything there including hazardous or poisonous waste which becomes dangerous when expired or exposed to the sun. Most children pass there every day on their way to school and we fear they will touch or eat the waste that they see.

Used disposable nappies



Disposable nappies are a huge problem because they take hundreds of years to decompose - people know that. That is why people don't throw them in toilets anymore. Many neighbours are fighting because when they throw used disposable nappies in their yards dogs play with the nappies, tear them up and then take them to someone else's yard who doesn't have a child who wears disposable nappies. This was a big complaint that we heard when doing house to house awareness and the nappies campaign. That's why people choose to throw them in rivers and dongas. You will find 80kgs, 50kgs, 25kgs and 12.5kgs of maize meal bags full of used disposable nappies.

Business waste



Businesses also generate a lot of waste especially glass bottles and we don't have a recycling company nearby. At least we have women who collect cans for recycling. As for glass bottles, no one is collecting them and we don't have a dumping site. Business owners dump the bottles along the river bank and in dongas. All this waste ends up in our river during rainy seasons and pollutes our water.

Shortage of water



We have a shortage of water. We mostly rely on the canal and the river for water usage. People who rely on farming for a living use the canal for irrigation. We have a shortage of water while we have the resources that could supply the community with water - 2 steel tanks and a water purification plant. During the time when there was a great shortage of water many people relied on the canal because the river is far away. The canal water is dirty because animals drink there and the irrigation scheme relies on the canal for water so we have to compete with the irrigation scheme and animals.

3.

Why is this happening?

Background of the issue

After the relocation to Steelpoort there was a lot of space and every person thought about farming as a way of securing food. A large area was occupied by farming and no one would give up this space easily unless their children needed space for living.

In the olden days old people had traditions which included witchcraft. Used things were managed. They were not allowed to be thrown outside. They believed that burning is the solution and most things that they bought e.g. tins and bottles, were re-used. That is why they didn't need a dumping site.

Now the population has increased. People have occupied the remaining space that was used for farming and they never thought about a dumping site again because they didn't know that waste would become a huge problem like this. If the recycling companies were nearby, people would recycle because they need cash. From our awareness campaign we realized people don't believe in reducing or recycling they just see it as a way of making money.

In the olden days people used cloth nappies as disposable nappies were not affordable. Now disposable nappies are affordable and everyone can buy them and again there are many companies that manufacture disposable nappies. Many people enjoy using disposable nappies because they save time. They do not need energy to wash and don't even need water. Disposable nappies are a problem in rural areas because they take hundreds of years to decay and fill up the toilet easily. In rural areas people dump disposable nappies in dongas and rivers. Most rural areas don't have dumping sites or waste collection. Disposable nappies are

Most rural areas don't have dumping sites or waste collection. Disposable nappies are not recyclable or renewable. .

“Disposable nappies are a problem because they take hundreds of years to decay... Most rural areas don't have dumping sites or waste collection”

Our local municipality does not have a plan for disposable nappies waste collection and there is no waste collection for different waste in rural areas. Also the manufacturing companies of disposable nappies do not have plans to make disposable nappies re-usable or recyclable. Most of the people who are working in our local municipality do not live in the local district municipality villages. That's why they don't allocate funds for rural waste collection.

Engagement

Conversation with waste management supervisor in our local municipality (Greater Tubatse Fetakgomo Municipality in Burgersfort)

We did not make an appointment to meet the Waste Management in our local municipality. We were directed to the supervisor who is Koena Masebe. The reason for not making the appointment was that if you make an appointment the municipal staff won't attend to you and postpone until you give up.

On our arrival we introduced ourselves and our Change Project. We asked for an hour or 30 minutes with her. She said that we cannot ask for this much time when we didn't make an appointment with her. She said that she was busy and has important things to do. But we were surprised that we took an hour with her.

The conversation and questions started with her. We asked our first question which was, *“What are the municipality plans regarding disposable nappies that are in dongas and rivers in rural areas?”* The answer was that, *“The municipality doesn't have plans for rural areas and they will never have plans because it is a national and international challenge. You as an organisation are supposed to come with solutions and plans because you are doing research.”*

Q How can the municipality help the community to manage their waste, not only disposable nappies but also domestic waste?

A The community must be the ones to know how to manage their waste because they are the ones who generate waste.

