

Women in sanitation innovation: A community level perspective

Nomandla Nqanula

Enviro-Champ

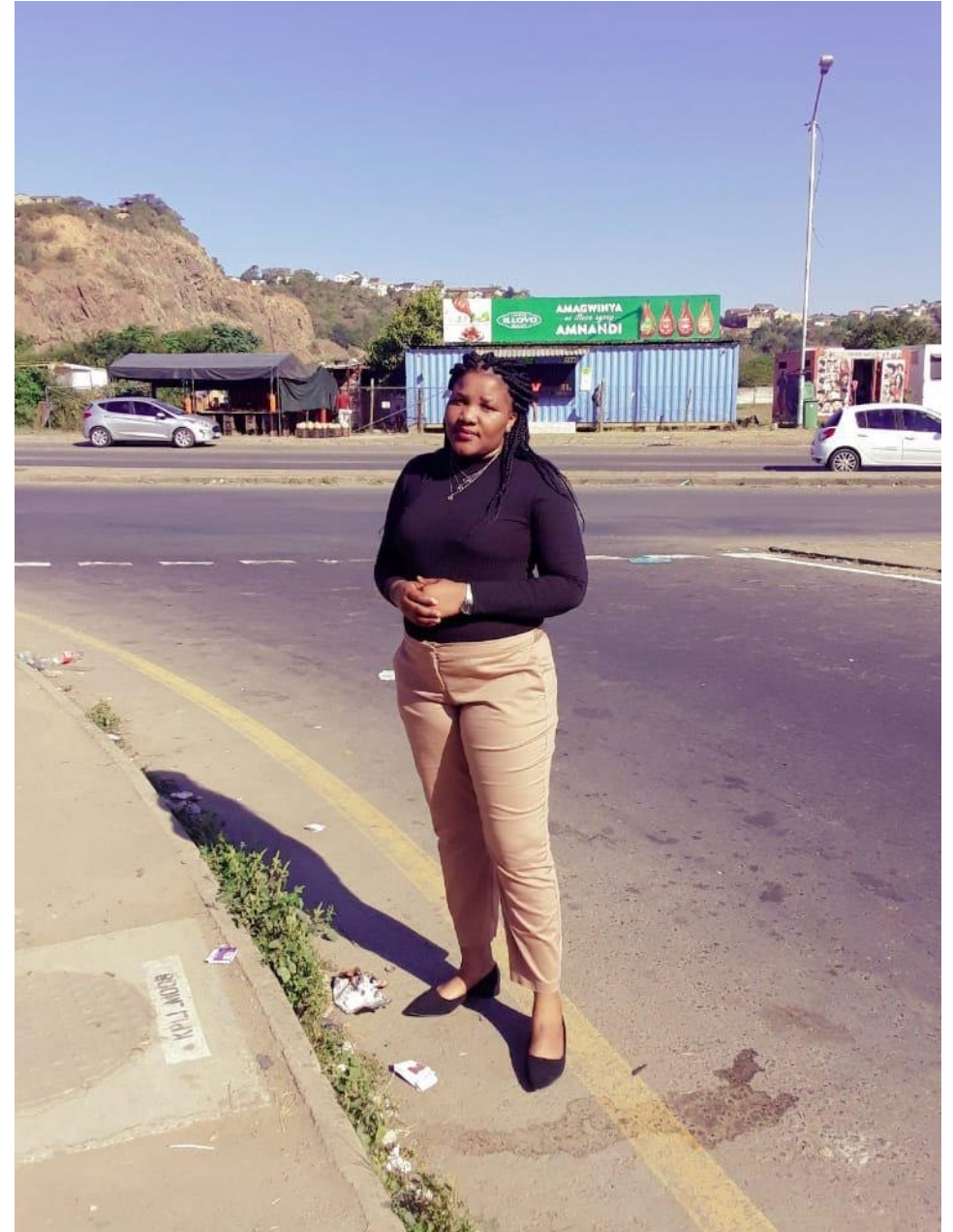
Quarry Road West informal settlement

Durban



My life and work in sanitation

- I am an Enviro-Champ working on the Palmiet River and working to improve the environment in the catchment and Quarry Road West informal settlement.
- I report Water and Sanitation infrastructure faults to eThekweni Municipality using a toll free call and whatsapp and an app developed through iQhaza Lethu informal settlement upgrading programme
 - Every Monday I report how many taps are working, if there are any leakages and blockages
 - I identify fire hydrants in the settlement in case of fire
 - I also report waste that is not collected



My experiences as a woman in sanitation innovation

- I am involved in trying to improve the conditions of the CABs that the community uses in the settlement
- Since the floods we cannot clean up the waste in the river bed in Quarry Road as there are no functioning toilets and so people are using outside to go to the toilet and this makes our work very difficult as the sewerage is mixed in with the solid waste



The challenges that woman as beneficiaries of sanitation

- Where I live in an informal settlement we use Communal Ablution Blocks for toilets
 - The CABS do not always work so we have to share the working CABS with men
 - Sharing toilets with men is very difficult as they shout when they enter the CAB and you feel very uncomfortable while you are inside the CAB with them
 - Some do not even knock on the door and so you have to watch out for yourself while you are there
 - Some smoke while they are inside the CAB and so you inhale the smoke and so in that way you cannot rest while you are inside the CAB, even though it is called a restroom
 - I got a yeast infection from sitting on the seats in the CAB and I have to go to the clinic and explain what happened to me and I had to treat the disease
 - Lack of sanitation spreads diseases like diarrhea and we experience that too



Challenges facing women in sanitation

- Waiting for the bathroom in the queues exposes us to urinary tract infections
- Lack of sanitary bins for the disposal of pads in the CABs leaves you with no confidence and everyone likes to look at you when you come out of the toilet, especially the men
- Lack of privacy exposes us to attacks and we have to wait until it is dark to go to the toilet outside, as then no one can see us
- A women we know went to the CAB at night and she was attacked and luckily she screamed and fought back



Opportunities for change in sanitation that are positive

- We have had support and together we have learnt about sanitation from outside stakeholders working in Quarry Road
- Working together on new water and sanitation projects
- We have also had support and learnt from the municipality

