

## Chapter 21

# The Positive Deviance Approach as a Behavior Change Strategy for Promoting Sustainable Sanitation Practices Including Eliminating Open Defecation

**Jannette Abalo**

*University of Begen, Uganda*

### ABSTRACT

*This chapter proposes the introduction of the positive deviance approach as a behavior change methodology for achieving sustainable sanitation in slums within Kampala city, Uganda. PD is an innovative public health strategy which promotes learning from people whose uncommon but successful behaviors allow them find better solutions to problem than peers with whom they face similar challenges. Adopting the application of PD by policy makers will allow for the examination of various sanitation achievements in communities with best practice and reciprocating in other areas.*

### SUSTAINABLE SANITATION

Sanitation means to provide facilities and services for the safe disposal of human urine and faeces (Bartram & Cairncross, 2010). Ideally, a sustainable sanitary system is meant to provide for a clean environment that promotes and protects human health, by breaking various disease cycles (Okot-Okumu & Oosterveer, 2010). From study carried out by Unger et al., (2013), about, 2.5 billion people have unrestricted exposure to faecal contaminants and a multitude of diseases due to lack of access to improved sanitation facilities. Although about 4.2% of the annual global mortalities are preventable, majority of urban dwellers drink dirty unsafe water, use unreliable sanitation facility, and practice unacceptable hygiene practices (Prüss Et al, & Bartram, 2002; Tumwebaze et al, & Mosler, 2013). In slum settlements, majority of households either share a toilet or defecate in open sewers/ drainage systems, thus exposing each other to contamination and dirty.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-4165-3.ch021

## **Status of Sanitation in Kampala**

Kampala is the largest city and capital of Uganda. Uganda is a landlocked country located in Eastern Africa. It is bordered to the East by Kenya, to the north by South Sudan, to the west by the Democratic Republic of Congo, to the southwest by Rwanda, and to the south by Tanzania. According to the 2012 Statistical Abstract, Kampala had 1.72 million people by mid-2012. According to UN-Habitat, 60% of Kampala's populations live in slums and only 16% of slum dwellers have access to improved sanitation. The Ministry of Water and Environment Sector Performance report (2010) attributes the development of slums and informal settlements in urban areas, especially in Kampala, which accounts for 35% of the urban population of Uganda to rapid urbanization, these informal settlements and slums are characterized by poor sanitation practices. Many people do not have access to safe and private latrines and have to resort to rudimentary methods like open defecation or plastic bags commonly known as *flying toilets*. Most of the people in these areas are discouraged by the lack of Access to property and high prices from investing in improved sanitation facilities.

In Uganda, slums have the worst sanitation characterized by either poorly constructed or malfunctioning latrines. Toilets empty into open drains and there are inadequate waste removal services. Millions of people in Katanga, Namwongo, Kisenyi, Mulago and Kivulu settlements defecate in the open drainages – use roadsides, railway tracks and plastic bags labelled 'flying toilets' – because they have no other option. City Streets and common areas have quickly become open sewers and rubbish dumps for other residents who lack sanitary facilities. Thus, this lack of sustainable sanitation threatens the health and security of the city as a whole, and the world beyond.

## **Uganda's Policy Frameworks on Sanitation**

Uganda has a well-developed policy framework, originating from a constitutional provision that every Ugandan has the right to a clean and healthy environment, and that, it is the duty of every citizen to create and protect his/her environment. To reinforce this, several laws, regulations, policies and strategies have been put in place for instance; the Public Health Act (1964, updated 2000), which advocates for prevention and suppression of infectious disease, proper housing, as well as proper handling of foodstuffs (Plan-International., 2011). The 1999 National Health Policy underlines the importance of sanitation and hygiene promotion as a key public health intervention. The 2005 National Environmental Health Policy provides a framework for promoting environmental health services at both national and local government levels (Plan-International., 2011). The national "Improvement of Sanitation and Hygiene (ISH) strategy" applies a three-pronged approach to increase demand for improved services, help households benefit from better sanitation, and create an enabling environment. The 1997 Kampala Declaration on Sanitation (KDS) was endorsed by district political leaders as an indicator of the political will to see change: it defines ten areas of action to improve sanitation at district and other local government levels (Plan-International., 2011).

The 2010-2015 National Development Plan (NDP) recognizes Community Led Total Sanitation as an hygiene and sanitation promotion approaches in the country, although there is no specific policy direction in the country to guide the adoption and application of CLTS per se (Plan-International., 2011). Despite having one of the most advanced, harmonized and coordinated water sectors in Africa, Uganda's progress in sustaining water supply and sanitation has stagnated.

11 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-positive-deviance-approach-as-a-behavior-change-strategy-for-promoting-sustainable-sanitation-practices-including-eliminating-open-defecation/204763](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-positive-deviance-approach-as-a-behavior-change-strategy-for-promoting-sustainable-sanitation-practices-including-eliminating-open-defecation/204763)

## Related Content

---

### Collaborative Environmental Knowledge Management

Haohui Chen and Ian D. Bishop (2013). *International Journal of E-Planning Research* (pp. 58-81).

[www.irma-international.org/article/collaborative-environmental-knowledge-management/76292](http://www.irma-international.org/article/collaborative-environmental-knowledge-management/76292)

### The Educ-Entrepreneur Model for Student Learning and Teaching

Asmaa Bengueddach and Karim Bouamrane (2022). *International Journal of Smart Education and Urban Society* (pp. 1-9).

[www.irma-international.org/article/the-educ-entrepreneur-model-for-student-learning-and-teaching/301464](http://www.irma-international.org/article/the-educ-entrepreneur-model-for-student-learning-and-teaching/301464)

### The TOSCA Case: How Open-Source Spatial and Digital Decision Support Tools Help Urban Agglomerations to Leapfrog Towards Smart Sustainable Cities

Maria Moleiro, Arjama Mukherjee and Joerg Rainer Noennig (2023). *International Journal of E-Planning Research* (pp. 1-16).

[www.irma-international.org/article/the-tosca-case/319370](http://www.irma-international.org/article/the-tosca-case/319370)

### Application of Virtual Design and Construction for Construction Waste Management in China

Yufeng Niu, Changsaar Chai and Yaoli Xiong (2026). *Sustainable Construction and Heritage Conservation in the Digital Age* (pp. 209-236).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/application-of-virtual-design-and-construction-for-construction-waste-management-in-china/383475](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/application-of-virtual-design-and-construction-for-construction-waste-management-in-china/383475)

### Smart Transportation Systems and Sustainable Urban Mobility

Venkata Ramana Kaneti, B. Yamini, S. Nagarajan, A. Adaikkammal, L. A. Anto Gracious, R. Siva Subramanian and P. Girija (2025). *Revolutionizing Urban Development and Governance With Emerging Technologies* (pp. 261-288).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/smart-transportation-systems-and-sustainable-urban-mobility/375995](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/smart-transportation-systems-and-sustainable-urban-mobility/375995)