Q What support can municipalities give a CSO or NPO that is helping the community to manage waste?

A The municipality has rules and regulations. They don't have a program of waste collection in rural areas and they don't have budget for rural areas around Greater Tubatse Municipality (GTF).

Q Why don't they don't have programs for rural areas?

(That's where conflict started because we asked "why")

A You people from rural areas you think you will get everything because you fall under the G.T.F Municipality.

We said the municipality needs to give us service delivery in our areas. That's when she got angry and said *'is this an interrogation, interview or investigation?'* She even said that we must put politics aside and follow the protocol. Municipalities have a protocol to follow concerning rural development, e.g. house number, household income and street planning. She mentioned Mashifane Park around Burgersfort, which is a new section in Burgersfort, and is in the process of receiving waste collection from the municipality. Our concern was that Mashifane Park is new section around Burgersfort and they are planning to collect their waste. We asked *'What about the communities that have been there years ago before Mashifane Park without waste collection?'* She said *'if you are going to ask me 'why' questions again I will refer you to the top floor of the building to meet the politicians because you came here with your politics mind'*. We said that we were not there with politics, we were there with concerns regarding our community. She said, *"I don't talk to communities."* It was a heated argument which took a long time. She even said that *"I don't care because am not staying around here I am from Polokwane and I have waste collection where I stay."*

The local municipal waste management collection department is relevant to our Change Project because we are dealing with waste in our rural area while there is no collection. While having a conversation with the Waste Management Supervisor she said that no one has the right to waste collection in municipal areas without municipal approval. But how can we run effective cleaning campaigns if we don't have waste collection? On 18 July 2017 we had a disposable nappies cleaning campaign around Ga-Mampuru river banks and dongas. Unfortunately, even though the municipality agreed to collect our bags of disposable nappies they did not.

Survey of nappy dumping in Ditenseng section daily

We did house-to-house interviews with people that have babies and use disposable nappies. We were collecting statistics on how many children are in our section, how old they are and how long they will use disposable nappies for. We entered 30 houses in Ditenseng section

and found out that each house has one or two babies who still use disposable nappies. We asked which nappies they use and how many disposable nappies they use per day.

Calculation of disposable nappies going into our river or dongas

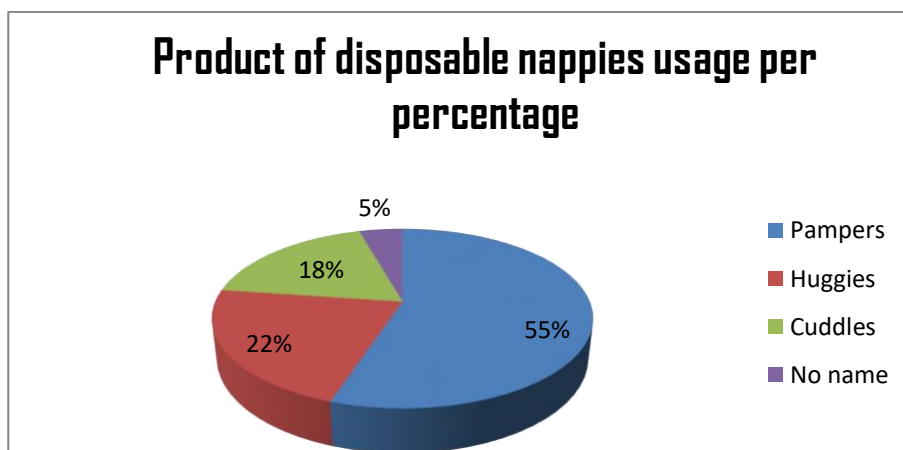
Age of babies	Number of babies per home	How much they use p/day	Total per day	Total per week	Total per month	Per year
0-12 month	19	3	57	399	1596	19152
12-24 month	5	4	20	140	560	6720
24-36 month	2	2	4	28	112	1344
3/4 years	4	1	4	28	112	1344
Total	30	10	85	595	2380	28560

This shows that our river carries more than 28,560 used disposable nappies per year. We only investigated 30 houses which revealed that a lot of used disposable nappies are going into our river as we don't have a landfill for dumping disposable nappie

What kind of disposable nappies are they using?

