

REFLECTIONS ON **SUSTAINABILITY**

In many respects the FAA programme is a trailblazer, achieving a level of scale that is almost unprecedented in Africa. This level of achievement naturally presents challenges, for example around sustainability and reliable, consistent monitoring. Regarding slippage, or households returning to previous unhygienic behaviours, the FAA and GSF in general accord great importance to verifying how communities appear to slip back to open defecation, and why. A number of internal studies have therefore been commissioned in Madagascar, both as part of and in addition to standard GSF procedures. Three recent studies by the GSF Country Programme Monitor, the programme's Executing Agency and the Programme Coordinating Mechanism all reported slippage, but at different rates. Differences in findings seemed to relate to definitions of ODF – reverting to open defecation versus adhering to the programme's very strict fly-proof latrine criteria⁷ – and to methodological differences.

While this discrepancy in monitoring data is a serious issue and one that the GSF is urgently working to address and learn more about, the findings do not take away from the FAA's success in mobilizing thousands of villages and hundreds of thousands of people to change their sanitation and hygiene behaviours. While these internal studies have highlighted some issues in households' adherence to the strict fly-proof criteria, they also

show that in the majority of villages, open defecation is no longer widespread. Some studies show that close to 90 percent of all villages that were declared ODF by the FAA have remained as such, and even the most critical study found that in close to 50 percent of all villages surveyed there was no evidence of a return to open defecation.

The growing experience of GSF-supported programmes in monitoring and evaluation shows that adherence to ODF status over time is not linear, but rather a 'two steps forward, one step back' type of process. In this regard, slippage should not be considered, nor monitored as, a 'yes' or 'no' matter but rather as a sliding scale. This does however pose additional challenges in terms of the complication and expense of recurrent monitoring.

The FAA's strong focus on the three innovative approaches described in this case study is very much in response to the aforementioned challenges regarding slippage and sustainability. By simultaneously strengthening its monitoring and evaluation systems the expectation is that the FAA will be able to monitor the exact impact of Follow-up MANDONA and other sustainability-oriented approaches, village by village. This is both in terms of countering ODF slippage and continuing to ensure that large numbers of communities move towards improved sanitation and hygiene.



ABOVE LEFT: A FLY-PROOF TOILET SEAT USING LOCAL MATERIALS IN THE COMMUNE OF MIARINARIVO. CREDIT: FAA/JOSÉA RATSIRARSON

ABOVE RIGHT: A FLY-PROOF TOILET SEAT FOR AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS UNABLE TO SQUAT. CREDIT: FAA/JOSÉA RATSIRARSON

⁷ These are: the pit has a tight-fitting drop-hole cover that prevents flies from entering; if it is a wooden slab, there are no cracks or holes between planks to allow flies to enter; ash is distributed in the pit after each use in order to eliminate odor and fly larvae; damp parts of the latrine and objects soiled by faeces are covered in ash; materials used for cleansing after defecation are safely discarded; and a handwashing station is present.