

## Sanergy – improving sanitation in Kenya’s urban slums

2.6 billion people worldwide lack access to adequate sanitation, many of them in urban areas. By designing user-friendly, hygienic sanitation facilities to increase usage and reduce cleaning costs, and applying a systems-based approach, Sanergy aims to improve sanitation in urban slums in Kenya.

Sanergy’s long-term objective is to build and scale commercially and sustainably viable sanitation infrastructure in the slums of Kenya, where 8 million people currently lack access to adequate sanitation. In the start-up phase, extensive field testing was carried out to indicate areas of improvement to existing solutions, where toilet design was found to have a direct impact on the profitability of the local entrepreneurs operating the facilities.

The grant from Sida’s Innovations Against Poverty (IAP) challenge fund, provided support to Sanergy in the product development phase, which focused on developing a durable, hygienic, and user-friendly toilet design: the “Fresh Life Toilet”. Building sanitation centres and franchising to local entrepreneurs is only the first step in the business model however, which also includes collecting the waste, and converting it into renewable energy and organic fertilizer.



In developing and scaling-up their solution, Sanergy cooperates with a large number of other actors, such as local plastics manufacturer Kentainer, the Kenya Water Services Trust Fund, Kiva, and several non-governmental and community organisations.

In addition to providing hygienic sanitation solutions to the people living in slums, the Sanergy model provides job opportunities at each step:

- Building a network of low-cost sanitation centres in slums
- Distributing them through franchising to local entrepreneurs
- Collecting the waste produced
- Processing it into renewable energy and fertilizer



Ruby Cup contributes to development on three levels:

- The product is an affordable, sustainable solution to the problem of access to menstrual hygiene products
- The business itself offers employment opportunities for women living in poverty
- The company also educates young women about menstrual hygiene

## Ruby Cup – a better future for young women in sub-Saharan Africa

For girls and women living in poverty, menstrual hygiene products such as tampons or pads are often prohibitively expensive – a problem which has often been overlooked despite its negative impact on development.

Ruby Cup provides a solution through bringing a durable, sustainable and ultimately affordable product in combination with education on menstrual issues to young women across Africa.

Lack of menstrual hygiene knowledge and products has a direct negative impact on development, as regular absence from and dropping out of school, and infections from unhygienic home-made solutions, impact the ability of women to improve their lives as well as their health.

Ruby Cup, a company founded by three students at Copenhagen Business School, offers a solution in the form of a menstrual cup, a product previously unavailable in most low income countries. The product is more expensive than disposable products initially, but can be reused for more than ten years, making it much more affordable and sustainable in the long run. Lack of knowledge and awareness of menstrual issues has proved to be part of the problem, and education and communication is therefore a prioritised part of the business.

With a small grant from Sida's Innovations Against Poverty (IAP) challenge fund, the founders were able to go to Kenya to survey the needs locally and to start marketing the product, first in Kenya, and now in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Scaling up takes place through sales in pharmacies and supermarkets, and bulk sales to individuals, organisations and NGOs that

provide Ruby Cups in refugee camps and schools. Also, for every Ruby Cup sold over the Internet the company donates one to a school girl from underprivileged backgrounds in Kenya. The goal is to sell half a million Ruby Cups in five years.

### CONTACT

For information about the projects or the Innovations Against Poverty challenge fund, please visit [www.sida.se/iap](http://www.sida.se/iap) or e-mail the IAP team at [innovationsagainstpovetry@se.pwc.com](mailto:innovationsagainstpovetry@se.pwc.com)

For more information on Sida's collaboration with the private sector, please contact the Swedish embassy in the country that you operate in via [www.swedenabroad.com](http://www.swedenabroad.com), or Sida at [www.sida.se/privatesector](http://www.sida.se/privatesector)