

The composting latrine

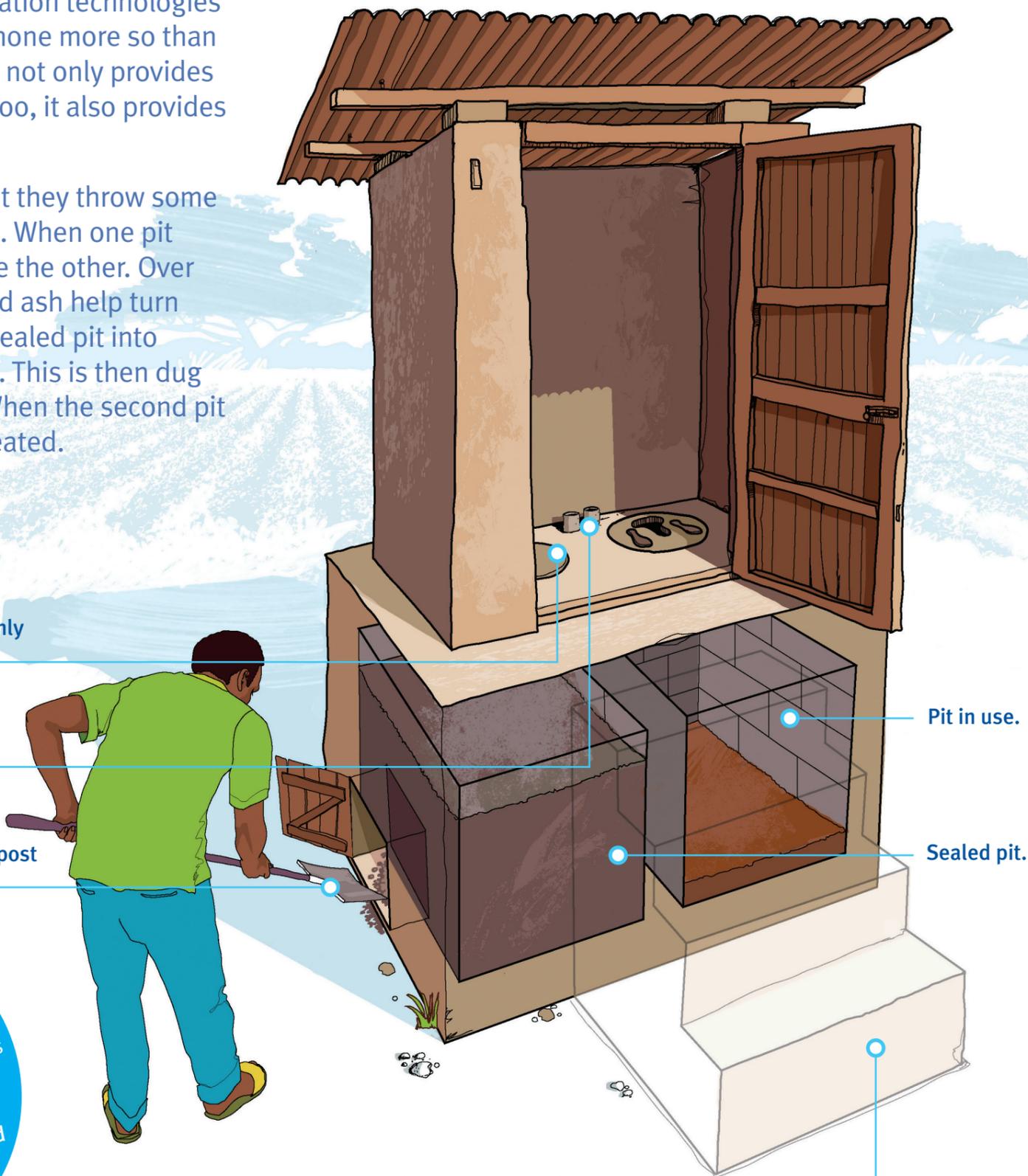
All of our water and sanitation technologies have wider impacts, but none more so than the composting latrine. It not only provides a safe place to go to the loo, it also provides free fertiliser!

After people use the toilet they throw some soil and ash into the hole. When one pit is full, they seal it and use the other. Over a few months, the soil and ash help turn the human waste in the sealed pit into completely safe compost. This is then dug out and used on crops. When the second pit is full, the process is repeated.

Two platforms above two pits. Only one pit is used until it is full.

A pot of ash and one of soil. A handful of each is added to the pit after every visit.

After a few months the safe compost is dug out and used on crops.

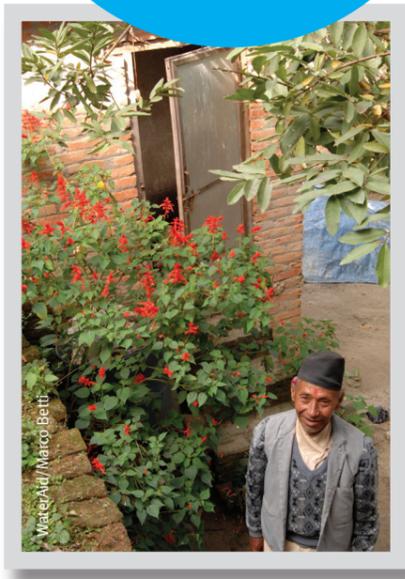


The structure can be raised in areas with a high water table or where the ground is very hard.

Watch composting latrines in action

Composting latrines in Malawi is a two minute film which shows how this simple technology has transformed people's lives in rural Malawi.

Go to www.youtube.com/wateraid and search for 'Composting latrines in Malawi'.



Buddhi Sipai outside his composting latrine in Lyaku, Nepal.

"When I first heard of the composting latrines I was curious. We use the compost for farming and it is very beneficial. Our health is better too as we used to get diarrhoea but this is now reduced. We mix up our household waste with compost from the toilet and use it for our plants. I use it to grow onion, coriander, carrots and radish. Fertiliser helps make them grow a lot but it has no taste, using this compost takes more time but is healthier and tastier."



Mary Nyirenda, showing sweetcorn she grew using compost from a composting latrine, Chikompulazi village, Malawi:

"I was using chemical fertiliser before but I couldn't afford to buy enough. I was very happy when people came here to tell me that I could have my own composting latrine – my fertiliser problems would be solved! I played a very key role in convincing others about the project. I told them a saying: 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating'. It's important because it will help the people to get manure for growing their crops. I also hope it will reduce sanitation-related diseases and keep the village clean."