Pampers	huggies	cuddles	No name	#D/nappies
15	6	5	4	# people

Pie chart



The Questions we asked during our interview with the mothers

- What kind of disposable nappies are they using?
- Where do they dump disposable nappies after they have been used?
- Why do they dump there?
- What kind of challenges do those disposable nappies pose?
- If there are challenges why are they still using them?
- What could be the solution for disposable nappies challenges?
- What method do they use to dispose of the used disposable nappies?

Short stories of mothers who use disposable nappies during our house-to- house interview campaign

Interviewee 1 lives in Ditenseng section, house number **xxx**. **She is the** mother of an 11-month old girl. She is using **the Huggies** nappies. Interviewee 1 said that she burns the nappies but her mother told us the truth that she dumps the disposable nappies in dongas but sometime she washes them and burns them. They dump in the dongas because they can't dump the nappies in the toilet and they don't have time to wash and burn so a better solution is to throw them in the dongas. The challenge she has is that disposable nappies are expensive and her mother wishes that she could use cloth nappies but due to the lack of water and time she can't. Her solution was that they wished the municipality could collect waste daily in our village.

Interviewee 2 lives in Ditenseng section house no **xxx**. She is the grandmother of a 2-year old child. She uses **Huggies** nappies because they do not cause bum rash and the price is good. They take the used disposable nappies to the dumping site in Steelpoort. She doesn't like people dumping in rivers or dongas so she can't do that.. Her solution was that the municipality could dig a hole where people could dump the nappies and that hole must be far from the people and the river. She can't use cloth nappies because "people will judge you". Cloth nappies are a problem during rainy season because they won't dry and also we lack water.

Interviewee 3 lives in Ditenseng house **no xxx** and is a mother of a 3-month old child. She uses Pampers nappies. She removes the gel inside the disposable nappy and dumps it in a toilet and what is left they throw in a small steel tank and use paraffin to burn them. She wished all women could do the same as the solution is not to dump in rivers.



How one of the mothers dumps and burns used disposable nappies

Interviewee 4 lives in Ditenseng. She is the mother of a 3 year old, 1 year old and a 2 year old. They use any disposable nappy products. We were talking to Interviewee 4 about where she dumps the disposable nappies. She was lying to us saying she burns them. Her sister came in and hijacked our conversation without knowing what we were talking about. She said “yes we dump in the river because we don’t have a dumping site but most of the time we dump in the stream.” We laughed a lot because her sister did not know how she could tip her. She eventually told us the truth. She said “I am afraid because I know what is doing is wrong and I am ashamed of it”.

The disposable nappies campaign was an attempt to find a solution and to try to understand why people dump in rivers. We also tried to make them understand the problems they are causing when they dump in the river. Some of them understand the issue but some of them don’t care. What the interviews show is that people try different solutions for dealing with the nappies but none of them are easy. The best solution is to take the nappies to the dump site but this means you need transport. We also learnt that people know that they should not dump nappies in the river and so are secretive about what they are doing. Finally, we found out that cloth nappies carry a stigma and women are judged for using them.



During our door to door disposable nappies campaign

4. Why this is not what we want to see in the world

One disposable nappy can carry one liter of water compared to urine simply because urine has salts. If one disposable nappy can carry one liter of water this means that 20 disposable nappies suck up 20L of water that we won't regain again. A jam-pack carries 86 nappies, so this means 86L of water is lost if they are thrown in the river.

People are using disposable nappies each and every day without a proper solution for disposing of them. That means that each and every disposable nappy in a rural area, where there is a river, will end up in the river. A child wears disposable nappies for about 3-4 years while a small baby wears three disposable nappies a day. In our research, when doing house-to-house disposable nappies campaign, we entered 30 houses in one section and each house has 1 child wearing disposable nappies. Due to the lack of proper dumping of used disposable nappies almost every one of these families dumps disposable nappies on the river bank. That ends up in the river and that means we are losing 30,240 L of water per annum because of 30 houses.

Imagine the whole community of households which contain 1,000's of children which means we are going to lose more and more water. And they are not intending to stop using disposable nappies. Also the manufacturing companies don't have a plan to make recyclable/decomposable disposable nappies. The material that is used to manufacture disposable nappies is non-recyclable. You can dig a hole and put used disposable nappies inside the hole and they won't decompose.

