

EU Supports building of ecological toilets in 40 schools



St. Saviours Primary School, located in Hlotse, is one of the 40 schools in Lesotho targeted by the sustainable school sanitation systems project implemented by Technologies for Economic Development (TED). Funded by the European Union, the project aims to improve the sanitation situations in schools around the country.

There are no toilets in many schools in Lesotho. In schools where there are, the facilities are blocked, old, smelly, unhygienic and have no doors, making them unusable by both students and teachers. With the lack of privacy due to the absence of doors, students, especially girls are reluctant to go to the toilets. This is worst among girls who begin puberty and have to deal with their menstrual cycle in latrines which lack privacy.

"Before we had the new toilets, we were using the old smelly ones," said 'Matiisetso Khemane, 13, a student at St. Saviours Primary school. "During break time, all the students would crowd at the toilets waiting for their turn and we would be late for class."

With a total EU funding allocation of € 750, 000 (over 10 million Maloti), TED and its partners have embarked on a project called the '*Child Friendly and Gender Sensitive Ecological and Sustainable School Sanitation Systems in urban and peri-urban areas in Lesotho*', which will construct Amalooloo ecological toilets in 40 schools, with a target of 12,000 pupils - 6000 boys and 6000 girls. The project works to reduce diarrheal disease episodes and absenteeism in target schools.

With 222 students and 8 teachers, 12 new toilets were constructed at St. Saviours between April and June 2015. "The new toilets are clean and they do not smell," rejoiced 'Matiisetso. "We take care of

them and clean them." 'Matiisetso said that they were taught to wash their hands with water and soap immediately after using the toilet.

'Matiisetso, who would like to be a teacher one day, said that she is very grateful to the EU and TED for their support.

The Director of TED, Mrs. Mantopi Lebofa, said it is important to implement the project at schools and teach children as they are 'change agents' with a high multiplier effect. "It starts with one child – one child can share knowledge on hygiene and sanitation learnt from school with their families, the community at large and influence them to change their behaviour," said Mantopi.



'Matiisetso Kemane, 13, Grade 7 student at St. Saviours Primary School in Hlotse, Leribe



Amalooloo Ecological toilets