

## Examples of anecdotes that can be used to raise communities' awareness and understanding on water points maintenance

### Experience of the Inter Aide's Water & Sanitation programs in Sierra Leone

It is sometimes difficult to explain maintenance to the communities and to illustrate the importance of a preventive approach compare to reparation.

The anecdotes hereafter are examples that can be used during awareness sessions and trainings with communities to pass the message that regular routine maintenance operations, quick management of small repair and small regular investments on maintenance avoid that:

- it becomes a worse and more costly intervention
- It affects people more seriously

These different examples can be adapted considering the audience (male, female, country) and the systems (hand pumps, gravity systems...) – *Costs of maintenance have to be adapted to the context*

And it is important to always keep a clear parallel with the water point.

#### Bicycle anecdote

Gabriel uses his bicycle every day in order to go to work a few villages away. Gabriel is riding his bicycle one day when the tire goes flat. Instead of stopping to patch the inner tube and continuing on his way, he decides to keep riding until the next day when he can see a mechanic. The next day, the mechanic tells Gabriel that he needs to replace the inner tube, the outer tire, the rim, some spokes and the spindle. The total cost he has to pay is 120 000 Le (30 \$). Gabriel was not expecting so many repairs to be done, and does not have the money. The mechanic explains to Gabriel that if he had stopped immediately to repair the deflated tire, these other parts would not have been damaged. Gabriel asks the mechanic how much it costs to patch an inner tube and the mechanics answers 2 000 Le (50 cents). Unfortunately for Gabriel, he was not able to use his bicycle for a whole month while he saved the money for the bicycle repair and had to walk both ways to work in order to keep his job. Gabriel now realizes the importance of taking care of his property, and to immediately repair parts when needed so as not to have to spend more money in the future. He also understands that though maintaining the bicycle regularly takes a little time, it is worth it so as not to have to go without the bicycle for an entire month if the bicycle needs to be repaired.

#### House anecdote

A house is a big financial investment and it is built to last a long time. When there is a crack in the wall, the crack should be fixed quickly to prevent any further damage in the wall structure. When old leaves fall onto the zinc roof, they should be cleaned away quickly, or as they degrade they will start to rust the zinc roof and cause holes in the roof. If there is a hole in the roof, the roof needs to be patched quickly, or else the rains will cause damage to the inside of the house. The house should be cleaned frequently in order to prevent mice, cockroaches and snakes from entering the house. Insects and animal infestations cause further damage to the house structure, to the food items stored in the house, and are a threat to the life and safety of the people inside. When the house is maintained properly, it will last a long time. If the family does not take good care of its house, one minor problem will lead to the next until they will have to spend a lot of money to replace and repair the house, or to build a new house again.



### Clothes anecdote

Sulaiman has a shirt that he bought new in the market for 35 000 Le (8 \$). While wearing the shirt, Sulaiman did not take good care. He rarely washed the shirt. One day, the shirt got a small hole from catching it on a branch. Instead of sewing it together, Sulaiman left it alone. As he continued to wear the shirt, the hole got bigger and bigger until finally, it was unable to be sewn back together. Sulaiman had to buy a new shirt or have no shirt at all. He decided to buy a new shirt for 35 000 Le again.

John, Sulaiman's brother bought a shirt on the same day for himself for the same price of 35 000 Le. Unlike Sulaiman, he took good care of his shirt, washing it when it was dirty, and patching any holes when needed. When Sulaiman's shirt was finally done, he begged John to give him his own shirt. John refused because he knew that Sulaiman would not take good care. When Sulaiman went to market to buy a new shirt, John continued to wear his in a good way. John's shirt lasted a very long time before it could not be worn again, finally faded by the sun.

John spent only 35 000 Le and some small amount of money for soap and the tailor fees to maintain the shirt properly. As Sulaiman did not take proper care of his shirt, he spent 70 000 Le (16 \$) during the same time period, a lot of money for simply not being able to take care of his shirt. Sulaiman did not take care of his shirt therefore he had to spend a big amount of money to replace it.

### Human Body anecdote

There are two carpenters that have competing shops next to each other. The first carpenter eats nutritious food, drinks clean water, washes his hands before eating and keeps himself clean, and he rests frequently to manage his health. The second carpenter does not rest enough, even though he feels pain in his body after work, he does not wash his hands before eating and does not drink clean water. Finally, the second carpenter gets very sick and has to stay in the hospital to get treated. He spends a lot of money for the hospital bill, and has been ordered to rest from work for two weeks. The customers from his shop start to use the first carpenter and the second carpenter loses more money. After seeing the consequences of not taking care of his health and body, both carpenters realize the importance of maintaining their health so that they can continue to work in order to support their families.



### Final Comments

*Maintenance is when we spend a small amount of money and time to regularly check everything is working well in the water point. We clean all elements, do preventive actions (greasing parts, tiding nuts, cleaning spring box, preventing from rust). Any parts that look like they are worn out will be replaced.*

*Repair has to be done when maintenance is not respected. It costs a lot of money and time to do. When you do not take care of the water point by doing regular maintenance, a small problem will grow into a big problem that can only be solved by costly repair.*

### Specific examples and advices

- **Hand pumps (India Mark, Kardia):**

*Grease is the food for the pump. If you do not feed your chickens and dogs regularly, they will begin to scrap at anything including kaka and garbage to be able to eat, even though the kaka and garbage will make them sick. If the pump is not fed with grease regularly, it will start to eat away at itself, causing more and more damage as it goes, until finally, the pump will die.*

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