Health impacts caused by used disposable nappies

Used disposable nappies pose a huge risk to the health of people during rainy season with people stepping on flowing diapers filled with fecal matter. Decaying diapers release methane, a dangerous and highly explosive gas into the air and into the natural environment. Used disposable nappies release organic and toxic chemicals such as toluene, ethyl benzene and xylene, substances which are linked to adverse health effects and in the long run can cause cancer.

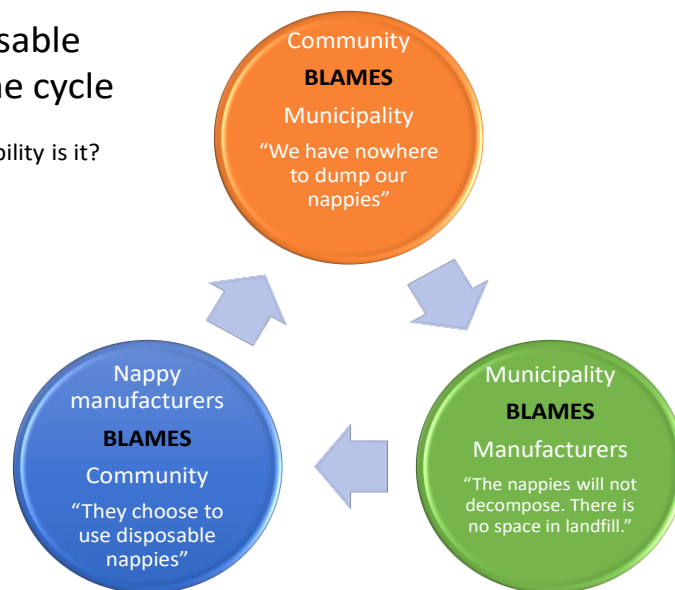
Dumping of used disposable nappies at unauthorized dumping sites and in water exposes the community to diarrhea when in drinking water and obnoxious odors, Some other gases produced that are which is toxic to human.

The greatest health risk from open burning of garbage at waste disposable grounds is inhalation of smoke and odor. It a solution to burn but it is a solution that is causing problems. Gases, which are produced when diapers are incinerated are toxic to humans. The ashes which may be dispersed by wind or leached by water may contain toxic contaminants, which may be inhaled leading to respiratory problems.

Poor waste collection has also encouraged people to bury used diapers in the ground. It affects the ground water supply as waste will eventually mix with underground water. The probability of contaminating the source of drinking water by pathogens such as bacteria and viruses is very high.

The disposable nappy blame cycle

Whose responsibility is it?



From our work we developed this blame cycle as no one wants to take responsibility for the problem of disposable nappies. The community blame the municipality for not providing a dumping site, when we speak to the municipality they blame the manufacturers of the nappies for producing products that won't decompose. The nappy manufacturers blame the community saying they don't have to buy the disposable nappies. It is their choice. If we are going to deal with the nappy problem we need to change this blame cycle into a responsibility cycle.

5.

What do we want to see in the world?

With domestic waste

We need our organisation to be more involved in awareness campaigns and cleaning campaigns and teaching people how to implement the RRR method. Our local municipality must allocate more funds for SME (Small Medium Enterprise) or organisations that are doing recycling in rural areas. This will not only clean waste but also contribute to job creation and poverty alleviation. Each household must have a dustbin or street bins that can be collected at least once a week. The current CWP workers (Community Workers Programs) must be tasked with cleaning waste on the street and in rivers.

With disposable nappies

For a temporary solution we must have used disposable nappies collected by our local municipality and taken to a landfill. What the municipality does not understand is that this waste is not just our problem it is everyone's problem as the waste ends up in the river which we all rely on. It is short sighted to not see this issue as potentially effecting 1000's of people.

We must have at least two workshops per month with communities, not only with women but with both genders, to teach them how to manage used disposable nappies. Everyone must have input, set rules and have fines for polluters. Also some people already have solutions such as driving to the waste dump or separating out the gel from the nappies and burning the material. We need to share these solutions with each other.

Manufacturing companies must be held accountable for disposable nappy pollution by allocating funds for organisations that are doing awareness and cleaning campaigns. Permanent solutions for disposable nappies are that manufacturing companies must make re-usable, recyclable and decomposable disposable nappies.

