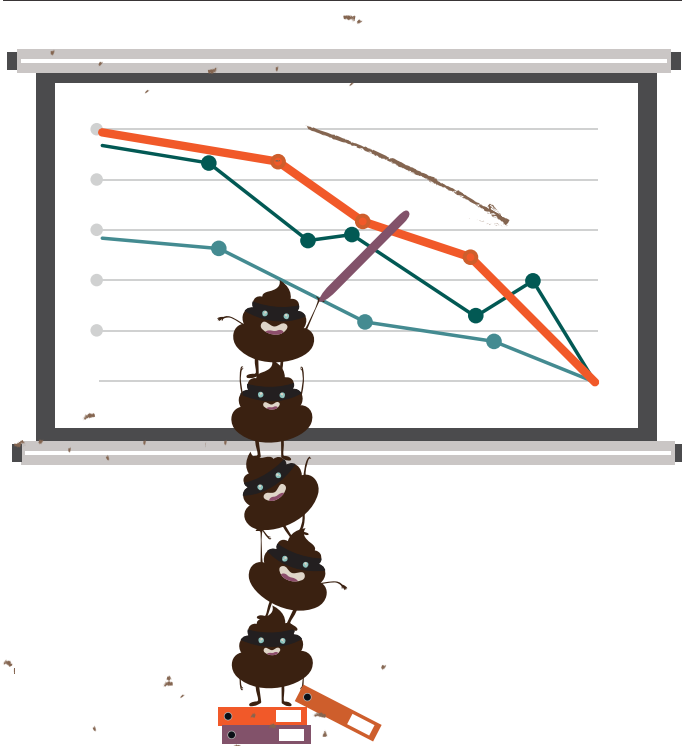




## TOILETS HAVE THE POWER TO TRANSFORM ECONOMIES

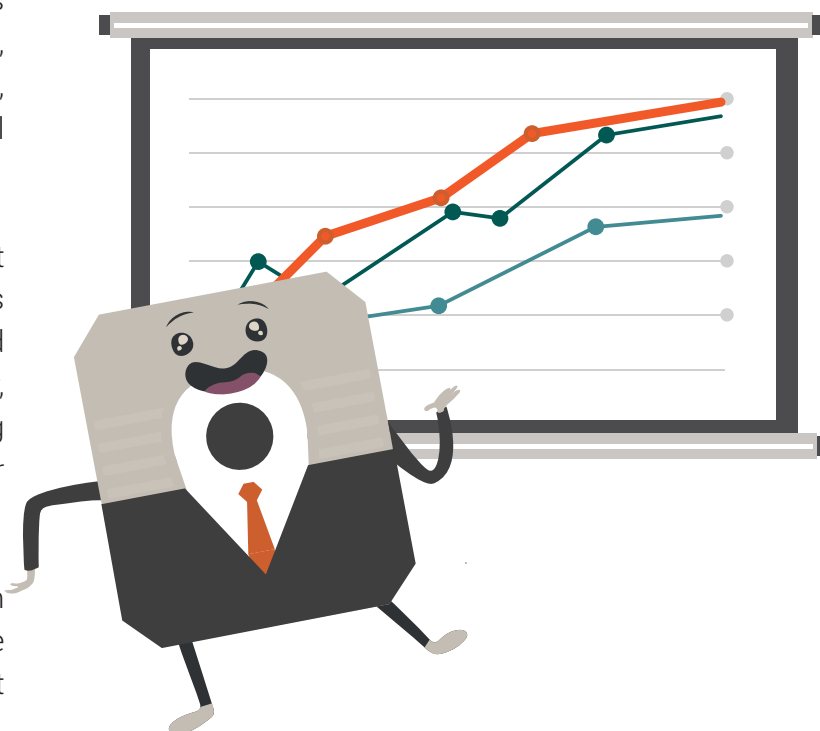


- A lack of toilets at work and at home has severe impacts upon businesses through problems in the workforce: poor health, absenteeism, attrition, reduced concentration, exhaustion, and decreased productivity (Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) 2010).
- Meeting the 2015 Millennium Development Goal target of 50% of people having access to sanitation and safe water was estimated to reduce sick days by 322 million every year, representing an annual health sector saving of \$7 billion. (Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), 2005).
- Globally, approximately \$260 billion is lost each year to the effects of poor sanitation and unsafe water on many aspects of the economy, but most significantly on healthcare (Hutton 2012).

- Providing toilets to people in rural areas currently practising open defecation is estimated to result in benefits that exceed costs by between five and seven times (Hutton 2015).
- In India, the time spent looking for a toilet or finding somewhere to go in the open costs the economy over \$10 billion every year in lost productivity – 20% of GDP (World Bank Group 2016).
- Diarrhoea caused by unsafe water, poor sanitation and hygiene is linked to 50% of child undernutrition, which can lead to stunted physical and mental development (WHO 2008).

