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Thank you so much, it is a pleasure to be here today. Just imagine, between yesterday and today, I think almost every one of us has gone to the toilet. But, that is not the story of 2.5 billion people today. One in three people lack access to clean and safe toilets. When I was in Niger, in January, 90 per cent of the people defecated in the open – 90 per cent of the population! This has claimed lots of lives, leading to impoverishment and diminished opportunities for thousands of people, especially girls. In 2010 only 14 per cent of Cameroon're sending kids to school and providing them with the educational supplies, most of the kids were staying home, especially the girls. Some of them were very shy to come to school, because they were not happy with the state of the toilets, most of them stayed home because they felt uncomfortable, especially during their period. Some were very shy because they couldn't afford sanitary pads and the greatest demand was toilets. We also realized that teachers were not coming to school. One teacher told us that when they come to school, if they want to go to the toilet, the distance for them to walk to the nearest bushes is just too far for them to go and come back, same with the kids. So, we worked with the school and we asked them: so how can we help you guys? And, that's how we started building toilets in 2014.

Our mission is simple: to promote safe hygiene and sanitation practices in schools, by constructing toilets in poor communities in rural Cameroon, so that children stay in school and learn in an environment that is not only free from disease, but one that ensures their safety and well-being. Our core objective is to end the practice of open defecation, to minimize the number of school days school children lose, to create an environment where children, especially girls, feel safe and secure – minimizing their risk of having to work for miles just look for safe place to defecate or urinate – and to promote the practice of hand-washing in schools that transcends to households.

And our theory of change is very simple, we go to the communities, we identify the schools. Our model is simple: the communities provide all the raw materials, I mean the communities provide the labour, they provide all the basic raw materials like stones, trees, that we can use, and we provide funding for the other part of the materials which they cannot afford. So, it is pretty much that the community provides about 60 per cent and we provide 40 per cent. We teach them how to maintain the toilets, we teach them how to teach the kids how to wash their hands, especially, you know, when they go to the toilet.

Since 2014 we have built toilets in five schools and you can see all the pictures there, and they are serving, right now, 1300 kids and teachers. Girls now feel a little bit safer, the practice of open defecation has greatly reduced, and one important thing that we came to realize was the number of school days these kids were losing a year dropped by 27 per cent. So enrolment rate went up, and this has also reduced the number of hours that teachers and kids lose each day trying to find a safe place to defecate.

If you look at the picture at the bottom right, that was the one that just... I was just overwhelmed. That school, what they did was they just dug a hole and put in a ladder, and you had kids of about four years old having to go down the ladder and defecate. We had cases where kids had fallen and some kids almost died, because that is the only thing they had. And you should understand that in 2000 my country made primary education free, so that meant that kids could go to school for free. But, in reality, it became a burden because the government stopped providing funding to basic services like tables, chairs, and toilets. So, now, the teachers had to charge parents what you call a Parent-Teacher Association Fee, and most kids were not even coming to school just because of that.

So, some of the barriers that we face are the fact that convincing the parents to build toilets at home is a challenge, because we do not want a situation where kids can only enjoy toilets at school, but in their homes they cannot. So, we are engaging the parents, and one of the things we found out was these kids are putting a lot of pressure on their parents back home, to provide them with such toilets. Some of the parents are telling us that we are just giving them a lot of problems, because now the kids are pressuring them. One of the other things that we are facing is compliance, so we are trying to teach the schools how to develop guidelines that actually promote hand washing in a sustainable way that allows them to take full ownership. And, one teacher recounted to us that kids are now leaving their homes at seven in the morning and rushing to school just to use the toilet at school, and some will just stay at school till they go home. Interestingly enough, the Head Teacher told us that teachers applied to come to such schools because they have toilets, and teachers are also using such toilets for learning purposes.

And, so, if you look at this data: diarrheal disease was one of the huge problems that kids were facing and you can see that in 2014, after we started building toilets, that number dropped. The number of days that kids

lost from school dropped from 261 to 166, followed by lack of textbooks. But, just one thing, we realize that toilets are very critical in an early stage of a child, especially the girl child. We have to put a lot of pressure on our governments to make sure that every child, in every part of the world, has access to a clean and safe toilet. Thank you.