

The Gulper

This manually-operated pump solves one of the biggest challenges in providing sanitation in crowded urban environments: emptying latrine pits when they get full. The Gulper is basically a hand pump that fits on top of a permanent pipe rising out of a latrine pit. The handle is raised and lowered and, with the help of valves in the pipe, the waste is lifted out of the nozzle and into a container.

In many cases, private contractors run collection services, taking the waste away to municipal treatment works. Emptying and disposal happens on a regular basis, keeping urban environments cleaner and providing business opportunities.

This means 'Get your latrine emptied for less' in Swahili. The motor-cart will take full containers to the waste treatment works.

The Gulper is fitted onto a valve in the middle of a concrete apron at the top of the riser pipe.

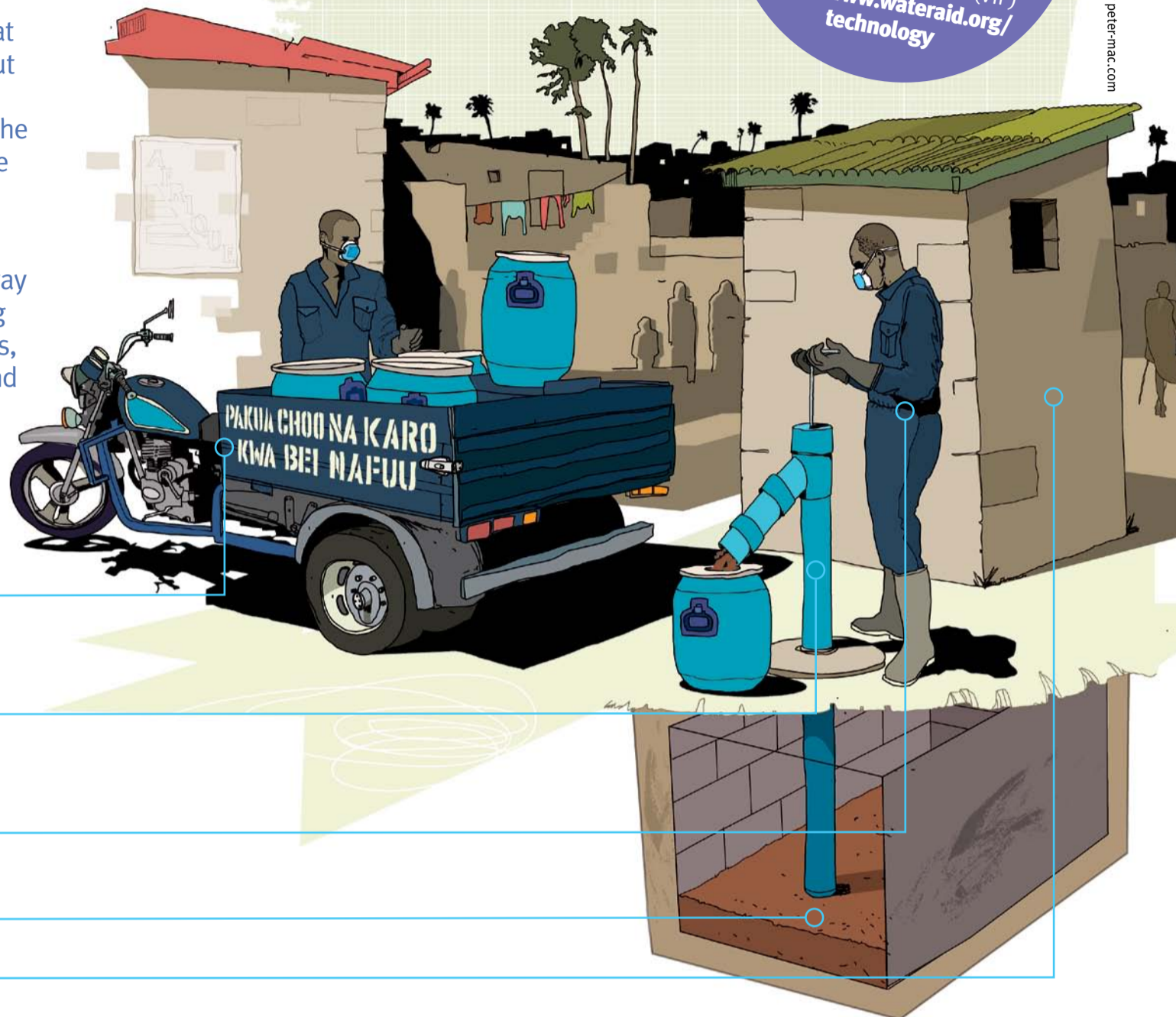
Wearing protective garments, the operator lifts the handle and 'pulls' waste up and into the container.

The pit sits under the latrine building above.

Latrine building.

Technology posters
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Illustration by peter-mac.com



A 'vacutug' machine empties shallow pit latrines in Urbanizacao, a slum in Maputo, Mozambique. This is wheeled through the narrow lanes by waste removal workers, like Hilario (pictured above), who are paid by the municipality.

"I have worked here for six months. I start work at 7am. In the morning we come and collect the machine and take it to the places we need to go. In between jobs we return to the centre to empty the machine. A team of four people use this system. I like my work. My family is big and they benefit from my wages."



The need for improved sanitation and hygiene is acute in crowded urban communities. Mohammad Mausin, 60 years old, is the caretaker of the community-managed sanitation block in a slum in Kaushal Nagar, India. The facility is for adults, children and disabled people, and consists of three latrines for women, three latrines for men, one for girls and one for boys. There are also two bathing cubicles for females and two for males.

"I open the sanitation block in the morning and close it at night. I am responsible for maintaining the attendance register. Before, people would practise open defecation and I would feel sorry for them. It is much better now, people are more dignified."

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