## TOILETS IN THE WORKPLACE INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY

Access levels to toilets in the workplace reflects access levels to toilets in the home. Very little data exists to tell us how many workers don't have access

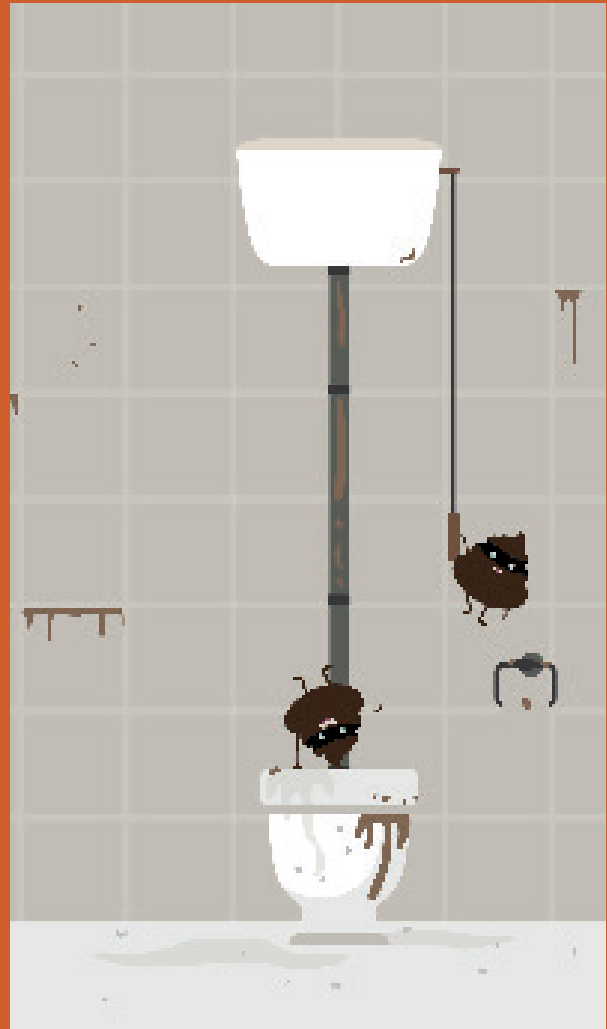


to toilets, but, for instance, only 40% of the urban population in Sub-Saharan Africa has access to a domestic toilet (WHO/UNICEF 2015).

Where toilets are present, a big issue for many workers is the way in which toilet breaks are controlled by the management. If access is restricted, people will hold back the urge to go, and even avoid food and drink to minimise how many times they might need to visit the toilet. Beyond the inconvenience and discomfort, this can have health impacts, particularly for women, leading to absenteeism and disease (BSR 2010).

Loss of productivity due to illnesses caused by lack of sanitation and poor hygiene practices is estimated to cost many countries up to 5% of GDP (Hutton 2012). In sectors such as the garment industry, the global workforce is 80% female (Business for Social Responsibility 2010). Investing in good toilets in workplaces and schools so that women and girls have clean, separate facilities to maintain their dignity, and to manage menstruation or pregnancy safely, can boost what is often referred to as the 'girl effect': maximising the involvement of half the population in society (Girl Effect 2015).

- *According to the International Labour Organization (2003), disease transmission accounts for approximately 17% of workplace deaths each year and most of these are a result of poor sanitation and unsafe hygiene practices.*
- *According to a study in the UK, sick days are estimated to cost companies a minimum of \$117 per person per day (Braun et al 2014).*
- *In Vietnam, profitability was 7.6% higher in factories where workers expressed greater satisfaction with water, air quality, toilets, canteens and health services provided, holding other factors constant (ILO 2015).*



### **NOT EVERY TOILET IS A GOOD TOILET**

Anecdotal evidence from many low-income countries tells us that even when a toilet is physically present in the workplace, it doesn't necessarily mean a person has access to safe, effective sanitation. We have to ask: are there sufficient numbers of toilets? Are they working, clean, lockable? Are there separate facilities for men and women? Is there running water for people to wash their hands or for women to manage menstruation safely?

## PROVIDING TOILETS AND OTHER SANITATION SERVICES CREATES JOBS

The global demand for water and sanitation services is worth over \$50 billion (Freedonia 2013), so there is a massive demand waiting to be met. Treating sanitation provision as a long-term business opportunity, as well as a fulfilment of people's rights, could help speed up progress and attract investment.

In the 2014 UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS), less than 20% of participating countries have sufficient capacity to meet rural sanitation needs and even fewer of these countries have plans in place to redress this gap (UN-Water, 2014), which requires investments in education, curriculum development, and enabling environments.

Making it easy for people to set up sanitation businesses, as part of a bigger plan, will help entrepreneurs to flourish and could accelerate progress. Particularly in the towns and cities of low-income countries, populations are growing fast and their need for toilets and waste removal is already desperate. Small-scale service providers could play a vital role in getting toilets to people quickly and beginning the transformation of slum areas (WaterAid 2016).

- *In the EU, there are more than 2.5 million jobs in the wastewater and solid waste management sectors (Ernst and Young 2006).*
- *The International Water Association (2014) assessed the capacity gap for trained water and sanitation professionals to achieve universal water and sanitation access across 15 countries to be over 750,000 individuals.*



## REMOVING THE STIGMA FROM SANITATION WORK

In 2013, new Indian legislation outlawed the building of any more insanitary toilets and employing people as 'manual scavengers' to clean out human faeces with their bare hands from rudimentary latrines. The practice will take time to eradicate, but as sanitation improves in India, the government is rehabilitating manual scavengers, training them for alternative livelihoods and providing education for their children (UN India 2014). Placing more value and respect for these tasks would also raise the workers' social status.