



The 10-year-old 'Handwashing Ambassador'



Sumaya demonstrating how to use a tippy tap at her home.

Cheerful and light spirited Sumaya Namugamba is a ten-year-old girl who studies at Kangulumira Church of Uganda primary school, one of ten schools in Kayunga district supported by USAID's Uganda Sanitation for Health Activity (USHA) to improve positive school Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services and behavior. Sumaya is a self-appointed 'hand washing ambassador.' She has taken it upon herself to apply handwashing learnings from school, in her home and

community by assembling tippy taps. A simple

device for handwashing whereby a three-five-liter container with a small hole near the cap is filled with water and tipped with a stick and rope tied through a hole in the cap.

Working through grantee organizations, USHA supports schools to attain a WASH friendly status, which involves, among other aspects, promotion of handwashing with soap; proper menstrual hygiene management; operation and maintenance (O&M) of sanitation and water facilities; reviving and instituting school health clubs (SHC); encouraging key hygiene behaviors; construction of improved segregated toilets for boys and girls; and access to safe drinking water.

Sumaya learned how to make and install tippy taps from USHA's training at Kangulumira Church of Uganda Primary School and she was eager to teach her friends and family. "When they taught us how to make tippy taps at school, I shared it with my mother, siblings and friends at home because I don't want them to fall sick," Sumaya says.

Back home, Sumaya collected small stick poles and asked her mother to buy her a jerrycan. She then made and installed a tippy tap just next to the latrine like they were advised at school. The ten-year-old also took charge to ensure that the device was operated and maintained well with water and soap always available for washing hands after toilet use.

Sumaya has not only changed her family but has taught her playmates how to make tippy taps and many of them have followed her example. Today, all Sumaya's neighbors have well maintained tippy taps. "My friends and I compete about whose home has the best tippy tap, this helps us to keep each other in check and because of that, we all have clean and firm tippy taps." Sumaya mentioned.

Thanks to Sumaya's efforts, handwashing with soap has become a norm in her community. Kasifa Tibiwa, Sumaya's mother, says with pride, "Quite frankly, prior to Sumaya's efforts, many of us were not consistent with the handwashing practice. It is not the case now ever since Sumaya installed the

tippy tap.” She continued, “My daughter is now a handwashing advocate in this village. She helps install handwashing facilities and teaches us how to properly wash our hands during these COVID-19 times, thanks to you people for training her at school.”