If all these methods can be implemented including municipalities putting more funds into recycling companies, everyone will be recycling tins, plastic, papers, glass, steel and everything that is recyclable. This will make our community clean from domestic waste pollution. Again if the manufacturing companies can come up with a better plan or listen to advice from the organisations and make re-useable, recyclable and bio-degradable disposable nappies, we won't see used disposable nappies in our rivers and dongas. We will

have a healthy, clean environment and we will have turned the blame cycle into a responsibility cycle.

6.

How are we changing things?

Below we summarise what we have been doing during our Change Project. We have mentioned most of these activities above.

Itumeleng Youth Project did awareness campaigns and distributed refuse bags to one of the sections in the village, Ditenseng. We did cleaning and collecting of the waste refuse bags that we distributed. We did a door to door disposable nappies campaign where we were trying to find solutions on how to manage used disposable nappies.

In every meeting that IYP is invited to, we try to put environmental issues on the agenda so that all the CSO's can be involved and engage in the waste issue. Bophelong Home Based Care organisation is another organisation that has engaged with IYP and organised a used disposable nappies cleaning campaign in dongas. They also organized a used disposable nappy campaign in the river.

Three IYP members, who are Tshepo Sibiya, Christine Mothupi and Kedibone Ntobeng, have attended the Changing Practice course accredited by Rhodes University, facilitated by EMG and funded by USAID through AWARD. This has given the organisation a chance to network with other CSOs. These other CSO's are:

SEJN, COME-ACT, CULISA, KHULUMANI SUPPORT GROUP, ACTION VOICES, MPUMALANGA WATER CAUCUS and EMG.



Changing Practice course participants

7. Broader influences affecting our Change Project

Gender and Inequality

In our community and in our organisation we have a gender and inequality issue where we have fewer men and more women in our organisation. When doing house-to-house campaigns, even if we are welcomed by men, the moment we say that our topic is disposable nappies no man is interested. They say this is for women. The reason is that women are the ones taking care of the babies. The man will leave and call his wife to meet with us.

Most men think that supporting a child is about financial support. A women's duty is bathe, feed, care for children. This includes changing a child's nappies. Sometimes it is difficult to get men to be involved in disposable nappies cleaning and awareness campaigns in our organisation because of this stigma.

8.

Reflections



Christine, Tshepo and Kedibone during a CPC mentorship meeting

Our reflections on Changing Practice and the issues around our community

Kedibone's reflections

As a member of IYP organisation and a Changing Practice course participant, the issue of unauthorized dumping that is happening in the village that I live in, is stressful. Our land is dirty, full of domestic waste and used disposable nappies and no one is taking responsibility for that. The community members say that they don't have a choice because they do not have an identified place to dump waste. So everyone in the village dumps their waste where it suits them.

Even our local municipality is not willing to collect waste in our village. Their reason was that they don't have a waste collection program in the rural areas and they also said that their landfill is full of used disposable nappies. They argue that for used disposable nappies waste

we have to engage with the manufacturing companies. The manufacturing companies said that they are not forcing consumers to buy their product. So I think if we can work together with the community, our local municipality and the manufacturing companies, we can come up with a better solution that will suit everyone in the world.

Christine's reflections

In my community there are lots of issues but there is one issue that makes me have sleepless nights: it is disposable nappies and unauthorized dumping. For me it is good that IYP is doing awareness campaigns house-to-house to give people knowledge about the unauthorized dumping problem, lack of water and unemployment in the rural areas. Disposable nappies are an issue that the community does not look at. When it comes to the issue of gender most of the time you will find women are the ones that are affected by it; men will say that it is women's job to look after the waste. As a member of the IYP I have discovered that local municipality doesn't have a plan for disposable nappies waste collection.

Tshepo's reflections

Being part of the Changing Practice course since assignment one to this assignment three I have learned a lot. The community doesn't seem to care about what is happening in their village, especially when it comes to waste. For some it is normal but some say. what can we do, where we can start? They are defeated. We still have a long way to go as the organisation to change the mindset of the whole community that it is not normal to live in dirty environment and that we are not defeated. Doing house-to-house cleaning campaigns, door-to-door awareness campaigns and interviews about the disposable nappies has taught us a lot .

We realise that our local municipality will not help the community with waste any time soon. Our conclusion as the organisation is that we are going to try and do what's best for our environment ourselves.

A Mountain of Disposable Nappies

A case study developed through the *Changing Practice: Olifants* project.

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